



Life Style

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Once saw my book in dust at shop, I placed it in bestsellers rack: Sanghi

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Author Ashwin Sanghi interacts with Ranjana Sengupta during a session at the Khushwant Singh Literature Festival in Kasauli on Sunday. Tribune photo: Ravi Kumar

Gurjant Pannu Tribune News Service Kasauli, October 8

What makes a book a bestseller? Are there any ingredients or a formula to it?

Ashwin Sanghi, author of three best-selling novels, shed some light on the mystery in his interactive session "Making of a bestseller: 70 secrets condensed" at the Khushwant Singh Literature Festival here on Sunday.

Calling himself a story-teller, he said there was a difference between a story-teller and a writer.

Sanghi, a fiction-thriller writer, said a lot of people ask him his qualification to become a writer. "I tell them that my mother said to me that I am a darn good liar since childhood."

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He advised budding writers to tell a lie as close as possible to the truth.

“Writing is about making the readers’ turn the pages effortlessly,” he quipped.

“I faced rejection from 47 publishers. No one in my family had even read a book except my grandfather who was an avid reader. He used to send me a book every week and I had to write him a letter giving a book review of sorts,” he recalled.

Being from a Baniya-Marwari family, he was taught the importance of two words — debit and credit — he says with a grin.

“I was taught that book keeping is more important than book reading by our munshi (accountant),” he said.

Sanghi started writing in 2002 and his first book got published in 2008.

“There is a fair bit of research that goes into writing a novel. Before writing crime fiction, I visited police stations to see how they work. How investigation works. You should know the era that the book is set in,” he shared.

He stressed the importance of marketing for writers.

“The tragedy in Indian publishing is that writers haven’t reached out to the readers,” he said.

Sanghi recalled a saying by classic novelist Ernest Hemingway “write when drunk and edit sober” and added that consider marketing your hangover.

“You have to become ‘besharm’ (shameless) in marketing your book. When a new book of mine is released I visit bookstores to see if it is available,” he said.

The writer recalled a funny anecdote when he visited the Crossword bookstore in Mumbai.

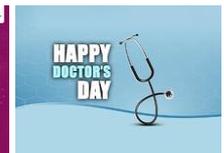
“I went to Crossword bookstore and asked the clerk if he had a book by the brilliant author, Ashwin Sanghi. He directed me to a faraway corner. My book was lying there in a heap of dust. I picked it up and kept it in the bestsellers rack,” he confessed.

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