

1. The animal rights issue is in fact a red herring.
2. Stronger links with international terrorism.

Ken Follett

From: Taylor, Imogen [I.Taylor@macmillan.co.uk]
Sent: 11 February 2003 17:27
To: Ken Follett (E-mail 2)
Subject: Whiteout

Dear Ken

I read the first draft outline of WHITEOUT over the weekend and wanted to come back to you with my comments straightaway.

The first, and foremost, of my concerns is the actual subject matter. While I appreciate that this isn't the crux of the book, I have an instinct that anything to do with animal experimentation/animal rights is really a bit of a turn off. I know that there are people who argue cogently for both sides, but I suspect the majority of people just don't find it fascinating enough to get really involved. I'm being quite subjective here, obviously, but the fact that this novel is set against such a background does trouble me, I'm afraid. We could perhaps turn it into some other kind of industrial espionage. My second worry is the British coastal setting - is it international enough, sexy enough, atmospheric enough? I may be wrong, but when you set this against the really terrific backgrounds of both JACKDAWS and HORNET FLIGHT - CODE TO ZERO too - it seems lacking, though that may be because I know Britain, and therefore France/Denmark/the States are all the more enticing.

On smaller points, I thought there were perhaps too many peripheral characters - we could do without the two servant figures, and can we cut out George's act of rape in the shed? It just seemed a violence too far.

On the plus side, Ken, I liked Antonia very much; Stanley too. The plot itself is all there, and I think you write about the actual siege very well - (the snow storm and the subsequent blizzard are wonderful). With some adaptation, it could be made even better.

I really hope you don't feel I'm being too brutal Ken, but I know you want an honest response. Please, do, feel free to give me a ring about this if you'd like to discuss it all further.

With all good wishes

Imogen