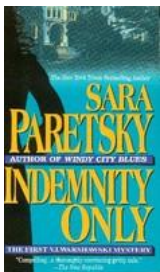


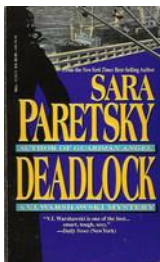
# THE V.I. WARSHAWSKI SERIES

## BY SARA PARETSKY



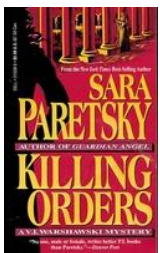
### Indemnity Only [1982]

Meeting an anonymous client late on a sizzling summer night is asking for trouble. But trouble is Chicago private eye V.I. Warshwski's specialty. Her client says he's the prominent banker, John Thayer. Turns out he's not. He says his son's girlfriend, Anita Hill, is missing. Turns out that's not her real name. V.I.'s search turns up someone soon enough -- the real John Thayer's son, and he's dead. Who's V.I.'s client? Why has she been set up and sent out on a wild-goose chase? By the time she's got it figured, things are hotter -- and deadlier -- than Chicago in July. V.I.'s in a desperate race against time. At stake: a young woman's life.



### Deadlock [1984]

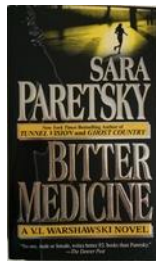
Deadlock, V. I. Warshawski's second case, involves the huge Great Lakes shipping industry. Once again the subject is murder — this time the “accidental death” of Boom-Boom Warshawski, an ex-hockey star and V. I.'s beloved cousin, who fell — or was pushed — off a rain-slicked pier on Chicago's busy waterfront. Convinced that Boom-Boom was in fact killed because of information he had uncovered about criminal doings on the shipping lines, V. I. begins a long and frustrating search for her cousin's murderer. In the course of an investigation that takes her to a remote Canadian port city and a calamitous trip on a sabotaged freighter, V. I. finds all too many possible candidates for the killer, including a grain company executive involved in extortion; and rival heads of two shippers, one of whom is being blackmailed for his criminal past; a hockey player whose specialty is graft; and Boom-Boom's lover, an icily beautiful dancer with expensive tastes in men and merchandise.



### Killing Orders [1985]

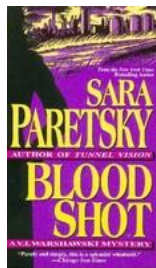
Killing Orders, V.I. Warshawski's third adventure, starts when her great-aunt Rosa summons the detective to her cold suburban home. Rosa made V.I.'s childhood miserable and the detective resents the command to help her aunt prove she didn't embezzle five million dollars from a

local Dominican priory. All hell breaks loose when a mysterious opponent tries to take Vic off the case by throwing acid in her eyes and burning down her apartment. And when a friend who's involved in the case is brutally murdered, it begins to look as if Vic hasn't got a prayer. But Warshawski continues to follow every lead, even when they point to some pretty unorthodox conclusions: Perhaps the Dominicans are covering up a financial scandal. Maybe the whole conspiracy is under the patronage of an international conglomerate, or of Don Pasquale, king of the Chicago mob. Worst of all, someone who's close to Vic could be involved — her darkly handsome English lover, Roger Ferrant, or even Aunt Rosa herself.



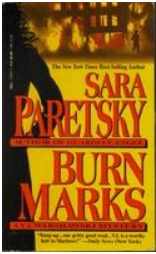
### Bitter Medicine [1987]

Chicago private eye V.I. Warshawski knows from the start that Consuelo Alvarado's baby is trouble. Consuelo is sixteen. Diabetic. And the daughter of a friend. When she goes into labor too early, even V. I.'s wild drive to get her to the hospital can't save either Consuelo or her child. Soon V.I. is investigating possible malpractice at the emergency room - and falling for a doctor who works there. Mixing business and love is always bad medicine, but V.I. finds herself listening to her heart, not her head. And when a brutal murder and the violent destruction of a woman's clinic put her at the center of a very dirty conspiracy, justice may be the only remedy for a hurt that cuts deep . . .and chills right to the bone...



### Blood Shot [1988]

V.I. Warshawski isn't crazy about going back to her old south Chicago neighborhood, but a promise is something she always keeps. Caroline, a childhood friend, has a dying mother and a problem -- after twenty-five years she wants V.I. to find the father she never knew. But when V.I. starts probing into the past, she not only finds out where all the bodies are buried -- she stumbles onto a very new corpse. Now she's stirring up a deadly mix of big business and chemical corruption that may become a toxic shock to a snooper who knows too much.



