



In the Barren Ground

Loreth Anne White

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In the Barrens, a vast wilderness in northern Canada bordering the Arctic Circle, night consumes every hour of the winter. Humans are scarce; ferocious predators roam freely. Locals say spirits do, too.

Rookie cop Tana Larsson doesn't mind the dark and quiet. Five months pregnant and hoping to escape the mistakes of her past, she takes a post in Twin Rivers, population 320. Maybe here she can find peace and community for her child.

But with her superior out of commission, Tana becomes the sole police officer in 17,500 square miles. One bitter night, she gets a call about the fatal wolf mauling of two students, and the only way to reach the remote scene is to enlist the help of the arrogant, irritatingly handsome Cameron "Crash" O'Halloran, a local bush pilot with a shady reputation for smuggling and a past cloaked in shadow.

When the macabre scene they uncover suggests violence much more sinister than animal, Tana must trust Crash if she wants to protect the town—and herself—from the evil that lurks in the frozen dark.

IN THE BARREN GROUND, a dark, atmospheric romance and police procedural with gothic/horror overtones set in a remote fly-in community just south of the arctic circle ...

In the Barren Ground Details

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Author : Loreth Anne White

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From Reader Review In the Barren Ground for online ebook

Ian says

After her lover committed suicide, Tana fell into a deep dark depression during which she found comfort in the beds of strangers. Now after a hook-up with a married superior she is pregnant and unwilling to get an abortion. Her last chance for redemption is a remote town in the Barrens close to the Arctic Circle. As the only police presence in a town that's often cut off from the outside world she is isolated and untrusted.

When two biologists are killed, everyone is convinced it's a tragic animal attack, everyone except her. She immediately notices that things aren't quite right and begins an investigation and as she investigates she uncovers more deaths that have been attributed to animal attacks. Meanwhile a serial killer has decided that Tana needs to be dealt with before she gets too close to the truth.

Writing good romantic suspense is not easy. Even the best writers of the genre often themselves dipping into clichés and caricatures. But thankfully, not so here. The story isn't particularly original, but it's written with a deft hand, the characters are interesting and the location pushes in on all sides with an almost oppressive atmosphere making what could easily be average into something great.

It feels a lot like the best from Linda Howard and Karen Rose but dare I say it, this feels a little better.

Selene says

3.75 stars

I was in love with *everything* about this story up until the villain was revealed, then the story sort of deflated in that area for me. Although I struggled with buying into that part of the story, I loved everything else: the strong atmospheric feel of the setting, the slowly developing friendship between the main characters, the writing style, and how the loose ends were tied up in the final chapter. This author has a way of creating heroines that I *strongly* favor!

This story was the perfect representation of romantic suspense done very well! The steam was light, the build-up slow, and the well-executed characterization kept me thoroughly satisfied! I loved these characters for their flaws, maturity, and realism. *I even loved the dogs!*

Cindy ~ SnS Reviews says

The complexity of which this author writes always astounds me. When you start the book its like a jumbled up jig saw puzzle. It doesnt make a lot of sense. Her characters are this way too. In the beginning when being introduced to a wealth of characters you tend to form an opinion on them as the heroine does. As the story goes along and puzzle pieces snap into place you see your first impressions were wrong. This was the case with the hero. It was also the case with the first deaths Rookie cop Tana Larsson had to investigate. Tana's first call is what looks like an animal mauling of two students who were up in the snowy mountains of The Barrens. From that point until the conclusion of the book – you were shocked at the things Tana uncovers and what is truly going on.

The story here is stuff of nightmares. The dark tales told by the Aboriginal Canadians come to life. This was a fascinating read that stayed in my head even in sleep giving me weird dreams. I don't dream often but something about this story got into my subconscious and wrecked havoc.

Melissa says

It was my love for *In the Waning Light* that convinced me I had to read more from Loreth Anne White. Let me tell you, she is one heck of a storyteller. She really took her time piecing together an intricate plot with this one. A dark and atmospheric mystery, set in a frigid and often frightening location; I had chills the entire time.

