



## Bleeding Through

*Sandra Parshall*

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## **Bleeding Through** Sandra Parshall

When veterinarian Rachel Goddard and Deputy Sheriff Tom Bridger take teenagers on an outing to clean up roadside trash in rural Mason County, Virginia, they make a grisly discovery: the plastic-wrapped body of a young woman. One teen peers at the face through the plastic and screams. The dead girl is her sister, Shelley, a law student who has been missing for a month.

As Tom launches a murder investigation, Rachel copes with a visit from her own sister, Michelle, who is terrified that a man is stalking her. Michelle insists she's receiving threatening calls and someone has invaded her office in the Washington, DC, area. Her own husband doubts her. Although Michelle is a psychologist, she has always been emotionally fragile, and she reverts to her childhood dependence on Rachel, stirring up memories Rachel wants to forget. Soon it becomes clear that the mysterious stalker is real and dangerous and has followed Michelle to Mason County. Now he's turning his attention to Rachel too.

Tom pursues the stalker at the same time he investigates Shelley's murder. Was the killing random, or was Shelley murdered because she was working to prove that a Mason County man was wrongly convicted of murder? Relatives of his supposed victim were enraged by Shelley's efforts to free a man they believe is guilty. Did they kill her to stop her? But what if she was right? If an innocent man was convicted, one person would have the strongest motive to silence Shelley: the real murderer.

As Tom closes in on Shelley's killer, the stalker makes his move against Rachel, and the two cases come together in a shocking climax.

## **Bleeding Through Details**

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Author : Sandra Parshall

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## From Reader Review Bleeding Through for online ebook

### Carla Patterson says

(If you have already read my review of Book 2, Disturbing the Dead, please skip to paragraph I listen to a lot of audiobooks after having had a neck injury which makes reading a regular book painful - before that, I roamed libraries far and near for new books to read. Now, I end up browsing the online offerings at all of the SF Bay Area libraries to see if I can find something I haven't read yet and might enjoy. It's can be a daunting task since my tastes don't fit what's popular a lot of the time. Over the years, I've learned to enjoy genres I never had an interest in simply because they're so well represented in the world of audiobooks.

One of these genres is mysteries. I tend to like the more psychological series such as those by Jonathan Kellerman, Val McDermid, and Tana French. I also like series which give their protagonists complex and believable worlds to live in like P.D. James' Dalgliesh and Louise Penny's Gamache. What I really DON'T like is mystery series which read more like romance novels than mysteries.

I found Parshall at the SF Public Library but the only audiobooks of her series which were available were Book 2 (Disturbing the Dead) and Book 5 (Bleeding Through). I ended up reading both of them, #2 first. I enjoyed them but probably won't look for the rest of the first 5 novels in the series. OTOH, I will probably read what comes after this book when it becomes available.

At times, the the main character, Rachel Goddard, really drives me up a wall with her contrary and idiotic behavior since she's supposed to be an intelligent woman. OTOH, I know plenty of real people who might do the same things she does so I take it with a grain of salt. Forewarned is forearmed, though, so keep that in mind while reading.

I was glad to see the resolution of certain issues which started being issues in the second book but think that might mean that I would be very frustrated by books 3 and 4. By skipping to book 5 from book 2, I got the benefit of those things being resolved in this book. YMMV, though, so I won't spoil the suspense by naming them! ;)

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### Nikki says

I stayed up far too late finishing this book! It's the fifth in a series featuring veterinarian Rachel Goddard and Sheriff's Deputy Tom Bridger. It might be best to begin with The Heat of the Moon, the first in the series; Bleeding Through wraps up some previous storylines, and it would be a shame to spoil the suspense in the earlier books by having read this one first. In Rachel and Tom, Sandra Parshall has created a sleuthing pair, each with his/her own difficult history, whose relationship is believable and whose detective skills are generally excellent. Now, in this particular book, I guessed whodunit before the sleuths, but the thriller aspect of the book made up for that. (And who doesn't like to feel smart once in a while?) Recommended.

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### Brad Larsen says

Every mystery requires some suspension of disbelief. This one is equal parts preposterous and ridiculous.

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### **Starr Gardinier says**

A teenager's body is found in Mason County, Virginia and Deputy Sheriff Tom Bridger is called in on the case. To his dismay, he discovers that it is a local teen that has been missing for the last month. Unfortunately, a group of teens are cleaning up the trash along the highway and are the ones who discover the body. One of the girls screams, realizing it's her missing sister.

In the meantime, Rachel Goddard, a local veterinarian and special friend of Tom's, has a surprise visit from her sister, Michelle, who insists she is being stalked. Tom has to split his time between the death of the local teen and Michelle's stalker. Then to her horror, Michelle discovers her stalker has followed her to Mason County, and Rachel, too, begins receiving messages from the stalker. He seems to have penetrated every file and every building where they are.

As Tom and Rachel race to track the stalker, and to find the killer, they put themselves into extreme danger. Can they stop the stalker before he kills? How can they stop the creepy "gifts" he keeps leaving for Michelle and Rachel?

