



Drop By Drop

Keith Raffel

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Stanford professor Sam Rockman suffers the crushing loss of his wife in a bombing at San Francisco Airport. Casting about to find meaning in the ruins of his life, he accepts an offer to come to Washington , D.C. to work for the Senate Intelligence Committee. What Sam wants out of his stint in D.C. is revenge for the death of his wife. What he gets is danger and betrayal. Secret documents are showing up on his doorstep. Russians are trying to poison him. A renegade CIA asset is strewing nuclear materials up and down Interstate 95. Sam finds allies among a savvy Kentucky senator, a billionaire investment banker, his wife's old rabbi, and the president's national security advisor. Too often, he finds himself thrown together with his counterpart on the other side of the aisle, the whip-smart, six-footer Cecilia Plant. Mourning still for his wife, Sam steels himself against Cecilia's appeal and remains suspicious of her motives.

Drop By Drop Details

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From Reader Review Drop By Drop for online ebook

Marni Tagami says

I liked Drop by Drop. I admire any author who can write in the first person successfully, and Keith Raffel has done just that. The story starts off so sweetly, and then suddenly, BANG! A crisis hits, and the rest of the novel is an intriguing journey as the main character finds his way to the one responsible for his young wife's death. The story begins in Palo Alto, California, then on "the Hill" in Washington, DC, with a brief journey to Russia. I thoroughly enjoyed the unique personality that made the main character memorable. It shows the witty, tongue-in-cheek side of the author manifested through his characters. The interactions between the characters was entertaining, and this added to the serious yet witty tone of the novel. By the end of the novel, the reader is left with the knowledge that though it may take some time, the loss the main character has suffered will heal, and his future looks bright.

Herve says

Drop by Drop is a thriller. Not a Silicon Valley thriller (like his previous dot.dead and Smasher) but a Washington DC thriller. I discovered Keith Raffel while looking for books about Silicon Valley and he is probably the only author who has created his mysteries (at least two) around the high-tech start-up world. [I already reviewed his dot.dead and Smasher].

Drop by Drop is (unfortunately) not about Silicon Valley and start-ups, even if it begins there. The hero is a History professor at Stanford University though. And I enjoyed reading Raffel's new work as much as his two previous novels. Do not get me wrong. This is probably not literature compared to Cormac McCarthy's Suttrees or even Franzen's The Corrections, but it is entertaining, the stories are good and the personalities always interesting and well-described. It is a good thriller! Though quite different, it reminded me of The Librarian by Larry Beinhart.

There is also something unusual, a feeling I got after reading Raffel's three books. There is a kind of sadness that all his heroes experience in their relationships with women. Even tragedy. Women are at the same time fragile and strong, fragile because often in dangerous positions. This makes the personalities really interesting.

Drop by Drop is also an ebook. It is in fact the first book I read on a screen. And I could read it! The experience is strange. No page, just chapters and digital references. I read it with white fonts on a black background. And I enjoyed it. I still prefer paper, but I also noticed that I have sold more Start-Up ebooks than paper versions in 8 out of the last 12 months...

Coming back to the story, why didn't Raffel fly east to Boston, which is the east-coast high-tech cluster, or even to New York, where there is the real life? The answer probably comes from the fact that Raffel has worked "as counsel to the Senate Intelligence Committee overseeing the secret world of the CIA, NSA, and other clandestine three-lettered agencies" before becoming a high-tech entrepreneur. He probably needed to share some his experience. I can tell you something I knew and is confirmed here: the high-tech start-up world may be a jungle with "vulture capitalists" but it is nothing compared to politics and in particular Washington DC!

I would not say there is a lot of action. I would almost say it is a psychological thriller. There is action, but what I liked the most were the hero's fights with himself. "Our tradition stands for justice. That's different than vengeance". It reminds me that even if I am fascinated by President Obama, I am not sure to understand why he said "Justice is done" last May. This is another story. Well not really. This book really addresses in its own way the question: "Does the end justifies the means?" You will need to read it to find your own answer. You will also learn a little more about the American constitution.

