



Rough Trade

Sidney Bell

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Quick-witted hustler Ghost is no stranger to living dangerously; survival has always been the name of the game.

He's just always gone it alone.

Now he's got the wrong people breathing down his neck, and the only way out demands placing his trust in the unlikelyst of heroes: Duncan Rook, a gruff cop whose ethics are as solid as his body.

Cozying up to a criminal is hardly what Duncan's reputation on the force needs—especially when that criminal is temptation personified. Ghost is Duncan's polar opposite, and the last person he expected to fall for.

So then why does every imaginable scenario for taking down their common enemy end with Ghost in his arms?

Rough Trade Details

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Author : Sidney Bell

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From Reader Review Rough Trade for online ebook

Cadiva says

I honestly didn't think this book would be able to comprehensively pull together all the suspense elements of the first two into a believable and cohesive ending.

But it really does, and not only that, it also brings a unique love story which never once follows the traditional path and yet still manages to be truly romantic and full of emotional growth.

It also manages to make me have feelings for two of the bad guys - or bad women in this instance, who were both as trapped in a situation out of their control as Ghost and Duncan were.

I wasn't expecting things to go down like they did but there was some clever narrative play which ultimately drew out the most effective and truthful ending for all parties involved.

The romance itself is a quiet, unobtrusive one, it's not hot and sexy, it's built up of small things, of trust, of movie marathons and a desire to want someone else's happiness to come first.

There couldn't, imho, have been any other way for things to go given Ghost's lifetime of experience with sex as a weapon and as an abuse, even four years later in the epilogue I think it was still fitting that the reader's gaze remained external and not in the bed with them.

Truly a wonderful example in this genre and a fitting conclusion to the series as a whole.

#ARC kindly received from the author via NetGalley in return for an honest and unbiased review.

Ele says

Ok I was really worried there for a minute. I have been waiting for Ghost's story for ever! I loved the beginning but as I kept reading, I found myself less and less invested. The horror! This can't be, The Woodbury Boys is one of my favorite series ever. Thankfully, it all worked out in the end.

Ghost and Duncan are incredible characters. Very well sketched, very unique and very interesting. The dialogue and the banter were out of this world. I've highlighted tons of quotes that made me laugh out loud. Ghost pretending to not take anything seriously and his wittiness contradicted Duncan's calmness and his patience in the most funny way.

"Could you draw me a map?"

*"Of course." Ghost accepted a pen and a napkin and sketched something, taking long enough that Duncan began to hope they might really have something. Then he held it out, revealing a map in the vague shape of the US, labeled with a star in the middle that said **BUM-FUCK EGYPT. YOU ARE HERE. SUCKS TO BE YOU.** He'd also drawn a hairy dick in the corner with a slit in the shape of a smile. It looked alien and disgusting. Duncan glared at him.*

“Really?”

“Yes.”

So what didn't work? Sydney Bell's books always have a mystery/suspense/action storyline. But for the first time ever I felt that the romance took a backseat and for a while it was all about Spratt and Mama and escaping the cops and the mafia. I loved the characters separately but together...meh. That's not to say that there was no connection between them, because there was. There was cuddling and sleeping together and watching movies and just...learning to really **trust**.

And then 80% happened. BOOM!

There is groveling and then there is...**GROVELLING**. Ghost grovels like no other! Loved, loved, loved it. There was some action too, but it was mostly feelings, romance and...groveling. Duncan stops being so patient and calm, and Ghost stops being so uncaring. So good! So incredibly good.

"You know that I felt like a fucking God every time you felt safe enough to let me touch you? You know that you never once made me feel like I was paranoid or bitter or too angry or too moody or like my view of the world was dark or twisted? I never once felt like I had to justify my edges with you, Ghost, because you have every bit as many."

There is a very small amount of steam in this story (view spoiler). This was very understandable considering Ghost's history of abuse. He has never even felt attracted to another person before Duncan. Do I think there could be more steam? Yes, and not just because I'm a perv. This was a major milestone for Ghost and Duncan and they reached it. Some more steam would have benefited the story in my opinion. Bell is a very competent writer and she could definitely pull it off.

All storylines get their closure and there is even an epilogue four years down the road. For some reason, though, the ending still felt a little bit abrupt. But only a little.

Bottom line, I expected to like Ghost's story more. Maybe I was building up anticipation? In any case, I'm happy to report that I ended up liking it. Recommended for all fans of the series.

