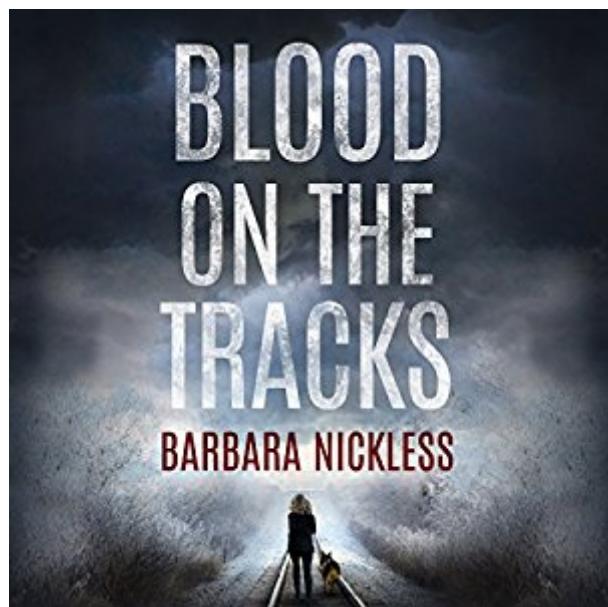


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# Blood On The Tracks: Sydney Rose Parnell Series, Book 1



## **Synopsis**

A young woman is found brutally murdered, and the main suspect is the victim's fiancÃƒÂ©, a hideously scarred Iraq War vet known as the Burned Man. But railroad police Special Agent Sydney Rose Parnell, brought in by the Denver Major Crimes unit to help investigate, can't shake the feeling that larger forces are behind this apparent crime of passion. In the depths of an icy winter, Parnell and her K9 partner, Clyde - both haunted by their time in Iraq - descend into the underground world of a savage gang of rail riders. There, they uncover a wide-reaching conspiracy and a series of shocking crimes. Crimes that threaten everything Parnell holds dear. As the search for the truth puts her directly in the path of the killer, Parnell must struggle with a deadly question: Can she fight monsters without becoming one herself?

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

It's not a good mystery unless there is a twist...or two...or three...or so many twists you begin to question when enough is enough. Don't get me wrong. There are many more reasons to read this book than to pass it by. Here's a quick rundown, without spoilers: THE HEROINE -- At first, it appeared this was going to be another female character who somehow seems to do everything right despite all the angst she has to lug around. However, the author has created a character with believable issues, one who uses her problems to help solve her case. Sydney Parnell is an interesting heroine who won me over after reading only a few chapters. THE PLOT -- While the mystery is the main focus, the sub-plot is woven with devilish care, the author teasing us with a fact

here, a fact there. You know the sub-plot ties in with the murder, but the reasons why are slowly revealed throughout the course of the book. A great technique that keeps the reader wondering, and driven to continue turning pages. **THE WRITING** -- Ms. Nickless writes with excellent care. Her scene descriptions are vivid, and the attention to the thoughts of her main character Sydney is wonderful. Overall, enjoyable to read. Worth 5.5 stars in this area!

**ADDITIONAL WRITING THOUGHT** -- The author uses transcripts of the main character's notes, interviews, journals, etc. at the beginning of each chapter. These small interludes were a great device that revealed much about Sydney Parnell in an entertaining manner...great idea! **JUST SO YOU KNOW** -- With a gritty story, there is the possibility of gritty dialogue. If you object to the use of f-bombs and similar words, this is not the book for you. One R rated sex scene also occurs.

Sydney Rose Parnell's life has had it share of trauma; abandoned by her father, her mother a murderer, a life-shattering tour of duty in Iraq with the Marines of Mortuary Affairs. She also bears the scars; PTSD and she sees dead people. Back home she has become a railroad cop and is forced into the investigation of the beloved niece of the man who had taken her in when her parents couldn't keep her. First, here is what I liked about the book. It was well paced. There was always action. As one reads through the book there are incidental pieces of information that tie in nicely with the plot later on. There are enough suspects to keep you guessing until the final reveal. All that was good to even excellent. However, here is what I didn't particularly care for. Sydney's seeing of dead people tended to get in the way too much. I often found it more distracting than helpful in giving insights into Sydney's personality, emotional angst, and motivations. Second, I'm not thrilled with the PTSD angle. I think that has been overplayed in books. Many of the chapter headings begin with vignettes of Sydney's thoughts; an interview published in the newspaper, excerpts from her diary and papers she had written in the college she returned to after her stent in Iraq. These vignettes give you insights into Sydney's PTSD. The problem is it makes it seem as though PTSD is inevitable. All soldiers who go to war see bad things. But not everyone comes back as damaged as Sydney was. I don't think portraying military service as inevitably ending in debilitating PTSD serves the returning soldiers well. Third, I didn't like it that a big part (as I read it, I thought **THE MOST IMPORTANT PART**) of the plot was left unexplained. I understand the reason this was done.

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