

Dear Reader,

At its heart, *A Soft Place to Land* is about the enduring love between Ruthie and Julia, sisters who were inseparable as girls but whose relationship is profoundly challenged by fate, grief, and the passing of time. In writing this novel I explored sobering territory, so it came as a surprise that the dominant feeling I experienced while crafting it was joy. I think this is because writing about Ruthie and Julia as girls let me relive parts of my own giddy girlhood relationships with my older sisters.

Early in the book you will read about a game that Ruthie and Julia play called "Biscuit and Egg." It's a game about breakfast items that have been separated from each other, breakfast items that miss each other terribly. The game is nonsensical, ridiculous (a mournful biscuit?) but it is one the girls play again and again. And how did I come up with such a strange game? Well, Biscuit and Egg was a game my sisters and I used to play, with glee.

It had been a long time since I'd thought about being a kid and playing with my sisters: about the shows we staged, the backrubs we brokered, the seances we attempted, and, of course Biscuit and Egg. Writing this book allowed me to gather those memories around me.

I hope that reading *A Soft Place to Land* will bring back equally mirthful — and bittersweet — memories of your own. I hope that the book will transport you — at least temporarily — to the elliptical days of youth, to the silliness and "nonsense" you once engaged in, "nonsense" that ultimately means so much.

Yours,

Susan R. White