Hollis says

"Hey, what's your sign? I want to read your horoscope."

"You're pissing me off."

"Scorpio, huh?"

Of course I jumped right into this after HARD LINE. Sure, sometimes I put things off but once I'm in it.. I'm in it to win. I also have no chill.

"Are you flirting with me by not murdering people?"

"Do you like it?"

"Jesus. No. No, I don't. That's not.. this is so fucked up. Conversations with you are like minefields."

There has been so much buildup to Ghost's story since he was first introduced in LOOSE CANNON and I'm not going to lie.. while I had absolute faith in Bell's abilities to see this through, you still have expectations as a reader, right? Big ones. But this didn't disappoint whatsoever.

"For the record, working in retail is way more demeaning than hustling ever was. People are dicks when they think you won't stab them."

What was surprising, though, was how much humour there was here. I expected Ghost's book to be gritty and dark and painful -- and it definitely had moments of that (the scene with the therapist almost had me lose it, and if not for the fact that I was heading out the door I would not have choked back those tears) -- but this was also a journey of healing, of exploration, of moving forward and I liked that Bell focused on some of the lighter moments between this very different pair of personalities, and the awkward banter, the bitching, the lack of play.. it was hilarious and wonderful and kinda awful at times but I lived for it.

*He knew the filthy words, the porn-star poses, the right pressure and pace and angles. He didn't know how to make it good for **Duncan** specifically, though. And he didn't know how to make it good for himself. He felt abruptly young and lost and a little frightened.*

Considering all the sexy of the last book, and particularly considering Ghost's tendencies, this was the least sexy of all the *Woodbury Boys* books and it was so perfect. It fit. It was just.. oh man. Slowburn, yes, but more accurately it was a slow-trust. It was Ghost finally having the opportunity to discover who he was, what he liked, and gah the feels.

"I have the flu."

"No you don't. You have feelings. It's okay to have feelings."

"It might be Ebola."

This was an easy four star right from the opening chapter and when I think about the journey I've been on with this series, and the amazing characters and the growth they had, the things they've overcome, there's nothing to do but award this all the stars. For all my nitpicking about the mafia-heavy plot at play in book one, I wonder how I would feel about it with a reread now that I've seen not only where but how those elements have played out. My guess is I would be a whole lot less bothered but who knows. Ultimately I was super happy with how it resolved, as you can see by that shiny five, and I was happy we had something of a reunion with all the Woodbury boys. Happy for them. Happy for me as a reader. And pleased as punch for Bell, too.

So looking forward to whatever this author does next (and she's teased it and it sounds amazing and I want it) and will no doubt happily reread this series, and BAD JUDGMENT, many many times. Definitely recommend.

4.5 "you gonna stab me? / not right now / fair enough" stars

**** I received an ARC from NetGalley and the publisher (thank you!) in exchange for an honest review. ****

Randi ♥ LoveSawyer.com says

OMG, I loved this, sooo much! I knew Ghost was going to break my heart but I had no idea I would have so many pesky feelings.

I'm not going to share a full review until we're closer to the release date. But this is a book you don't want to miss and that's not something I say lightly.

I think I might have my first ever book hangover! Anyone know of a cure? I'm so not ready to be done with Ghost and Duncan yet. [Read More](#)

Jassy says

4.75 stars

I have been waiting for *Rough Trade* since the second I knew Ghost would get his own story. It was **the book of 2018** for me - the one I was looking forward to the most. So imagine my happy dance when I was approved for an ARC :D

I dove into the story with expectations as high as Mt. Everest and here I am not disappointed. How is this even possible, right? I think it's just Sidney Bell's writing that speaks to my heart even though I usually dislike the tropes (Bodyguards in *Bad Judgment*, BDSM in *Hard Line*, prostitution in this book... it's just crazy!).

Rough Trade is an **action filled, pretty dark and twisted novel**. There are books that are too long and there are those that are not long enough. This one is almost double the length of our standard novels but it still falls to the latter category O.o. Call me an addict... I could have read twice the amount and the pages would still have turned by themselves. The writing keeps you glued to the pages (I even hid in the bathroom when I actually had visitors just to get some more pages in).

I wondered non-stop what kind of man Ghost would need in his life since we know from previous books that he has a hard time trusting or being touched even by his long term friends. The answer is: **Duncan Rook** who is solid as a rock and a giant - oh yeah, I LOVE masculine guys. His morals are pretty impeccable and so is his honesty. I think it was his calm and his lack of games that won Ghost over (and me too in the process).

