

Ken Follett

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Sent: 02 September 2000 01:48
Subject: Contact Ken Message

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[Register:]
Yes

[Message:]
Ken,

I just finished your new book and, as always, am amazed at the way you tell a story. I think you handled the characters, and dialoge, in a superb manner that makes the story come alive. I have no doubt that you are about to list another best seller to your credits.

A couple of things I want to point out though.

In one scene, where Luke is taking the girl to see her gay brother you have her saying "Pull up here." That is european. Americans say "Pull over."

Luke's black secretary needs explaining. There were no black secretaries in Huntsville, or on the Arsenal, at the time. That was totally unheard of. You might try a simple sentence, "dispite the fact that she was black Luke had insisted on hiring her as his personal secretary."

The scene where the woman is driving out of Huntsville on a blind goose chase. The highway is not the Chattanooga highway. It is the Robert E. Lee highway, more commonly called Lee highway.

Where she stops and talks to a black field laborer. He would not be wearing dungarees. He would have been wearing "a pair of old faded and patched overalls." (dungarees are the same as blue-jeans; all field laborers wore overalls.

He would have also called her "Missus." To do other wise would have been a sign of disrespect.

When she goes to the black church to find the secretary. The choir would have stopped singing imediately, in mid song, as soon as she walked in the door. A white person had no business in thier church and the presence of a white stranger would have spelled trouble by anyone's definition.

By offering this critique I do not mean to belittle your work. On the contrary, may I live long enough to have your talent. I offer these suggestions because as a writer I know how important it is to make the story as real as possible.

One more note: You had the black church on Mill Street. Mill Street was a part of Dallas Mills at the time and blacks were not allowed there. The church would have been on Church Street. I know this may sound strange to you but Alabama was probably more oppressive than South Africa at the time. There were strict color and social barriers that no one dared cross.

By the way, I was so impressed with your book that after I finished I had a drink in your honor. You weren't here so I dranked yours too!

May life always be good
tom carney

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