Tana is a 24-year-old rookie cop in the small and very remote town of Twin Rivers in Northern Canada. Let me make this clear - she is the only cop. **Can you imagine how creepy that would be?** Not to mention, her two predecessors went mad from the sheer isolation and the perpetual darkness. If I was her, I would have been on the first plane out of there.

But she's tough, resilient and pretty darn determined to get a fresh start. When the bodies of two researchers turn up ripped apart, I'm talking blood, guts, empty eye sockets and decapitation; it's up to Tana to figure out if it was just an animal attack or if there's something more sinister going on. Could there really be someone out there depraved enough to stalk and hunt humans?

“In the Barrens of the soul, monsters take toll, they come with hunger and ice in their heart.”

There's a mile-long list of suspects, creepy local lore, little to no communication with the outside world, diminishing daylight, blizzard conditions and civilians unwilling to give up any information. Well, no one she can trust. The only person offering up any kind of help is Crash, a known criminal with a shady past. There's something about Tana that gets his guilty conscience working double time. I want to blurt out so many things right now, but I won't. Lips sealed. Let's just say, there were quite a few surprises along the way.

“You better stick around, you hear? I . . . I still need a pilot.”

While this story was an **extremely slow build** and a little light on the romance, in the end, **I thought it was worth the read.** I found the big reveal to be pretty surprising and I liked the way it all unfolded. It was definitely the ending I adored the most though.

ARC provided by Montlake Romance and NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

♥Rachel♥ says

3.5 Stars

Tana Larsson is a young Royal Mountie policewoman, the lone law enforcement officer in the small town of Twin Rivers, way up in northern Canada. Five months pregnant and looking to heal from past errors, she doesn't mind the isolated post, but her situation becomes very complicated when two research students are brutally killed by what appears to be animals. As details come to light, Tana questions whether it was just an animal attack. Delving into this mystery is a dangerous business, especially when it seems she has no one in

her corner. Should Tana trust the local pilot, Crash O'Halloran, with his shady business dealings for help or risk plowing in alone?

This is the third mystery I've read by Loreth Anne White, and while **In the Waning Light** is still my favorite, **In the Barren Ground** creeped me out, and had me guessing until the end. I was definitely surprised and didn't see how it all came together until pretty late in the story. I love it when I don't have everything figured out!

While I liked the story, the romance was a bit disappointing. Tana was so suspicious of Crash until almost the end, so I didn't feel a real bond between them, mostly because of Tana, for a lot of the story. I can see how she would have reservations about his character, but the situation was frustrating for me.

In the Barren Ground was eerie with the cold, dark, wintry setting of northern Canada giving it a sinister edge that felt similar (to me) to the movie 30 Days of Night. That was a paranormal horror flick, and while **In the Barren Ground** wasn't paranormal, portions of this story had that feel to me. Definitely appealing to horror fans like me.

A copy was kindly provided by Montlake Romance via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Anita says

ARC provided by the Publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Having read several of Loreth Anne White's books I have come to expect something different than the normal romantic-suspense genre and *In the Barren Ground* does not disappoint. The characters are fully developed and not your standard H/h variety either. The setting, Twin Rivers, the Barrens, two degrees south of the Arctic acts as another character in this dark, twisted tale.

Rookie Constable Tana Larsson has been posted to the outback of beyond in the far north of the Canadian north. She is on her own in this settlement of 320. She is the only law for miles around and now she has what, at first, appears as a deadly wild animal mauling of two biology students. Everyone wants to classify the attack as such, but Tana, although a rookie, is meticulous about the details and has decided to dig deeper, uncovering odd similarities to previous cases.

Cameron "Crash" O'Halloran, a local bush pilot with a shady reputation and connections to the previous attacks. He also feels protective of Tana and can't walk away when strange things start happening to her. Everyone has their reasons for living in such an unforgiving place, some people are hiding from their past, some just want to start over. For Crash and Tana, the past will need to be dealt with before they can even think about a future.

Stephen Clynes says

Rookie cop Tana Larsson is the only RCMP officer manning Twin Rivers, which has a population of 320. Her patch is in the Northwest Territories and covers some 17,500 square miles, a huge area for a single police officer to service. A call comes in reporting the fatal wolf mauling of two students in a remote area of this barren wilderness.