Sandra Parshall is a native Southerner and this is the fifth book in her Agatha award-winning series. I enjoyed this book very much and Parshall has kept the suspense so tense, I couldn't put it down. I look forward to the next book in the enjoyable series. Kudos to Sandra Parshall for a compelling yarn!

Reviewed by Holly Price author of "At Death's Door" (released soon) for Suspense Magazine

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### **Marcy says**

This was definately a great read. I started on page 40 last night and literally couldn't put it down. It had everything a great mystery has. I can see why it won the Agatha Christie award. It actually had me checking to make sure my door was locked at 2am:) I would highly recommend it. There are four other books in the Rachel Goddard series, I can't wait to read the next one.

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### **Magic Mary Austin says**

The author got me to care about veterinarian Rachel Goddard right off the bat, and expertly wove in details from preceeding novels in this series so that I could enjoy this one, which was my first. Despite the fact that I now know the conclusion of her lifelong mystery I am going to go back and read the earlier novels because the author is that good.

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### **Patricia says**

Rachel and Deputy Chief Tom Bridger are living together and life has settled down into a satisfying routine,

Rachel's sister, Michelle, fears she is being stalked. Michelle hopes that her stay with Rachel and Tom will discourage the stalker. This is the first time that Michelle has visited and Rachel is on edge about the visit and Michelle meeting Tom. Rachel and Michelle also have past issues that they have never satisfactorily worked out. Michelle's visit gives the two sisters the perfect opportunity to solve past issues and to grow closer.

Rachel and Tom are supervising a group of teenagers cleaning up litter on a Mason County, Virginia highway when they discover the body of a young woman wrapped in plastic. Sadly, the sister of the woman is one of the teenagers on the clean-up crew and the teenager sees the body before Rachel or Tom can pull her away.

When Tom begins his investigation, he learned that the deceased girl, Shelley Beecher, had been making inquiries in an attempt to free a person she felt had been wrongfully accused of the murder of Brian Hadley. The Hadley family is furious at Shelley's attempts to prove that Vance Langford, convicted of their son's murder, is actually innocent. Now Shelley's family is pointing fingers at the Hadley family for the death of their daughter. Tom is busy trying to find out who murdered Shelley and keep peace between the families until he can solve the crime.

This fifth addition to the Rachel Goddard series keeps the reader glued to the pages.

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### **Kait Carson says**

The arc of this series just keeps getting better and better. The book begins with the discovery of a local girl who was last seen in Fairfax. Rachel, Tom and a group of high school students doing roadway litter clean up discover the body under a mattress. It is immediately evident who the body belongs to. A young woman who has been involved in the innocence project. Her client, a local boy sentenced to life in prison for the beating death of another man. That's all I'm going to say about the plot. Don't want to give away any spoilers. The plot has twists and turns that keep you turning the pages until the very end. I have to admit, I was three quarters of the way through the book before I suspected the murderer, and then I was not 100% correct. The story also seamlessly weaves Rachel's personal life and family into the book. The ending is satisfying, on all fronts. I'm putting off reading the last of the series. I want to savor it, and hope that the next installment is released by then.

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### **Toby says**

first reads giveaway

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### **David says**

The book moved quickly, but didn't really pull me in. The characters seemed two dimensional. I had a tough time believing that law enforcement can't trace a cell phone call if the caller had "blocked" the number. It was such a big part of the story, my doubt made the plot less believable.

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### **Debbie says**

I absolutely adored Sandra Parshall's first novel *The Heat of the Moon*, but I could not imagine how she could possibly maintain this kind of intensity in a series. She has, and she has done a superb job with all her subsequent novels featuring veterinarian Rachel Goddard and Deputy Sheriff Tom Bridger. *Bleeding Through*, the fifth in the series, reflects back to the action of that first novel more than in the intermediate books. Rachel's sister, Michelle, may have a stalker. Even Michelle's husband isn't sure he believes her. When Michelle comes to stay with her sister in an effort to get away, the stalker addresses his attention to both sisters. In the meantime, Tom's dealing with the murder of a local woman, who went missing from her home several hours away, and now a month later, her remains are found locally. Could all of this be because of an earlier local murder? And things from Rachel's past, which she would prefer remain buried, seem to be surfacing. It's an intense story with engaging characters. Highly recommended. (But if you're new to this series, start at the beginning.)

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### **Renee says**

I listened to this as an audiobook & found it very enjoyable. One of my favorite narrators, Tavia Gilbert, great characters, interesting mystery. So glad I found this author & that the Mid Hudson Library System has more of her audio books! (Some strong language. No graphic scenes.)

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### **Carl Brookins says**

One of the advantages as well as one of the difficulties of writing a series character is the judicious use of background information in succeeding novels. An author knows that a new reader may come to her series after one or more unread books have established a main character or even an important minor character. In the present case, the reader is presented with a deeply troubled pair of sisters. Their previous troubles have considerable influence on the events related in "Bleeding Through," so the dilemma is, how much to reveal without possibly damaging interest in learning more about Rachel Goddard by reading earlier books in the series. In this novel, I think the author has sometimes skated a little too close to the line. That aside, this is a fine addition to the series about Rachel Goddard, veterinarian.