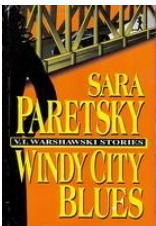
### **Burn Marks [1990]**

*"Victoria, sweetie, you look terrific!"*

With those words—and the sour yeasty smell of stale beer—Elena, V.I. Warshawski's derelict aunt, re-enters her niece's life at three in the morning. Burned out of her SRO hotel, Elena has turned to V.I. for a place to stay. V.I. vows that it will be a short visit and uses some old political contacts to find Elena a room.

When V.I. is hired to investigate the fire at the hotel, her aunt disappears, and her aunt's young friend is found dead at a construction site. V.I. is warned off the case by both a high-ranking police officer and a major Chicago developer— who also happens to be a close friend of the chairman of the Cook County Board. After three terrifying attempts on her life, V.I. doesn't know whether it's the politicians, the police, or the developers who are after her.

As this, her sixth investigation, takes her deep into the workings of both the construction business and Cook County politics, V.I. discovers a connection between the two that brings her to a confrontation where the line between friend and enemy is redrawn to frightening effect.



### **Windy City Blues [1991]**

It's strictly Friends & Family as V.I. Warshawski, "the detective mystery fans have been waiting for" (*Time*), makes return appearances in a collection of stories that bring new meaning to "ties that bind." Decker out in her silk shirts and no-nonsense Attitude, V.I. is out to make a living--by the skin of her teeth.

In "Grace Notes," V.I. has barely finished her morning coffee when she sees an ad in the paper asking for information about her own mother, long dead. The paper leads V.I. to her newfound Italian cousin Vico, who's looking for music composed by their great-grandmother. What's the score? Clearly it's something to kill for... "The Pietro Andromache" finds V.I.'s friend Dr. Lotty Herschel with motive and means to dispatch her professional rival and steal his priceless statue. Lotty didn't do it--but does she know who did? V.I. soon cuts to the art of the case--and it's not a pretty picture at all!

Summoned by an old high school friend to a race "At the Old Swimming Hole," V.I. ends up swimming with the sharks--the FBI and a ruthless gambling kingpin--in a pool of blood.... And it's only "Skin Deep" when a relaxing facial transformation transforms a client into a stiff. V.I.'s pal Sal needs help. Her beautician sister Evangeline is prime suspect--and V.I. has only

eighteen hours to crack the case before it's headline news..." Three-Dot Po" proves there's nothing like a dog. Especially a dog on the trail of her mistress's killer, with V.I. in tow...

In "Strung Out," love means nothing and V.I.'s quick to learn the score as her old friend's tennis-champion daughter is under suspicion for strangling her father with a racket string. And there's more, nine stories in all, in this masterful collection of short fiction starring V.I. Warshawski, "the most engaging woman in detective fiction since Dorothy Sayers's Harriet Vane" (*Newsweek*).



### **Guardian Angel [1992]**

When a crotchety 80-year-old starts wrangling with a yuppie couple over the state of the neighborhood, it's up to tough private eye V.I. Warshawski to come to his rescue. And the emotional stew thickens further when the old man's body turns up in a canal and Mr. Yuppie turns out to be a corrupt lawyer.



### **Tunnel Vision [1994]**

Stubbornness has landed private eye V.I. Warshawski in big trouble at her Chicago office. With her grand old Loop building set to be razed, she's become a hold-out tenant amid frayed wiring and scary, empty corridors. Then she finds a homeless woman with three kids in the basement, and before she can rescue them, they disappear. Worst of all, she's been implicated in a murder--after the body of Deirdre Messenger, a prominent lawyer's wife, turns up sprawled across her desk.

V.I., who had volunteered with Deirdre at a women's shelter, suspects her death is linked to a case of upper-class domestic abuse so slickly concealed that the police refuse to believe it. Increasingly at odds with the cops, V.I. is blindly plunging ahead after the truth. And her path may lead to corruption at the highest levels or deep into the abandoned tunnels beneath Chicago's streets, where secrets are hiding in the dark like a child's--or V.I.'s--worst nightmare.



## Hard Time [1999]

Multimedia conglomerate Global Entertainment has purchased the *Chicago Herald-Star*, forcing the paper's staff to scramble to stay employed. Reporter Murray Ryerson, V.I.'s longtime friend and sometime rival, manages to reinvent himself as the host of a television show on Global's network. On her way home from a party celebrating Murray's debut, V.I. almost runs over a woman lying in the street. Stopping to help, V.I. soon learns that her Good Samaritan act will drop her squarely in a boiling intrigue.