In the Barren Ground is a great mixture of a story. There is suspense, mystery, gothic elements, romance and a regular tale of police procedures that you get in most crime thrillers. The writing is first class with a huge vocabulary and great attention to detail. Loreth's descriptions of her scenes and the surrounding environment is top rate. You really feel you are on an outdoor adventure holiday.

In the Barren Ground is a creepy tale with lots of suspense. From very early on you wonder about the fatal wolf maulings and every character you meet raises your suspicions. Character development is spot on and each character has a good and a dodgy side to them.

There is lots of mystery in this novel as the chapters chart the history of this remote region. The culture of living in the bush is fully explored and I loved the details of hunting and surviving in this wilderness.

There are some gothic elements woven into this story. I do not read books in the gothic genre, so these elements came as a surprise to me. But these gothic elements added so much more to the story. They fitted in really well and added to the mystery a great deal. Then to add a character who happened to be an author of a gothic novel, was just icing on the cake.

As with Loreth's other novels, romance takes a part in the story. It should appeal to both genders and adds so much to the fullness of this novel. Again like her other novels, the love is not just shown between humans but between dogs and their owners too.

The police procedure and job frustration parts are great. How can you preserve a crime scene when you are the only police officer around AND there is falling snow to contend with? Throw in the problem of wild animals eating the evidence and it is a huge challenge for Tana to deal with on her own.

Each character has the ability to be a criminal and you can point your finger at every one of them. The plot of this novel is very good indeed. There is no need to second guess if there is a bad guy or if the fatal wolf maulings were simply an accident, just enjoy this novel for what it is. I found this book a pleasure to read, it gave me plenty to think about. I really engaged with this story and felt I was there. Loreth makes great mention of her characters wearing Baffin boots. She wrote about them as commonplace. I love wandering about and I live in the UK but have never come across these Baffin boots. So involved I became in this novel, I felt I had to check these boots out online. Oh yes, they are the genuine item, roughy, toughy, snow hiking boots!

I found In the Barren Ground to be an outstanding read. It coupled regular reading enjoyment with a sense of adventure and a cultural learning experience. No risk of frostbite as I sat back in my favourite armchair with this top scoring 5 star read.

Review to follow as I am having trouble doing copy/paste to Goodreads. However my review posted on my blog okay...

<http://standinginthelighttill.blogspot...>

RachelW (BamaGal) says

Tana Larsson comes to be the new cop in a tiny Canadian town near the arctic circle. She almost immediately has to investigate the mauling deaths of a couple of student researchers. As she investigates, Tana comes to the conclusion that there is more to the deaths than being attacked by a bear or wolves. And

then she discovers there are several deaths from earlier years that are suspiciously similar.

There are legends passed down by the native locals of an ancient creature who eviscerates and eats the organs of his victims. This lore has been incorporated into a grisly novel by a hunter from a nearby hunting lodge. The deaths are all identical to the descriptions in the legend. The story builds creepily and is quite gory in places. The investigation goes on, and questions create more questions. The mystical aspect is a large part of the story, which kept me glued to the pages. Strange things are happening, both to Tana and around her. There is a lot of local color and Canadian winter hardships. It's all good...great and absorbing reading...

Then at about the 80% mark, the story became a standard crime melodrama. All of the wonderful clues and mystical happenings turned out to be giant red herrings that meant absolutely nothing in the end. They were there only to distract the reader. So very disappointing. Where I couldn't tear my eyes from the pages earlier in the book I was skimming and rolling my eyes disbelief that the plotline had been reduced to such a dismal and almost routine level. It read like the author didn't know what to do next, so she fell back on cliché and overused tropes.

Overall, the story was very good. The last part was passable, if a major letdown. It was like thinking you were going to get prime rib, anticipating it and drooling over it while you're waiting...only to get a hamburger in the end. Good enough eating, but not at all what you were expecting.

CD {Boulder Blvd} says

Wow, I really enjoyed this one!

I received this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review and it's one of the best books I've read this month. I was pulled into the lives of the characters and the suspense plot of who or what had killed these young women (plus 1 man) and left their bodies to mother nature's scavengers.

