



The Star Side of Bird Hill: A Novel

Naomi Jackson

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Two sisters are suddenly sent from their home in Brooklyn to Barbados to live with their grandmother, in this stunning debut novel

This lyrical novel of community, betrayal, and love centers on an unforgettable matriarchal family in Barbados. Two sisters, ages ten and sixteen, are exiled from Brooklyn to Bird Hill in Barbados after their mother can no longer care for them. The young Phaedra and her older sister, Dionne, live for the summer of 1989 with their grandmother Hyacinth, a midwife and practitioner of the local spiritual practice of obeah.

Dionne spends the summer in search of love, testing her grandmother's limits, and wanting to go home. Phaedra explores Bird Hill, where her family has lived for generations, accompanies her grandmother in her role as a midwife, and investigates their mother's mysterious life.

This tautly paced coming-of-age story builds to a crisis when the father they barely know comes to Bird Hill to reclaim his daughters, and both Phaedra and Dionne must choose between the Brooklyn they once knew and loved or the Barbados of their family.

Jackson's Barbados and her characters are singular, especially the wise Hyacinth and the heartbreaking young Phaedra, who is coming into her own as a young woman amid the tumult of her family.

Praise for *The Star Side of Bird Hill*

"Jackson has written a first novel full of heart and heartbreak, a novel about going home, about the ties that bind three generations of women across years and despite absence. It is a bittersweet lesson in learning to recognize love."

—Ayana Mathis, author of *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* (Oprah's Book Club 2.0 selection)

"Naomi Jackson has written a tender novel exploring the complexities of motherhood and childhood. *The Star Side of Bird Hill* holds together opposing elements—the book is quiet in the telling, but the story being told is sharp and vibrant. It is as much a story of the fears of childhood as it is a story about welcoming old age with optimism. A book that knows death and discovery. A book laced with pain but shimmering with hope. With care, the narrative addresses huge issues, such as mental illness, mortality, sexuality, and, at its very core, what it means to love another person as they are."

—Tiphonie Yanique, author of *Land of Love and Drowning*

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Beth Sanders:

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