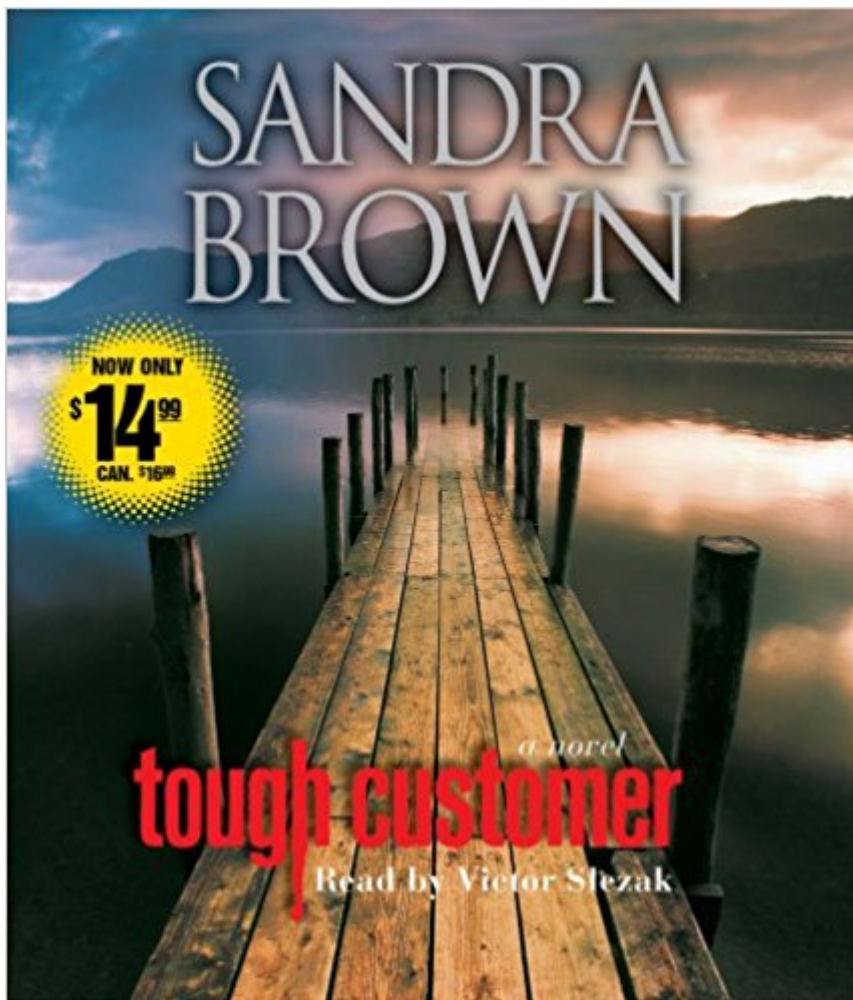




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Tough Customer: A Novel



Synopsis

From acclaimed best-selling author Sandra Brown, *Tough Customer* is a heart-pounding tale about obsession and murder, the fragile nature of relationships, and, possibly, second chances. Now only \$14.99. Colleagues, friends, and lovers know Dodge Hanley as a private investigator who doesn't let rules get in his way in his private life as well as his professional one. If he breaks a heart, or bends the law in order to catch a criminal, he does so without hesitation or apology. That's why he's the first person Caroline King asks for help when a deranged stalker attempts to murder their daughter—the daughter Dodge has never met. He has a whole bagful of grudging excuses for wishing to ignore Caroline's call, and one compelling reason to drop everything and fly down to Texas: guilt. Dodge's mind may be a haze of disturbing memories and bad decisions, but he arrives in Houston knowing with perfect clarity that his daughter, Berry, is in danger. She has become the object of desire of a co-worker, a madman and genius with a penchant for puzzles and games who has spent the past year making Berry's life hell, and who now has vowed to kill her. Dodge joins forces with local deputy sheriff Ski Nyland, but the alarming situation goes from bad to worse when the stalker begins to claim other victims and leaves an ominous trail of clues as he lethally works his way toward Berry. Sensing the killer drawing nearer, Dodge, who's survived vicious criminals and his own self-destructive impulses, realizes that this time he's in for the fight of his life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Brown's latest thriller reintroduces a character from her previous outing, *Smash Cut* (2009): Dodge Hanley, a grizzled investigator who used to be a cop. Dodge is awakened one morning by a call from Caroline King, a woman he hasn't seen in 30 years since the day their daughter, Berry, was born. Now Berry is the target of a frightening stalker who has just broken into Caroline's house and shot Berry's coworker, Ben Lofland. Dodge reluctantly agrees to travel from Atlanta to Texas to help the police hunt down Berry's tormentor, the vengeful Oren Starks. The police deputy on the case, Ski Nyland, is suspicious of Berry and convinced she is hiding something. As Dodge works with Ski to track Oren, his feelings for Caroline resurface, and he recalls how they first met and the reason their torrid relationship came to an end. Though a late-in-the-game twist seems somewhat farfetched, the draw here is the appealing Dodge, a character Brown fans will have no problem rooting for. --Kristine Huntley --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