From time to time, Raffel remembers he lives in Palo Alto. So let me finish with some quotes:

- About bankers: "For once he had abandoned his Silicon Valley khakis in favor of investment banker pinstripes." ... "An investment banker who takes companies public. And what does that consist of? A great roadshow, generating hype. All his IPO's, every one, go out above the predicted range. In his business you count winners by dollars, not votes."... "Investment bankers found themselves talking to the SEC enforcement crew regularly nowadays."

- About Palo Alto places, he seems to enjoy the Peninsula Creamery as well as the Stanford Theatre: "Since high school, I'd frequented the Stanford Theatre in downtown Palo Alto, a repertory house playing the best of Hollywood's Golden Age." (Without Hewlett Packard and the Packard foundation, this marvelous theatre would probably not exist anymore.)

Finally, one of his descriptions of California driving rules, "I navigated over to the carpool lane. Only in California would one driver plus one passenger equal a carpool. And only in California would such loose admission requirements still result in an almost empty lane," reminded me of why Woody Allen hates California. "I don't want to move to a city where the only cultural advantage is being able to make a right turn on a red light" — Alvy Singer (Woody Allen in Annie Hall). Well, I still love California! And Raffel seems to prefer it to Washington DC...

Shelly King says

Truly great read! This is definitely a can't-go-to-sleep-until-I-finish-it book. It's got lots of thrilling plot gotchas, political intrigue, and a main character I'm behind all the way. If you're up for a thrill ride, this book will deliver. I highly recommend it!

Anita Rudd says

It felt like the writer did not know how to end this story. Probably because it's been written a hundred times before. Not very suspenseful and the main character is not very likable.

Nancy Silk says

This novel begins with Professor Sam Rockman taking his newly pregnant wife to the San Francisco Airport where she is leaving for a business trip. As Sam is inside the terminal, his wife outside, a car approaches and there is a massive bomb explosion that takes her life. That was the exciting promise of more thrilling scenes to come. But, the promise was not fulfilled. From there the author swings into too much meaningless, mundane dialog that encumbers Washington DC politics and daily affairs. Too often the author loses me in this as well as in his flamboyant use of words that I had to refer to a dictionary to interpret. I'm glad I just

had to click the word on my Kindle to understand his intent of a sentence. The end scenes were not that thrilling, as he seemed to rush to the last 'thrilling' scene. Oh, and there is an attempted sex scene at the very end that doesn't go anywhere either. As I finished reading this book, I said to myself, "This was such a waste of time." The story idea is good, and it could be made into a thriller if the author considered the reader who wants more action, simply written.

James Saunders says

Drop by Drop

A lot better than I thought. The intensity began and I began to be oblivious of distraction. The first half was a little slow and chatty then it changed and the tension began to rise and the drama started to grip my attention. The book ended with a surprise ending to me.

Best Crime Books & More says

I had this book on my Kindle for quite a while but finally got around to reading it. The jacket info sounded interesting and I was looking forward to it. Now one thing I need to point out is that the book is written by Keith Raffel, an American who has worked for the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee. IT was read by me, a bog standard British woman. The reason I point this out is that if you struggle with American Politics, you may struggle with the initial concept of the book. However, don't let it faze you; I am certainly glad I persevered.

In the beginning we meet Sam Rockman and his wife Rachel as they prepare to drive to the airport where Rachel is leaving for a trip. The worst imaginable happens and Sam Rockman's wife becomes a victim in the war against terrorism. Whilst Sam is struggling to come to terms with the loss of his wife, he is given the opportunity to work for the Senate Intelligence Committee. Sam takes up the offer and before long; the reader is taken into the crazy world of Politics in Washington D.C. At this point I loved the book, the writing was great but I soon realised it wasn't that straightforward.

I am certainly not a stupid girl, however I have to be honest and say that American Politics are not my strong point. I found that at one point, I had to go back and check which character was doing what. I didn't let this put me off and carried on and without realising it before too long I had got to grips with who did what and for whom. Sometimes the wording of something would throw me slightly and I had to be careful that I didn't skim over if I wasn't sure, (a habit I am terrible with).

At around the halfway point I realised that I actually really liked this political thriller. Sam was a great character and one that I would love to see again. In addition to him, Cecilia Plant turned out to be a lady I would also love to read some more of. There was plenty going on throughout the story and it keeps the interest of the reader especially with the very real threats presented to a country. Towards the last quarter of the book, the pace really picked up and I read the last part incredibly quickly. The ending was great and I realised how much I had enjoyed the book once I had finished.