In a case that forces her to go head-to-head with one of the world's largest providers of private security and prison services, a case that exposes dark hidden truths behind the razzle-dazzle of the entertainment industry, V.I. will be ahead of the game if she gets out alive.



## Total Recall [2001]

Total Recall follows the Chicago P.I. on a road that winds back more than fifty years — and into an intricate maze of wartime lies, heartbreaking secrets, and harrowing retribution.

For V.I., the journey begins with a national conference in downtown Chicago, where angry protesters are calling for the recovery of Holocaust assets. Replayed on the evening news is the scene of a slight man who has stood up at the conference to tell an astonishing story of a childhood shattered by the Holocaust — a story that has devastating consequences for V.I.'s cherished friend and mentor, Lotty Herschel.

Lotty was a girl of nine when she emigrated from Austria to England, one of a group of children wrenched from their parents and saved from the Nazi terror just before the war broke out. Now stunningly — impossibly — it appears that someone from that long-lost past may have returned.

With the help of a recovered-memory therapist, Paul Radbuka has recently learned his true identity. But is he who he claims to be? Or is he a cunning impostor who has usurped someone else's history ... a history Lotty has tried to forget for over fifty years?

As a frightened V.I. watches her friend unravel, she sets out to help in the only way she can: by investigating Radbuka's past. Already working on a difficult case for a poor family cheated of their life insurance, she tries to balance Lotty's needs with her

client's, only to find that both are spiraling into a whirlpool of international crime that stretches from Switzerland and Germany to Chicago's South Side.

As the atrocities of the past reach out to engulf the living, V.I. struggles to decide whose memories of a terrible war she can trust, and moves closer to a chilling realization of the truth — a truth that almost destroys her oldest friend.



## Blacklist [2003]

This is a story of secrets and betrayals that stretch across four generations—secrets political, social, sexual, financial: all of them with the power to kill. Eager for something physical to do in the spirit-exhausting wake of 9/11, V.I. accepts a request from an old client to check up on an empty family mansion; sub-sequently surprises an intruder in the dark; and, giving chase, topples into a pond. Grasping for something to hold on to, her fingers close around a lifeless human hand.

It is the body of a reporter who had been investigating events of forty-five years earlier, during the McCarthy era, and V.I.'s discovery quickly sucks her into the history of two great Chicago families—their fortunes intertwined by blood, sex, money, and the scandals that may or may not have resulted in murder all these years later. At the same time, she inadvertently becomes involved in the story of a missing Egyptian boy whose possible terrorist connections make him very much sought after by the government. As the two cases drive her forward—and then shockingly tumble together—she finds that wealth and privilege, too, bear a terrible price; and the past has no monopoly on patriotic scoundrels. Before everything is over, at least two more people will lie dead . . . and V.I. might even be one of them.



## Fire Sale [2005]

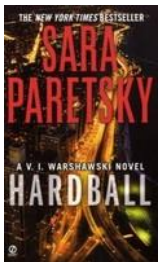
V.I. Warshawski may have left her old South Chicago neighborhood, but she learns that she cannot escape it. When V.I. takes over coaching duties of the girls' basketball team at her former high school, she faces an ill-equipped, ragtag group of gangbangers, fundamentalists, and teenage moms who inevitably draw the detective into their family woes.

Through young Josie Dorrado, V.I. meets the girl's mother, who voices her worries about sabotage in the little flag manufacturing plant where she works. The biggest employer on the South Side, discount-store behemoth By-Smart, pays even less, and Ms. Dorrado doesn't know how she'll support her four

children if the flag plant shuts down.

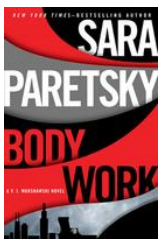
The elder Dorrado's fears are realized when the plant explodes; V.I. is injured and the owner is killed. As V.I. begins to investigate, she finds herself confronting the Bysen family, who own the By-Smart company. Founder William "Buffalo Bill" Bysen, now in his eighties, has four sons who quarrel with each other and with him; the oldest, "Young Mr. William," is close to sixty and furious that his father doesn't cede more power to him. And then there's "Billy the Kid," Young Mr. William's nineteen-year-old son, whose Christian idealism puts him on a collision course with his father, his grandfather, and the company as a whole.

When Billy runs away with Josie Dorrado, V.I. is squeezed between the needs of two very different families. As she tries to find the errant teenagers, and to track down a particularly cruel murderer, her own life is almost forfeit in the swamps that lie under the city of Chicago.