Praise for Sandra Brown -- : 'It's a great, entertaining read, with lots of surprising twists and turns, credibly flawed characters and a love affair that's as steamy as a Savannah summer.' -- Lisa Scottoline, *Washington Post* on *RICOCHET* 'A masterful storyteller, carefully crafting tales that keep readers on the edge of their seats' -- *USA Today* 'Perfectly plotted' -- *People Magazine* 'An edge-of-seat thriller that's full of twists ... Top stuff!' -- *Star* 'Fast fun' -- *Cosmopolitan* 'Millions of readers clamour for the compelling novels of Sandra Brown. And no wonder! She fires your imagination with irresistible characters, unexpected plot twists, scandalous secrets ... so electric you feel the zing' -- *Literary Guild* 'If you want romantic suspense that has teeth ... Sandra Brown is your gal.' -- Stephen King 'Brown's novels define the term page turner' -- *Booklist* --This text refers to the Mass Market Paperback edition.

There are times when a chick book is an absolute necessity, and this book fills that need spectacularly. While this book will probably never be considered literature, I love her use of the English language. Not once does she use a reflexive pronoun in the subjective case.

I've read almost all her books. I loved them all, even the ones from back when there were only typewriters and no computers. But this was, to me, her best ever. Just kept me awake since 1:00 am. It's now 5:00 but I had to finish it, it's that good!

I like Sandra Browns' writing, this was as clever a read as always and I love her surprises and outcomes! Thanks Again Author!

I agree with another reviewer who said this book could have been half the length that it is. The flashbacks have nothing to do with the present dilemma, except to pad pages. I found myself skimming this material because I could sense the irrelevance of it. (and it was) Sandra Brown really needs to decide whether she is going to write suspense or romance. It feels like she wants to have the relationship between the damsel and the sheriff to be the main story. Unfortunately, anytime she introduced that kind of material, I felt myself saying, "oh brother." As a result of the dilemma, the main character gets to reunite with her long missing father. Can they accept each other? Okay, I can accept this being part of the fall-out of the crisis they were thrown into, but the sexual tension between her and the deputy, felt like the gratuitous sex scene, without anything really leading up to it. And the ending was disappointing too. We think the bad guy has been caught, but then there are about 50 pages of trivia before we find out he hasn't. The plotting really needs to be tighter than this. *À French Silk* by Sandra Brown, much better choice.

I'm glad I did not have my blood pressure checked while reading this book because it much higher than normal the entire time it took me to read *Tough Customer*. Having met Dodge while reading *Smash Cut* this book was like visiting a distant relative. The flash backs were excellent and explained how he and Caroline got together. The undercover police work was explained very well. Owen and Berry's conflict kept me guessing and the ending was a complete surprise. I hope we get to visit this family again some day.

I really loved this book! The characters and theme really stayed with me after I finished the book. I actually listened to it on CD during my drive time to and from work. The narrator was excellent. I usually worry that a male speaking for female roles would not be able to convince me of the individuals in the plot. But this actor did an exceptional job. I am sometimes not a big fan when current plot goes back and forth to the past, but in this case, it was well written, and timing was perfect and did not confuse, but clarified well. I truly was taken by Dodge. Caroline summed it up completely toward the end of how Dodge viewed himself and life. His passion, commitment and loyalty as well as other characters in the story was convincing and touched me. I would recommend this book.

Loved this book. Great love story with lots of action & mystery. I love Sandra Brown who always makes it interesting.

Sandra Brown is one of my favorite authors to read and this book was very good. Her characters are well developed and the plots are always intricately done. She has never disappointed me since I read "Breath of Scandal".

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