Overall, I really would recommend this book, especially to those who enjoy Political Thrillers. Just be warned, that if you aren't that au-fait with American Politics than it may take a little time to get into. Now I

will look forward to future books by Keith Raffel.

Bruce D says

What an experience. Reading Drop by Drop on my iPhone with the Kindle app (my first time reading an electronic book) was a real screen flipper. I finished it the next day. I was immediately intrigued with its explosive start. Early on, I had a suspicion of who done it, but I wasn't sure and certainly couldn't have anticipated the twists and turns. I concur with everything the previous reviewers have said. In addition, the sex scene near the end was breathtaking; I wouldn't have guessed what would happen when the lead character's lover arrived at his belt buckle, very real. The action and reality throughout the book kept me fully enthralled with one small exception. At the end, the main character's quick recovery from traumatic blood loss and shock was a bit of stretch (medically speaking), but I was more than willing to go along with it as I couldn't wait to flip along to what turned out to be such a satisfying finish. Well done and a lot of fun. Keith, I look forward to your next book.

Clare Revell says

From first to last, this book is an unputdownable rollercoaster of emotion. From shock to laughter to tears – all in chapter one – this action packed thriller has it all. It's twists, turns and intrigue as one man struggles to come to terms with his wife's senseless death and find her murderers, keeps you guessing until the end.

BETSY COLLINS says

A Good Title for a Good Read

I should save this rating for the "perfect" book.. For my taste this one comes close . I liked the suspense, vocabulary, character development and plot albeit there were parts that were somewhat farfetched. Five years from now I could read and enjoy it again.

Karen says

Another page turner!

Debbie Smith says

Hate to rate it less than three stars, just because it wasn't my type of book. The first chapter is good and the writing is good, just not my style, and didn't care for so much politics.

Scottnewyork says

DC based thriller ripped, as they say, from the headlines of the day. With unexpected twists at the end. Leaves you waiting to see what happens to the principal characters at the end. Sequel?

Thoorsell says

"Drop by Drop" is a sizzler for anyone who likes a political, thrilling and intellectual story. Keith Raffel has the ability to tell a story which keeps you on the edge of your seat. The story opens with a shock and never stops you wondering if you are reading headlines from a national newspaper or another great novel by this distinguished author. By developing strong heroic ties between the characters, this story is a thrilling page-turner. The author gives us an insider look into Washington D.C. movers and makers of policy, the truly powerful. The reader is reminded of what the motivation is behind successful people: it is often the determination developed by personal crisis. "Drop by Drop" is both a love story and a political thriller. This story is developed with insider insight that Keith Raffel has from his own career as the counsel to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.. Each character is ripe with intelligence and remarkable sophistication. You can't believe the facts of this fiction or visa versa. "Drop-by-Drop" reads like a government insider's non-fiction but you know by turning each page the story will satisfy your quest for justice. A satisfying and humanistic story that keeps you interested and involved - maybe a reminder to get involved. Grab this great read - share with others who enjoy intelligent suspense. I longed for more Keith Raffel and am thrilled to have discovered this new friend. Don't forget Keith Raffel's other great novels "Smasher" and "Dot Dead". Really great reads!

Cathi, Silicon Valley, California

Fictional Bookshelf says

Drop by Drop is truly an amazing thriller that gets you were it counts - your gut. Mine was twisted in knots as I read through the pages with a speed like I've never seen before. Keith Raffel, the author, knows how to bait his hook to keep reeling you in until you realize you're finished with the book.

The emotions of the main character, Stanford professor Sam Rockman, was dynamic and well written. For some of the emotions he goes through after the death of his wife may make you cry. I sniffed a few times.

However, it wasn't the chilling emotions that kept me hooked it was the plot itself. It was full of twists and turns. I never could guess what was going to happen next and that's a good thing. If I figure out who has done what halfway through the book I'm no longer interested in the story.

I also like the fact it's a political thriller. I haven't read many thrillers that deals with fictional politicians and Keith made them seem so real. He had me thinking about so many things after reading his work.

This is a MUST read thriller that will keep you on the edge of suspense.
