

## Sun Don't Shine

**Crissa-Jean Chappell**

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In Crissa-Jean Chappell's novel *Sun Don't Shine*, a teenager meets a young man who helps her realize the truth about her past.

Reece was abducted by her father as a child. While out stealing at her father's request, she meets an intriguing young man, Shawn. When the two begin to spend time together, Reece's father reacts with violence at their closeness. And Reece learns that her father has been lying to her for years. In a slow but steady way, she begins to move away from his control.

Reece is an authentic narrator: perceptive, sometimes vulgar, and to the point throughout, as with her opening observation of "Traffic pound[ing] the highway. All those cars are going where I can't go—away from here. Right now 'here' is the Surfside, which might be the dumbest name ever. You won't find much surf in Miami." She dumpster-dives with her father, who orders her to "hustle up," clarifying both their relationship and the environment.

Utilizing both narration and dialogue, the story moves between Reece's memories and the present day. Reece's encounter with Shawn, and her father's oversized reaction to "breaking the rules," prompt references to previous infractions. This formula is repeated throughout the novel, resulting in a fast-paced, compelling story with embedded internal references that hold interest. The suspense created from Reece's hesitancy to bring her father to justice also leads to a satisfying, surprising conclusion.

An abducted teenager leads *Sun Don't Shine*, an exceptional novel with an original perspective on memory and trauma.

DEBBIE MCCARTHY (January / February 2024)

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