



Trail Of Blood

Lisa Black

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Seventy-five years ago, the Torso Killer terrorized a city with a horrific spree of murder/dismemberments. He was never caught.

It would be impossible for the maniac to still be at large—and active—today . . .

A decapitated body has been found in a sealed room in an abandoned building—and forensic scientist Theresa MacLean believes the decades-old corpse is a previously unaccounted-for victim of the legendary psychopath. But the discovery of a second body—newly slain and bearing the unmistakable signature of the Torso Killer—suggests the unthinkable: that a copycat serial killer is following in a madman's bloody footprints.

A long-dormant nightmare has been reawakened as a dark history repeats itself. Theresa MacLean's forensic investigation has opened a door into a terrifying past—a door someone desperately wants to keep closed . . . and will keep killing to make it so.

Trail Of Blood Details

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Author : Lisa Black

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From Reader Review Trail Of Blood for online ebook

Magpie67 says

A story in the present with a body discovery that takes everyone back to 1935 in Cleveland. Depression, Trains, Hobos, mob, dirty cops and Eliot Ness. Did the detective they found 75 years later stumble onto the serial Torso killer in 1936? Did his gumshoe detective ways get himself killed? His family thought he was a deserter and thus a hard life they had to live. Is the old body giving new light to an old killer? Who has read all the details and decided to bring back the Torso killer? Theresa spends her time looking at the clues from the body, studying the notes in an old journal found with the detective. Theresa works in the morgue and has her own posse to help her understand what each body is telling her and if they are connected. Her cousin, Frank, is a detective doing the gumshoe walk about. I do get a certain thrill when Lisa Black makes fun of CSI because the results come into quick and I love the procedural of how the clues actually fit and are used by the detectives. Lisa knows her stuff and thus her characters are fleshed out with a detailed realism. Throwing in an obnoxious reporter was riveting too. The team sought redemption for the dead detective and his family. I love history mixed with fictional characters. I loved the train angle, the story of how desperate men used the rail line to find work and move about. The era was the depression, the mob, the dirty cops of Cleveland and how Eliot Ness was sent to clean it up. So imagine my surprise to find that the Torso killer really existed back then and that not of his victims were identified because they were transient. Well done Lisa Black... I love your series but kudos to the third book for its excellence.

Donna says

Okay, no excuses. I love this series, but it took me almost four months to finish this book. Not sure exactly why. My only answer was that it was slow going and didn't really pick up till the middle end of the book. I love the character of Theresa and I love the fact that she gets to solve a 50+ year old murder, as well as new ones. But all the technical mumbo jumbo, just weighs it down. To me it wasn't as good as the first two books. But it wasn't bad. Might have to wait a few more months before I read the next one.

Kathy says

Basically not a bad story, but it's very frustrating when an extremely smart person, the protagonist, goes out on their own and does really stupid things and ends up in jeopardy. I've seen it in way too many books and it's kind of frustrating.

Melissa says

I was excited to find this book on my doorstep. I love mysteries and am generally fascinated with forensic science. However, this book never grabbed my attention. I am the type of reader that loves a book that coaxes me to stay up all night just until "the next chapter". Unfortunately, with this novel I would read a few pages and put it down until I happen to run across it again while cleaning up the house, with no sense of urgency to get back to the story.

The idea for the dual plots across time was intriguing, based on string of bizarre real-life unsolved murders in Cleveland, however the execution was lacking. I believe the reason why this story fell flat for me was the people. The main character was slightly annoying, complaining about feeling middle-aged though there are frequent comments on her good looks. There are some great technical paragraphs showcasing her knowledge of forensics, however her intelligence becomes questionable as she continues to make ridiculous choices to run after serial killers in the dark, alone and unarmed. The only person I was moderately invested in was the good cop from the 1930s who was murdered. These flashbacks saved the book enough for me to forge my way through the pages just to confirm that my suspect (somewhat obviously) was indeed the killer.

That said, I loaned this book to my mother-in-law after I was finished and she enjoyed reading it. To each their own.

Cheryl says

I liked this book. The mystery surrounding the killings was nice. the way that Theresa's mind works and the way she looks at a case is impressive. She is not easily shaken up by anything. This I liked. She made for a strong female lead. Yet despite the strong presence of Theresa and the gruesome killings of the Torso Killer, which were not really that gory, I found the story just alright. I was only after I had gotten almost all the way done and had a third of the story left that I was like what just happened? The killer had been identified but I could not remember the clues pointing to him and then the ending did not finish strongly. The whole time the story again was fine but then when it came to the ending it seemed to just be rushed and over quickly.

Johnna says

This was my first intro to the Theresa MacLean series. I couldn't put it down and WILL be getting the rest of this series to read.

Kristin says

'Trail of Blood' sees forensic investigator Theresa McLean trying to solve murders that occurred decades apart. After discovering the skeleton of a police officer in an abandoned building about to be torn down, the Cleveland PD is tasked with investigating a bunch of recent deaths that mirror an unsolved series of deaths that occurred while James Martin, the skeleton from the building, was on the force, back in the 1930s. I found the parallel plots to be a bit unrealistic, that these murders happen immediately after the skeleton, which has likely been in the building for 50+ years, is found, and that the killer decides to pick a series of deaths from that same time period.