### Hardball [2009]

When VI Warshawski returns to her Chicago office after a client visit at Stateville, the last thing she expects is exactly what she finds. Her once tidy work space looks as though a hurricane tore through it. Ripped documents, upended drawers, and even pictures from the wall have been strewn about. But the most chilling find is a bracelet belonging to Warshawski's adored cousin Petra. A video surveillance camera reveals that three persons entered the premises - but where is Petra? The cops spring into action, calling it a possible kidnapping, possible assault, and possible aggravated burglary. Has Warshawski's connection to a group known as the Anacondas put those she loves in danger?



### Body Work [2010]

The enigmatic performer known as the Body Artist takes the stage at Chicago's Club Gouge and allows her audience to use her naked body as a canvas for their impromptu illustrations. V.I. Warshawski watches as people step forward, some meek, some bold, to make their mark. The evening takes a strange turn when one woman's sketch triggers a violent outburst from a man at a nearby table. Quickly subdued, the man - an Iraqi war vet - leaves the club. Days later, the woman is shot outside the club. She dies in V.I.'s arms, and the police move quickly to arrest the angry vet. A shooting in Chicago is nothing new, certainly not to V.I., who is hired by the vet's family to clear his

name. As V.I. seeks answers, her investigation will take her from the North Side of Chicago to the far reaches of the Gulf War.



### Breakdown [2012]

Carmilla, Queen of the Night, is a shape-shifting raven whose fictional exploits thrill girls all over the world. When tweens in Chicago's Carmilla Club hold an initiation ritual in an abandoned cemetery, they stumble on an actual corpse, a man stabbed through the heart in a vampire-style slaying.

The girls include daughters of some of Chicago's most powerful families: The grandfather of one, Chaim Salanter, is one of the world's wealthiest men; the mother of another, Sophy Durango, is the Illinois Democratic candidate for Senate.

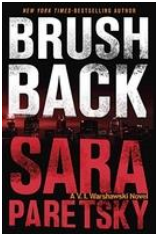
For V. I. Warshawski, the questions multiply faster than the answers. Is the killing linked to a hostile media campaign against Sophy Durango? Or to Chaim Salanter's childhood in Nazi-occupied Lithuania? As V.I. struggles for answers, she finds herself fighting enemies who are all too human.



### Critical Mass [2013]

*Called a "career-crowning triumph" and named one of the the top 50 mysteries and thrillers of the last 5 years by the London Sunday Times, Sara Paretsky is back with Critical Mass the latest entry in the VI Warshawski series.*

When private eye V.I. Warshawski is called out to a derelict drug house in a rural town just south of Chicago, she discovers something she wasn't expecting: the mutilated corpse of a man, dumped in a cornfield. It is a discovery that throws V.I. into the fascinating world of physics and invention: a design that sparked the construction of the computer as we know it, the development of nuclear weapons, the wonder of Newton's prisms and a train of dramatic events that occurred in wartime Vienna. Someone holds the answers to her questions - someone who will stop at nothing to prevent the truth from resurfacing....



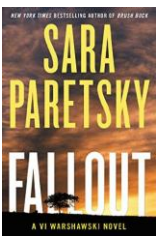
## **Brushback [2015]**

No one would accuse V. I. Warshawski of backing down from a fight, but there are a few she'd be happy to avoid. High on that list is tangling with Chicago political bosses. Yet that's precisely what she ends up doing when she responds to Frank Guzzo's plea for help.

For six stormy weeks back in high school, V.I. thought she was in love with Frank. He broke up with her, she went off to college, he started driving trucks for Bagby Haulage. She forgot about him until the day his mother was convicted of bludgeoning his kid sister, Annie, to death. Stella Guzzo was an angry, uncooperative prisoner and did a full twenty-five years for her daughter's murder.

Newly released from prison, Stella is looking for exoneration, so Frank asks V.I. for help. V.I. doesn't want to get involved. Stella hated the Warshawskis, in particular V.I.'s adored mother, Gabriella.

But life has been hard on Frank and on V.I.'s other childhood friends, still stuck on the hardscrabble streets around the dead steel mills, and V.I. agrees to ask a few questions. Those questions lead her straight into the vipers' nest of Illinois politics she's wanted to avoid. When V.I. takes a beating at a youth meeting in her old hood, her main question becomes whether she will live long enough to find answers.



## **Fallout [2017]**

[Coming in 2017]

**Compiled for the  
Just Desserts mystery fiction discussion group  
Lincoln City Libraries – Lincoln, Nebraska  
August 2016 – sdc**