Everyone who read the first two books will probably have guessed that **Ghost** had an abusive past. Honestly, I suppose most others would have broken completely. And while he definitely took some mental damage from his past, he is also a survivor you can only admire.

The relationship between the two MCs builds very slowly which was exactly the right way in my opinion. Trust doesn't build overnight! Ghost was badly hurt in the beginning and Duncan helped to protect him from the bad guys: meaning Benjamin Spratt - a dirty cop who has a very special relationship with Ghost and Mama - a really bad crime boss most people will know from the previous books.

While they are alternately fleeing or hiding from our villains, Ghost and Duncan grow closer. There are some tender moments that had my heart beat double time <3 Is it odd to listen to 'Love is in the air' when reading such a dark book?! It melted my heart at times.

Good things come to those who wait - and that is why I could believe that Duncan and Ghost were stable in the end. Slow burn has never been more needed or expertly implemented.

So, why 4.75 and not 5 stars? The answer is simply that I missed the heat. I get why physical intimacy is

hard for Ghost and why it was good that in the beginning there was no such thing but there could have been more towards the end. I like my books a little bit dirty at least and I felt strongly that our two MCs both had the trust they needed. Still, they did never go all the way and I hope that we get something like that in the after-book content. Also, I am not necessarily a fan of radio silence or breaks in a relationship.

But that's it - those are my only two complaints, the rest is fantastic, awesome, terrific and I highly recommend it.

ARC kindly provided by the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review

Dia says

4,75 stars

Ghost's story! I was dying to read it for SO long!!! He was the most intriguing character in this series.

When I got this ARC from NetGalley I was over the moon. Before diving into this one I've read a wonderful book. The trouble is that we tend to compare the books we read. So after a pretty HOT and kind of rough book, action packed and full of crimes, this one left me wanting a little more. Don't get me wrong, I am still rounding up and giving 5 stars to this one, but I will mention why it's not a "5 huge stars" book for me.

What I absolutely adored here would be the way this story was revealed to us. The chase, the wounds, the motel, the mistrust, all the sweet moments. I was surprised many times and it's definitely a page turner!

This wasn't a light read. I am all for angst in books and I am not easily touched by the stories. Here I ached for Ghost. I think it's safe to mention there are some scenes that could make you tear up. Ghost's past just broke my heart. No wonder it was SO hard to get close to him. After all he's been through, he was still protecting himself from getting hurt. In any way he could.

The romance was painfully slow. I was just dying for more. OK, I get it, Ghost was keeping his distance (as always) and Duncan didn't want to cross the line, but... It just took them too much to explore what they felt.

There are some scenes that simply melt your heart, like them watching old movies together and Ghost being brutally honest and admitting what he feels for the first time in his life. But there were some other things that didn't really work for me. Even if I know it wouldn't have been realistic for Ghost to dive right into a relationship with Duncan, it still hurt how he chose to act, radio silence and all. And then I really didn't like how Duncan chose to ignore him.

I would have wanted many more scenes with Ghost and Duncan, more sweet and also hot ones.

We do get A LOT of action and I am happy with how things ended with Mama and Spratt, but overall the ending left me wanting a little more.

ARC kindly provided by Carina Press via NetGalley.

Optimist ?King's Wench? & MANTIES Champion says

BR with Adam!

This book kind of wrecked me and I don't know what to say that wouldn't be considered spoilery, so I'm just going to spout some gibberish about my feelings and hopefully there will be something useful amongst the gibberish.

Gibberish with copious graphics. Like I do.

Rough Trade picks up where *Hard Line* left off and we finally FINALLY get inside Ghost's head. He's on the run and the action plot line takes up quite a bit of this story. He and Duncan join forces to try to figure out how to extricate Ghost from this situation with minimal collateral damage and without breaking the law. Parts of their hiding out I did think dragged but when it picked up it was fun and kept me on the edge of my seat. However, throughout all of it Bell developed a relationship sturdy enough to withstand a Cat-5 hurricane.

Ghost, for me, has been largely enigmatic. I assumed some things about his past that contributed to shaping him and unfortunately I was right about those things. Ghost has survived his own personal hell. (**Trigger for mentions of childhood sexual abuse.**) That sort of upbringing necessitated a certain tenacity and a set of survival skills that make him somewhat unpredictable; they are second nature to him. Unlearning them is no easy feat. The complexity of Ghost cannot be overstated.

