

The Book I Wish I'd Written

This writing prompt made me look at the 100 bestselling books of all time. I was disappointed to note that my favourite book doesn't make the list! I was also surprised that there are just 3 authors that cover the top 10 books. Does anyone know the bestselling book of all time?

A) The Da Vinci Code – Dan Brown

Unsurprisingly J K Rowling has 7 books in the top 10. But who is the other author?

A) – E L James with 50 Shades Of Grey.

Out of all those, I suppose I wish I had written the first Harry Potter and come up with the whole concept, leading onto the films and all the merchandising. I am rather relieved to confirm I didn't write 50 Shades. The Da Vinci Code I thought was OK but don't believe it should be the number one best seller.

So what is the book I wish I had written? It's Pillars of The Earth by Ken Follett – written in 1989. I discovered the book after Ken gave a talk in Watford around 2006, several Watford Writers attended. Ken described the research for the book and there was a long discussion about it. I can't remember if I bought the book that night or soon after the talk. It's a stonking 1000 pages of medieval life, starting in 1135. I really couldn't put the book down and missed several night's sleep at the time.

If you don't know anything about the book, the main concept is building a cathedral in the fictional town of Kingsbridge in Wiltshire. The description of how the cathedral was designed and the construction of it was so interesting, Ken obviously did a lot of research. Added to this was the stories of the people that were involved in the physical building of cathedrals. We follow the life of Jack Builder a stone mason, who doesn't live long enough to see the cathedral completed. But there are the complexities of religion, politics, royalty and the ever changing dynamics of the men in power and their fate and fortunes. I can remember being in awe of the amount of research the author must have carried out, but also being fascinated with the technical information on the construction process, things like 'drawing a line in the sand' is literally how the plans were worked out. This detail sticks with me when I visit cathedrals in this country and abroad, the sheer complexity of getting materials to the top of the building. Many men died during the construction of cathedrals.

Sadly I don't have the commitment to write a book of this length or anything requiring the amount of research required. Apparently there are some historical inaccuracies in the book, including sugar being mentioned, which was not available in England at that time. But to me it's a great read and I think it deserves to be in that top 100.

493 Words