I so enjoyed Black's book 'Takeover' that I keep reading others in the series, but so far the others haven't quite measured up, nor does McLean rise to the role of similar characters like Kathy Reichs' Temperance Brennan or Patricia Cornwell's Kay Scarpetta as a cutting-edge woman at the forefront of her career. Thus, the book was OK, but not one I'll likely go back for a second read, and I'll continue to look for the later books in the series at used book sales, thrift shops, and eBook deals to give them a chance to remind me of

what I found so compelling in 'Takeover'

Lauren Barth says

Just your average serial killer murder mystery. This wasn't the worst book I've ever read, but it certainly didn't fully grab my attention. It was entirely too drawn out and extremely predictable. The characters were just ordinary and the novel's progression wasn't anything over the top. This is another book that is actually part of a series (book #3), but I didn't know that until today. I may or may not read the other books in the series. I love murder mysteries, but there just wasn't much mystery for me. I do like that it is loosely based on true events.

Karen says

Police procedural with a lot of forensic detail, which is to be expected as this is the author's expertise. Overall a good story but a bit of a slow read due to all the detailed forensic explanations.

Robert Beveridge says

Lisa Black, **Trail of Blood** (Morrow, 2010)

Full disclosure: this book was provided me free of charge by Amazon Vine.

The whole time I was reading *Trail of Blood*, aside from being annoyed with myself that I hadn't done my research and didn't realize I was dropping into a series with book three, I kept pointing out things to myself and saying "you really shouldn't like this book. Look at what Lisa Black is doing here!". And there wasn't a point where I was ever actually able to refute any of those things I was pointing out to myself. But as a seventeen-year resident of the Mistake on the Lake, I found the subject matter intrinsically interesting (a modern serial killer beings recreating the Torso murders from the thirties), and Ms. Black has enough of a way with words that I powered through a four-hundred-page novel in a weekend (and it was a weekend with lots of family plans, so I didn't ave much time to read). Which makes the short answer "if you're in the mood for a solid, if predictable, turn-your-brain-off mystery, this is the book for you!". Which is absolutely true; if you pick this up and you're a fan of a solid genre mystery, you won't regret popping the cover price.

Plot: Black turns in her third Theresa MacLean novel, in which the forensic investigator is called to what may well be the scene of an undiscovered Torso victim, a seventy-five-year-old corpse walled up in a building in Kingsbury Run slated for demolition. Not long after that, a young woman's body washes up at Burke Lakefront Airport, in almost the exact spot where the first victim conclusively linked to the Torso killer had washed up over three-quarters of a century before—and in almost the exact same condition. MacLean, along with her cousin Frank (a homicide detective), a pushy-but-charming journalist, and the vice president of the local railroad preservation society, find themselves both trying to solve the original Torso killings and stop the modern madman before he can finish his recreation.

(As a side note: every Torso killer book I read makes me wonder: why is it that an obscure computer game is the only place I've ever found speculation that the Torso killer was responsible for the death of Elizabeth

Short? Inquiring minds wanna know.)

The first thing that my head pointed out to me as I was reading this is how far overboard Black goes in the Cleveland references. I get that place references are a good thing, when they're done inline, and not overused; Jim Butcher gives the Dresden Files books, for example, a very good grounding in Chicago geography without going out of his way. To the other extreme you have Brian Keene, whose *Ghoul* was so drenched in mid-eighties references (not specific place, but you know the drill) that the first half of the book was somewhat painful to read. Black doesn't go quite that far, but the operative word in that phrase is "quite". I flinched a couple of times. (Example: Black has MacLean go out of her way to mention a book on the Torso killings that was written by a local author, and it's done kind of awkwardly.)

Then there are the red herrings. It's pretty obvious both in the modern storyline and the 1930s storyline that Black is setting up different possibles for the killer, but there wasn't much of a point where the alternate theories of the crime had me wanting to pony up the cover price for either of them. Then in both cases came one clue that cemented the correct suspect way before expected, which killed a good deal of the suspense.

And yet, despite all this, I tore through it. And I'm torn enough about it to have changed the rating I originally gave it three times just while writing this review. Ultimately, I think, the charges leveled against the book, both here and in other reviews, are minor (yes, the characters are shallow, but at least I *want* to know more about them, which often isn't the case) when compared to the simple readability of the thing. Recommended, but be aware that opinions vary widely on this one. ***

Judy says

Engaging mystery with balance between 75 year old serial killings and present murders in Cleveland Ohio area. Good character depth.

Mary says

I'm still reading this book but it seems like I've been reading it forever. It's such a slow read, I don't know if I'm going to finish it. It's a good story but unlike the other reviews, I feel there's something wrong here but I can't put my finger on it. Perhaps it's because it doesn't flow for me. I like the story but I'm just not engaged.

Brucie says

Remarkably good story with parallel plots as a present-day serial killer copies the path of a decades-ago murderer, while the series heroine investigates the trail much as a righteous cop did in the previous series of murders.

Lindig says

I like forensic scientists, I do. But in all the books when they venture out of their labs, they all seem to be idiots. They rush off after mad killers; they wander rough areas in the dead of night; they don't tell people where they're going; they conduct their own investigations and the police are forgiving. Right.

Same with Lisa Black's heroine, Theresa. Now, Black really is a forensic scientist and CSI (unlike some writers, such as Cornwell), but her heroine is an idiot (like Kathy Reichs' character).

Annoying.

***Avonna says**

Love this series more and more. All Clevelanders who love mystery/true crime have read about or taken the tour for the Cleveland Torso Murders. This third installment of this series combines present and past with an entertaining solution. Really worth following!