What blew me away... well, a bunch of things actually, but once Ghost starts dealing with his past, some of that dialogue is stunning and the insightfulness of it dazzled me. Ghost's honesty stole my breath a couple times. At one point I was even talking to my kindle! Like a nutbag.

It's no secret that I (along with **many** others) have been enamored with Ghost from the start but after being inside his head, it's official. I love him. I **never ever** expected him to be funny. What a surprise that was. I cackled repeatedly at his snarky and highlighted like a fiend. The banter between he and Duncan was a delight.

Honestly, I also never expected Ghost to fall for a cop who's a giant either. Were Duncan a different sort of person this thing between them would've never gotten off the ground, but Duncan is eerily intuitive when it comes to Ghost. How he just knew not to do certain things and to do others made me respect him. The way that subtly changes the longer they know each other is what made me love him, love them. He is a positive influence and a caretaker at heart but mostly importantly, he believes in Ghost which is **exactly** what Ghost needs making his size a source of comfort rather than a source of intimidation.

I read romance all the time and there are a lot of phenomenal writers out there who can convince me that

their couple are soulmates or of their compatibility or of their longevity, but I ***know beyond a shadow of a doubt*** that Ghost and Duncan will never leave. Neither of them are built that way with Duncan being steadfast to the core coupled Ghost's loyalty and trust issues makes them rock solid in my mind. Maybe all their days won't be sunshine and daisies but they won't leave. They've fought too hard for each other for that to happen. This, I know. And as a romance reader, there's not a lot that beats that feeling. However, **there is very little sex content**. It just doesn't fit their narrative and I appreciate that Bell stayed true to that.

Instead we're treated to a multitude of quiet moments that meticulously construct a manifest intimacy between them that I found poignant. Slow burns aren't always my cup of tea but the way in which this particular relationship developed made them necessary to each other and *that* for a squishy marshmallow like me is what brings me back to the genre again and again.

I freely admit that I am biased when it comes to Sidney Bell simply because I feel a sort of kindredness with her writes. She is wordy. I am wordy. She seems to be fascinated with the human psyche as am I. Sometimes that sort of thing doesn't work for people but for me it does. All the words have a purpose: character development. She crawls inside her characters and turns them inside out, showing them warts and all. Neither Ghost nor Duncan are perfect. They make mistakes with each other, they have weaknesses and blind spots but there was never an instance wherein I didn't understand *exactly* why they chose to do what they did, both the good and the bad. Those choices are what made them fully realized characters, characters that will remain in my memory for the foreseeable future.

So, if you enjoy slow burn romances between protagonists who are polar opposites that are fantastically well developed by a highly talented writer, give this series a try. All the Woodbury boys have been terrific and *Rough Trade* is not a stand-alone.

An ARC was provided by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Diana says

DNF @46%

No rating

I KNOW I am in the minority here, but I really struggled with this one. I couldn't connect with either character, and I after a while, I was just bored. I felt like they kept going over the same stuff over and over. I am sad because I loved the first two books in this series, and I was really looking forward to Ghost's story.

This one is on me, and absolutely being a moody reader. Please read other reviews because all my friends loved this one.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher/NetGalley, in exchange for an honest review.

Jessica's Totally Over The Top Book Obsession says

4 Ghost Stars

Omg Okay so I didn't read the other 2 books in this series. Now this book can be read as a standalone, but you can tell it's part of a series. I felt like I missed some "getting to know" Ghost moments by not reading the first two books. Still it didn't take me long to fall in love with Ghost. My heart broke for him and all his went through. Some of the things in this book were ugly, raw, and hard to read. Selling sex to survive as a teen, the hunger, abuse, betrayal, just everything!!! It tore my heart out. Ghost had dark issues and I love that the author didn't gloss over them. Duncan took a little longer to warm up to for me, but in the end I loved him too. Not as much as Ghost but..... Duncan and Ghost had a really slow burn relationship. Which was understandable with trust issues and past demons. Plus it really gave depth to Duncan and Ghost's love. I did however take a star off because I would have liked a little more steam between them. Just a tad! Still this book was a great and emotional read with lots of action. This was my first time reading anything by Sidney Bell but it won't be my last. I plan on going back and reading the first two books in this series too.