Rachel has moved in with her lover, Tom Bridger, acting sheriff of Mason County, Virginia. He's looking to be elected sheriff in the next election and the unmarried cohabiting couple are clearly the basis for some concerns. When the novel opens, Bridger is looking for a missing local young woman who had been involved in a project to determine whether a local man had been correctly convicted of murder. The situation is emotionally complicated because the original case was investigated by Bridger's father, a former sheriff.

Rachel's sister comes to town, fleeing what may be a stalker. The way in which these two plot lines come together is a masterful job of plot development and writing. The characters are thoughtfully fleshed out in consistent manner. As is true of all her published work, the novel is polished, smooth and tightly organized. The tension rises smoothly without artifice to a dramatic and logical conclusion. This book should bring the author new fans and will not disappoint current readers.

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### **Debbie Oxier says**

This is the first book I've read of the authors but it won't be the last. However, it was the fifth book in the series, unbeknownst to me, so now I am going back to the beginning to read the rest.

I really liked the characters. Rachel Goddard, we learn, is a veterinarian, currently involved with Sheriff's Deputy, Tom Bridger. She just recently moved in with him. While the two of them are out with a group of teenagers picking up trash along a roadside, they stumble upon the body of a young woman who's been missing for two months. She was apparently strangled near where she went to school but her body was dumped in the county in which she lived. Tests indicate she was probably placed on ice for awhile before the killer decided to dump her.

As Tom delves into the investigation of her murder, Rachel gets a disturbing call from her sister, Michelle. She wants to come and stay with Rachel for awhile. This puzzles Rachel as she and her sister aren't what you'd call close. This has to do with their past, something that happened when they were little, which I won't go into so as not to give anything away. I will say it puts a very different twist on a rather common plot and made me want to know more about the relationship between the sisters and also the events surrounding their past. There is also an additional subplot concerning Rachel and a man who shot her and is now in a mental facility, or so she believes.

Anyway, you have virtually three stories going on at once yet the author does an excellent job of putting all the pieces together without totally confusing you in the process. It certainly kept me turning the pages.

Rachel was a strong person, fairly independent, and just beginning to settle into her new relationship with Tom. This makes it difficult having her sister stay with them for awhile as they try to find out who is stalking her. Tom thinks Michelle's husband should be the one protecting her. The fact that Michelle being there could also put Rachel at risk has him concerned. Especially as he's tied up with the murder case at the moment. Even so, Rachel wants her sister safe. She realizes they have things that need to be cleared up between them but she's willing to work through their issues in order to protect Michelle.

Tom is a hard-working, down-to-earth type of guy who knows he wants to spend the rest of his life with Rachel, which means he's willing to do whatever is necessary to take care of Michelle too. There's no doubt she's being stalked but he's trying to catch a murderer as well. With as full a plate as he's got, he turns to his co-workers for help. These are characters I liked as well and thought they made a good team. Their involvement in helping solve the cases Tom was working on was invaluable and added to the appeal of the story.

While the story seems complex, I had no problem keeping up with what was going on. There were some clever twists and turns involved and by midway through the book I was suspecting everyone. Lol! Very nice job. I look forward to reading more with Rachel and Tom.

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### **Gloria Feit says**

This suspense-filled novel is built around characters you care about, especially its protagonist, Dr. Rachel Goddard, veterinarian extraordinaire. The book opens when Rachel and her significant other, Deputy Sheriff Tom Bridger, working with a group of teens cleaning up roadside trash in a rural area in southwestern Virginia, discover the body of Shelley Beecher. The girl, a 22-year-old first-year law student, had been missing for a month, having disappeared after leaving her volunteer job at an Innocence Project office in Fairfax County, in Northern Virginia, an area hours away from where her body had been dumped like so much trash into the bottom of a ravine. Tragically, the group of youngsters discovering the body included Shelley's 17-year-old sister, Megan.

There is a common theme in this tale, that of stalkers and their victims. It includes Rachel's history wherein a man who stalked and nearly killed her was ultimately caught and tried, although because of a cop's biased testimony was only sentenced to a psychiatric hospital. Now, Rachel's psychologist sister, Michelle, announces that she needs to see Rachel immediately because a stalker in her own life has her feeling threatened: her office has been broken into, and she is receiving frequent e-mails, phone calls and notes from him, and she feels unsafe in her own hometown of Bethesda, Maryland. With no physical evidence, or any idea of who is doing this to her, there is little or nothing that the local police can do. This causes Tom's investigation to necessarily take a back seat to the more immediate threat that has come into his and Rachel's lives.

The background of Rachel and Michelle, fascinating and horrifying, as well as their present relationship, is carefully revealed to the reader, as is each sister's ambivalence toward her live-in lover and husband, respectively. The pov alternates between that of Rachel and Tom, and the writing is fast-paced and well-plotted. The threats, and the tension, escalate to the point that I was torn between not wanting to find out what happens next and not being to turn the pages fast enough. The novel is terrifically entertaining, and recommended.

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