Tana has had a rough life when she finds herself as the only RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) in a northern region of Canada. She doesn't believe in herself and she doesn't trust others enough to ask for help. But with a child on the way and evil lurking in the frozen darkness, she must learn to trust her instincts and the community she has been assigned to.

I really liked Tana's character. She's brave without being foolish and recognizes her strengths and weaknesses. Her development from trying to "go it alone" to recognizing she must rely on others was really well done and believable.

Tana finds herself being dependent for help from a man that she doesn't trust. Crash is a little harder to accept, but underneath the crusty outside of a man who wants revenge and is skirting the outside of the law is a person who's willing to fight for the underdog and what's right.

You have two damaged people who really don't believe they have a second chance but who need each other to solve what really happened about how these victims died. Now if you are looking for romance and sex, this may not be your book. The relationship is important to the plot, but not the center of the plot. The relationship is one of learning to trust each other and really learning who the person is and what made them who they are. I enjoyed this a lot more than insta-lust and sex.

But what really pulled me into this book was Ms. White's story telling ability. Blended with the plot is the

folklore of the indigenous people. Folklore that is supposed to be spoke and listened to and not written down and read. There are places you shouldn't go. There are monsters in the barren ground. The way this story is told you believe the folklore as much as you look for clues as to who the monster is. I don't want to say too much about the plot as I loved how it was developed and how the story unfolded.

This was the first book that I have read from this author and I would definitely read more of her writing. I'm intending to read In the Waning Light next.

Ginger says

This is the first book that I've read of Loreth Anne White. I did not know what to expect from her writing or whether In the Barren Ground would be more thriller than romance. I personally would not put this book in the romantic suspense section. It was ALL thriller and horror, and a teeny tiny bit of romance. If you are queasy about gore, you might want to stay away. The crime scenes were descriptive and unsettling.

The setting of the book was fantastic! It was wild, isolated and utterly frightening. I was completely engrossed in this book. Wow, she blew me away with the setting, the characters and how well-crafted the plot was. The last ten chapters of the book was a binge read and I did not guess who the serial killer was until the end. When I look back at the rest of the book, I feel the plot was air tight with who the killer was, I just didn't suspect it!!

Tana, the main character is a new RCMP officer that's stationed up in one of the most desolate places in the world, northern Canada next to the Arctic Circle. I enjoyed this character because she was flawed from past mistakes, brave and had integrity for her profession. She wanted to do what was right, was intelligent about her limitations and knew she needed to be a part of the community to make a difference.

Crash was also a great character. It takes a while to get into his story and when you finally get to his past, it all comes together. He has a scarred background and I enjoy how his character battles on doing the right thing. He really wants to help Tana with the murders but was struggling on getting involved.

I was surprised on how much I really liked this book! The ending was fantastic and I was on the edge of my seat. I'm glad to find this author and I will be reading more of her books in the future!

Rachel the Book Harlot says

4.5 stars

◆ Anna's ??????g\$ ◆ says

4.25 STARS

Wow.

Not for the faint-hearted. Dark, gruesome, brutal, disturbing. Very intense and atmospheric. It sucks you in and transports you to another weird Twin Peaks-Fargo-like back of beyond world.

Fantastic writing. Excellent characterization. Strong, relatable characters. Unique, gripping story line.

Romance is almost non-existent but the crumbs I was thrown here and there were absolutely enough for me.

Loreth Anne White has officially become my favorite author.

Laura (Kyahgirl) says

4/5; 4 stars; A-

I really enjoyed this unusual thriller. At first I considered abandoning it because the main character, Constable Larson, was very hard to like. She was judgemental, intolerant, and downright prickly. However, as the story progressed it became clear that she was also courageous, smart, and compassionate. She had a pretty big pile of baggage that she was carting around.

One of the things that makes this story unusual is the setting, the far north. Also, the author uses an interesting blend of multiple cultural details and native lore to add flavour to the story.

I thought the depiction of life in an isolated community was pretty accurate, as was the odd collection of personalities and social rules.

The only thing that bugged me in this book was a very minor quibble, the repeated use of the word 'fortnight'. It know it seems petty but its really jarring. I have never met a Canadian or an American who uses that word in their everyday speech yet Crash used it two or three times within a couple of days.