<https://jessicasoverthetopbookobsessi...>

Natalie says

At last, we get to learn Ghost's story! Ghost is the enigmatic, semi-feral figure appearing in books one and two, central to the story arc for this series. He likes to think he cares for no one but he remains loyal to Church and Tobias, no matter how he tries to deny it. This will stand alone to an extent but I highly recommend reading the first two books. The author does a fabulous job fleshing out a deeply troubled Ghost and the circumstances that shaped him. Duncan Rook is a cop with his own firm ethics, that don't necessarily align with the law or the expectations of the brotherhood of police. Good thing because Ghost fiercely tests his boundaries. There's a lot of action from start to finish and it breaks up long periods where the two are forced to hide out, and that's where they build their connection. There is little sex in this one, which only makes sense as Ghost's full history is revealed. There's no graphic or on-page description of his abuse but his suppressed memories provide enough for imagination to fill in the blanks.

This isn't just slow burn as it takes a good part of the book for Ghost and Duncan to even begin to understand each other. It was fascinating seeing how the author brought two people with such wildly different backgrounds together. Much of that rests on the experience and instinct given to Duncan as a cop, allowing him to tease out the puzzle that is Ghost. I adored Duncan and his steady support against Ghost's demons but Ghost is the type you want to wrap up in a hug, except he'll cut you if you do. Even when he treats Duncan rather badly, his reasons made me mad at Duncan for not forgiving him right away. This is an excellent trilogy and the individual plots and overall arc are well conceived and executed. I highly recommend this story in particular. #NetGalley #RoughTrade

An ARC was provided by the author, publisher or a promotional service and I have chosen to publish a fair and honest review

Sandra says

When I first read Loose Cannon and met Ghost in its pages, I fell in love with that character and begged for Ghost to get his own book. In the 2nd book of this trilogy, we instead got Tobias' story, and there was very little of Ghost in that book. And then finally, book 3 arrived, and it was all about Ghost.

I went in knowing that I would likely find heartbreak within, that I would be on the edge of my seat more often than not, and that finding out Ghost's true backstory would be painful.

I wasn't wrong.

But I wasn't ready for the magic of Duncan Rook. I wasn't ready for the man who would finally give Ghost a safe haven, who would see the man behind the rentboy mask, who would take the time to temper the fight or flight response that has kept Ghost alive for so long.

This book was everything I had hoped for, and then some. I'm not going to tell you the plot - you should read this so you can find out for yourself - but I will tell you that this book is perfect and exactly how it should be, and there's not a single thing I would change about it. It gets five shiny stars, because that's all I can give here, but I would give it more if I could.

What struck me most about this book is how little sex there's in it. Stay with me here, so I can explain... because you may have expected there to be a lot of hot and heavy stuff happening, seeing how this is Ghost, but I can tell you that the relationship between Duncan and Ghost isn't based on sex. Nor is there any kind of physical relationship for a long while. And that's how it had to be. There's a scene that made me cry my eyes out, because... no. You read this yourself. I was moved to tears more than once, because Duncan, while not perfect as a character (yeah, he has flaws too), was perfect for Ghost. He understood him. He watched him and his reactions so carefully, so closely, and then adjusted his actions accordingly. He **learned** who Ghost truly is, not the face he presents to most of the people in his life.

And Ghost, OMG. Ghost, despite his upbringing, despite the abuse he's suffered (oh how I cried), despite the life he's led so far, only relying on himself, knowing that he can't trust anyone... Ghost learns to trust Duncan. It's slow, so slow, but as time passes, and as Duncan passes test after test, Ghost learns to trust. And the person that emerges from behind the mile-high walls he's built around himself - gah. I can't even tell you what that did to me.

So, this book. Read it. You have to read the other two first, because this isn't a standalone, and the trilogy must be read in order. But read it, you must.

** I received a free copy of this book from its publisher via Netgalley. A positive review was not promised in return. **

Shin Mon Thway says

This is the case of this is not the book, it's me. ? Time of death is 58%. I definitely overestimated my ability to catch up the series because I haven't read the first and second book in this series. So I was just lost. ? I am genuinely interested in Ghost's story so I tried my best but after trying to read this book for more than a month, I just couldn't get into it because I haven't got a clue about what is happening. ? I definitely should have read the previous books in the series. So .. it's time to call a spade and a spade and move on to next book. ? Since I didn't finish this book, it will be an automatic 3 stars rating as for all my unfinished reads.

3 head hangs in shame stars

??????

Disclaimer: This book was provided by the publisher through Netgalley for an honest and unbiased review.

