

Unlocking Mysteries with **DAVID WEST**

Unveiling the Pages: Engineering, Espionage, and Historical Intrigue

A Writer's Evolution traces David West's captivating journey into historical fiction, blending engineering expertise with the intrigue of espionage.

Introducing David West, an accomplished engineer turned author who embarked on a literary journey after an intriguing twist in his family history led to his acclaimed book, "The Spy who Sank the Armada." With a background in engineering and project management, David's transition to writing was sparked by a commission from Gower Publishing. Since then, his passion for storytelling has taken him on a fascinating path into historical crime fiction. His works, including "The Sir Anthony Standen Adventures," intricately weave together history and imagination, unraveling the mysteries of the past.

In this exclusive interview with The Reader's House magazine, David shares insights into his literary influences and favorite reads. From discovering lesser-known gems like Richard Hillary's biography by David Ross to drawing inspiration from iconic figures like Ian Fleming's

PHOTO: Meet David West: Engineer turned acclaimed author behind 'The Spy who Sank the Armada,' delving into historical crime fiction in The Sir Anthony Standen Adventures. His literary journey and influences unravel in an exclusive interview with The Reader's House magazine.



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James Bond, David reflects on the books and authors that have shaped his writing career. Additionally, he reveals his upcoming literary endeavors, offering a glimpse into his research and the anticipation of diving into Richard Osman's "The Thursday Murder Club" for a much-deserved enjoyable read.

David West graduated in engineering science from the University of Oxford. During a career in engineering and project management he was commissioned by Gower Publishing (now Taylor Francis) to write a book on Project Sponsorship. Having caught the writing bug he studied creative writing with the Open University, and had a short story published in an anthology called Something Hidden by Bridge House Publishing. On discovering that his ancestor, Sir Anthony Standen, had been Francis Walsingham's spy providing detailed intelligence on the Spanish Armada he researched his ancestor and wrote The Spy who Sank the Armada. It's a fictionalised biography which weaves answers to the why and how did he do that questions into the known history. The Sir Anthony Standen Adventures continue as historical crime fiction.

What's the last great book you read?

The Tiger in the Smoke by Margery Allingham. An article in the CWA's Red Herrings prompted me to read it. I understand that it's J.K. Rowling's favourite crime novel, and I can see why. Unlike Christie's Poirot or Marple books, the amateur detective, Albert Campion, has a very small role to play. That intrigues me. It's magnificently written, I couldn't put it down.

You're organizing a party. Which two authors, dead or alive, do you invite?

T.E. Lawrence and C.J. Sansom. Lawrence was a magnificent writer and had such an interesting life, if tragically short. My father was a desert rat in WWII and he said that Seven Pillars of Wisdom was required reading for desert warfare. C.J. Sansom is in my opinion the finest living writer in my genre, historical crime fiction. I'd like to see what I can learn from him.

What's your favourite book no one else has heard of?

I'm going to cheat here. I want to say The Last Enemy by Richard Hillary. I first read it while I was at Oxford. Richard was a Battle of Britain spitfire pilot who was a member of the Oxford University Air Squadron in the late 1930's. I've probably read it half a dozen times. However, as his was one of the three short lives featured in Sebastian Faulk's The Fatal Englishman: Three Short Lives, I can't say no one else has heard of it. So I shall choose Richard Hillary's biography by David Ross. It's an epic biography and cast fascinating light on Hillary's life as a fighter pilot, author, and man. I imagine there are many readers familiar with David Ross, but I had to find some way of getting to The Last Enemy.

What books and authors have impacted your writing career?

My first assignment on the creative writing course scored 69%. My tutor complimented my writing but asked what the point of the story was. The next day my wife and I were watching University Challenge. A question was "who wrote The Seven Basic Plots: Why we tell stories?" I thought, I don't know, but I need that book. The answer was Christopher Booker. I bought and read it and my next assignment scored 95% and was the story published in Something Hidden.

Ian Fleming's James Bond, of course. Reviews of my books have said they are James Bond-esque. I'll wear that badge with pride.

I read most of Dennis Wheatley's Duke de Richelieu books as a child. The ones that influenced me as a writer were, The Second Seal, and Vendetta in Spain. They pitch our



PHOTO: Fire and Earth: A Saga of Passion and Elements

hero and his friends into the events starting WWI and the Spanish civil war respectively. I'm sure his work has influenced the way Sir Anthony Standen interacts with historical events and characters.

What book are you planning to read next?

I'm not sure. I have read biographies of Louis XIII, Marie de Medici, Cardinal Richelieu, and Charles Albert de Luynes, as research for my work in progress. I think I deserve something excellent that will make me laugh. I thoroughly enjoyed Richard Osman's The Man who Died Twice, but I haven't read his first book, The Thursday Murder Club yet. I think that will be it.