



**Dear Reader,**

I am so pleased to share with you a new novel which has been a labor of love. It's touched me as no other story of my career has.

*Rainwater* is based on a true story told to me by my late father who grew up during the Great Depression. One of his most vivid childhood memories was of a showdown between his father and armed federal agents who arrived at Grandpa's dairy farm demanding he pour out surplus milk rather than give it away to people in need...and in the ravaged cotton and cattle country of central Texas, there were many in need.

In my grandfather's opinion, the government program, designed to create a greater demand for milk and thereby drive up the price, was flawed if not downright lunatic, especially when the babies of so many friends, neighbors, and, indeed, perfect strangers, were going hungry. He refused to comply with the mandate and, backed by a few gun-toting relatives, ordered the agents off his property. The agents retreated without a shot being fired, and Grandpa continued giving away the surplus milk he couldn't sell.

This story fired my imagination, stayed with me, and eventually provided the background for *Rainwater*. I hadn't planned to write an additional book. I didn't have time. But this story wouldn't let me rest. So after delivering the manuscript for *Smoke Screen* in the spring of 2008, I gave myself two months to draft a story that was vitally different from my thrillers; a total departure from anything I'd written before. In short, I took a career gamble.

Throughout the year, whenever I had a spare week or two, I revisited *Rainwater* because once I began committing it to paper, I was captivated by *Rainwater* himself, by Ella and Solly, by all the people who inhabited their tiny sphere. I missed their company when I wasn't in their midst. I became completely immersed in their strife and joys. Never did I work on *Rainwater*, nor even think of it, that I wasn't brought to the point of tears.



From the day I conceived it, I felt this story was special, that although it takes place almost eighty years ago, its conflicts are timely today; its themes are timeless. My hope is that you, my loyal fans, and ultimately readers who aren't acquainted with my suspense novels will find this one as engaging, compelling, poignant, and meaningful as I have.

Sandra Brown