Adam says

Tag team review with Cupcake!

I'll admit that I've been very iffy on Ghost. In fact, I don't think I even liked him much before book 3.

The way Ghost treated Church and Tobias. His disappearing act. His attitude. It just didn't sit right with me.

But I am now a reformed man. I will root for Ghost - and Duncan - till the end of my days.

'Rough Trade' picks up where things left off in book 2. Ghost is stuck between Mama and Spratt, and his time is running up quickly.

As far as the crime/action plot goes, this book hits the ground running. The danger that Ghost is in is imminent from the get-go, and it never really slows down.

The twists and turns kept me very entertained. I'm a sucker for a good action plot, and 'Rough Trade' did not disappoint.

It's got all the corrupt cops, crime lords (or, in this case, ladies), shoot outs, and close calls I could ask for.

But the real star of this book isn't the crime angle, it's the slow-build relationship between Ghost and Duncan.

Ghost's predicament brings him to Duncan's doorstep. And while Duncan knows that Ghost is nothing but trouble, his unshakeable morals won't let him turn away.

The two men are complete opposites. Duncan is a by-the-book officer of the law. Ghost has spent his entire life trampling that book into the ground.

And yet these two are helpless to the web that slowly weaves them together.

But it isn't easy. Ghost has lived a life of trauma, and *fuck*, did his backstory ever hurt. His only protection has been to build a shell of deceit and manipulation around himself. Duncan sees right through it, and won't settle for anything less than the man he knows is underneath Ghost's exterior.

It was almost painful to see Ghost's struggle as he slowly fell for Duncan. But when he *finally* let himself believe that he deserved something good in life, Ghost showed up in a big way.

My only niggle: I thought Duncan could have been a tad more considerate of why Ghost was the way he was. But even so, there's never any doubt that Duncan loves and accepts all of Ghost's pointy edges.

It takes a lot of hard work, but Ghost and Duncan more than earn their happy ever after.

Overall, this was a great conclusion to the Woodsbury Boys series. If you're looking for romance, crime, and complex characters, give this series a try!

haletostilinski says

5 MASSIVE stars!

Wow.

I've been waiting for Ghost's story since the first book of this series and it didn't disappoint at all. What an amazing ride this book takes you on.

This book starts off with a few flashbacks with Ghost, including how he met what's-his-face, the dirty cop, Benjamin something - SPRATT! Right, him. But back in present day it starts off basically where the second book left off.

Ghost is on the run with the old retired cop, and he's taking Ghost to stay with Duncan Rook, a good man if not a good cop, to help protect him from Spratt and Mama.

But when things go awry, Ghost is left injured and dependent on Duncan to help protect him. Not that Ghost

can't take care of himself, but not even Ghost can take on all of Spratt's men himself.

What follows is these two on the run, and a pretty awesome slow burn.

See, Ghost has had a pretty shitty life, and he was (view spoiler) and anything to do with romance or sex is all an act for Ghost, because he doesn't actually like it or want it. But it does give him control he got taken away from him as a kid - control in that HE got to choose what he did with his body.

And Duncan, he really is a good man, and when Ghost tries to pull his hooker moves on him - all an act, but a way of control - Duncan isn't having it, especially when Ghost goes into a fugue state, basically a doll, protecting himself from what is happening. Duncan isn't a rapist, and he won't do anything with Ghost unless Ghost actually wants something too.

So in the weeks they're on the run from Spratt - and Mama too, really - they get to know each other, and there's just something about Duncan that gets to Ghost. Maybe how he's probably the first one to treat Ghost with respect and decency when it comes to sex. There's Tobias and Church, but they're his friends, and there's nothing sexual or romantic there. But Duncan is attracted to Ghost, and yet he still refuses to do anything Ghost doesn't want to do. It surprises Ghost and makes him off balance.

And maybe as well, it's just how damn truthful Duncan is. He's an honest, good man at his core and he doesn't take Ghost's bullshit - he sees it for the bullshit it is and calls him out on it - and he admits to being attracted to Ghost when most probably would have lied. It's obvious he wants Ghost, but he doesn't take advantage of Ghost's apparent willingness, because he can see it for what it is. He tells Ghost he's not a good person, when most would lie and say he is. But then he also says Ghost CAN be a good person. He doesn't say it's hopeless either, that Ghost can't make different choices.

He's also good at keeping emotion out of his voice, which makes him hard for Ghost to read, and that only frustrates him more.