Mei says

I received an eARC, from NetGalley and the publisher, in exchange for an honest review.

Thank God I've read this book in July!!!! I was feeling freezing all the same!!! You must know that I **hate** cold, so I kept asking myself why people would live there all the time!!!!

Anyhow, the descriptions of the frozen ambient here were fantastic! You could feel the fog rising, the snow falling, the wind blowing, the temperature dropping... Brrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr

The story is a mix of horror and crime-mystery.

Our heroine, Tana is a rookie cop left alone to manage a huge territory by herself. She's pregnant (view spoiler), she made a lot of mistakes both in her youth and after the death of her fiancé (view spoiler)... She's also a mix: her mother was native and her father Scandinavian. Her mother was abusive and promiscuous,

while her father abandoned them when she was young. So Tana has a lot of issues, but she's firmly convinced to change her life and make something of herself, starting with doing good with a terrible job.

Our hero, Crash, is one of the *persons of interest* in her first investigation: two young scientists has been found dead – ravaged by wild animals. Or not...???

Crash is shady... you don't know at the beginning of the book if he's a good guy or not. But step by step his character is revealed and you got to understand why he's acting that way.

His life was not easy too. He lost a lot – he lost himself and his self-esteem, his family, he was shot, he was in a coma, he was betrayed... Now he's working on revenge – outside the law, (view spoiler) dealing drugs and booze with local lowlife... I know that seems bad, and it was, but you have to read the book to understand his motivations...

Both are very complex and very flawed persons, but I couldn't not cheer for them: they suffered really very much!

And don't think this is a hot romance! No, no, no... there's just a glimpse of growing feelings between them.

There's so many things happening, so many twist and turns that you'll have your head spinning!

An Aboriginal Canadians lore with dark tale about monster ravaging people is woven into the gruesome crimes which Tana investigates. And it gave me creeps...

I didn't get who was the killer until almost to the end, but let me tell you it was unexpected and really crazy!!!

...things a damaged mind can conjure is really, really weird... and sad... and sick...

It is book well worth reading, because it is well written and keeps you on your toes! And it is not for the weak of heart!

Eva • All Books Considered says

I LOVED THIS! RTC

ETA: Review originally posted at **All Books Considered: 4 STARS**

This is the first book I've read from this author but it won't be the last because I completely loved this! It was super spooky and there were twists and turns that kept me invested and not wanting to put this down. The character development was excellent. Now to talk about probably the most unique part of this book and my favorite thing: the setting and amazing descriptions of being in such a setting. While I have not been to the Arctic Circle, I now feel like I have based on the amazing description -- all of my senses were engaged and I could feel the darkness, the cold, the life and the struggle in this tough and remote part of the world. Tana was easy to imagine in this setting and I could not admire her and love her more as a character -- you want only good things for her and Crash is definitely a good thing. One last thing -- the romance is definitely a very slow burn and much of the book is spent more on tracking the crime than the romance, necessarily. This implicitly worked for me because it felt real and worked for the story; however, I did want to tell you in case you were expecting a straightforward romantic suspense with an equal combination of romance and

suspense.

This book is truly a dark, atmospheric romance and police procedural with a bit of a Gothic and/or horror feel; it was totally unique and it's hard to think of anything that is like it! In the Barren Ground comes out today, August 16, 2016, and I definitely recommend this one to fans of dark romantic suspense!

"Tana!" he yelled as he saw her disappearing around the side of his house. He broke into a run, caught her by the arm.

She swung around, eyes sparking. Her mouth was close. She was breathing heavily, their breaths clouding together. Snow settled like confetti on her fur hat. He wanted to kiss her. By God, he just wanted to kiss that full mouth, bury himself in her freshness and youth, cover himself in it. His eyes burned, heat seared his chest. And suddenly he ached--to star again, a second change, just to try. But he didn't dare. He could not do that to her. She was young, idealistic. He was far too jaded, carried too much dangerous baggage. She was going to be a mother, and there was no way in hell he could realistically be there for her, or a kid, so why in hell was his head even going there?