But they also make each other laugh, and smile when they both so rarely do.

They watch old movies together and end up eventually cuddling, kind of, in bed. It's a thing they start to do, and it brings them both comfort, but especially Ghost.

I will say that, once Spratt and Mama are dealt with, it almost felt too easy - or well, over with quickly. But it felt authentic and real and not drawn out for drama's sake, or shortened because the author didn't know what to do. More that they were ended in the most realistic way possible, and sometimes that isn't in a long, drawn out way.

There is some smut, but not a lot. Don't expect much - and no penetrative sex - but there is still some, mostly at the end. But given Ghost's past and how he never even really wanted sex until Duncan, it makes sense that it took him time to get to a place that he'd be comfortable doing sexual things and wanting them, and being ready for them. I like to think that Ghost and Duncan got to penetrative sex eventually and it was awesome and beautiful, just like when they do get to smutty things, it's not just about the sex. It's about their feelings for each other, and how safe Duncan makes Ghost feel, and how much Ghost actually wants it when he's with Duncan.

I love where Ghost ends up by the end of this. Not only was getting his perspective awesome and amazing, but seeing where he ends up versus where he started out? Simply beautiful. Ghost actually chooses, at one

point, to start going to therapy, and it helps him SO much. I was so proud of Ghost when he decided to go, because he so desperately needed it.

Also where Ghost and Duncan start out and where they end? Just as beautiful. Let's just say they start out with Ghost threatening to stab Duncan or somewhere along those lines if he got close to him, and by the end there is love - real, raw, honest love.

This is 350 pages of awesomeness, of getting to go on a journey with Ghost, who starts out this book - this series - so broken by what life has thrown at him, and getting to a happier, healthier place by the end of it. Never "fixed" or "cured" but better. Healing.

The ending made me so freaking happy, and the epilogue was just perfect for these two. I would have liked a little more with them in the epilogue, but in a way it was perfect for Ghost, who got closure in the best way, and had Duncan at his side in the end. And really, in the end Duncan, Tobias, and Church (and maybe their boyfriends...on occasion) is all Ghost needs and wants in life. They're his family.

All I can really say without given everything away is...yeah, read this. A lot of us were waiting for Ghost's story, and it was everything and more than I could have asked for. And maybe...maybe I'm just greedy, but a little short with just tad more of Ghost and Duncan wouldn't be asking for too much, would it? No? Darn ;)

Also, P.S. at the very end we find out what I assume is Ghost's real, legal name. :O I'll always think of him as Ghost, but it's super cool to know his real name, too.

Two massive, MASSIVE thumbs up - this is the best in the series, in my opinion. And my second favorite Sidney Bell story. Such a beautiful, amazing story, I loved it to pieces. I can't sing it's praises enough.

Highly, HIGHLY recommend!

ARC generously provided by Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

Judith says

"Everyone pays for sex.It's just that we don't always pay with money(...)"

Ever since Ghost was introduced in book one I've been fascinated by him.Book two wasn't a massive hit for me so I went into this with some trepidation.After a shaky start I really liked this and it's definitely my favourite book in the series.

Who would be the man who finally tamed Ghost?

Turns out the Author created the perfect character in Duncan.Not someone I would have imagined Ghost with but this is Ghost so I really didn't know what to expect.

With the drama of Mama and Spratt unfolding around him, Ghost finds himself having to put his trust in a Cop. **Their relationship is not conventional at all.** There's no insta lust or love here. What there is, is a slow understanding of each other and their boundaries. Don't go into this expecting lots of dirty sex, which given Ghost's past might be a realistic expectation...

“Everyone pays for sex. It’s just that we don’t always pay with money. Sometimes it’s with dinner or dancing first to make your partner feel respected, sometimes it’s with drinks in a bar, sometimes it’s with date movies or going to see someone play in their awful band or listening to someone talk about their bullshit.”

Ghost might have been a whore but sex did nothing for him apart from survival. His body might have been used but mentally he switched off every time, as a result this is an extremely slow burn which I didn't mind at all. In fact anything else here wouldn't have been believable here. Ghost learns a lot about himself from Duncan and he wants to be a better man for him. There is drama, there is angst but there are also some tender moments—watching old movies together and taking care of each other had me melting a little bit.

Duncan and Ghost turned out to be pretty damn special together

Recommended.

Review copy provided by the publisher, via NetGalley.
