



I Wish I'd Written... Dear Diary

Article Author:

[Allan Ahlberg](#) [1]

[141](#) [2]

Article Category:

I Wish I'd Written

Byline:

Allan Ahlberg chooses Sara Fanelli's **Dear Diary**.

Allan Ahlberg on a lovely, ace book...<!--break-->

Two hundred words, said Rosemary. Right, there's five for a start ? no, eleven! ? no ... I should stop this. I had a job once as a grave-digger. Ambrose, a fellow worker, and I would argue endlessly on philosophical topics, which mostly concluded thus: ?It all stupidity you talkin?, Allan.? He had a point.

Where was I? Yes, two hundred words on the book I wish I'd written. That's not so difficult. I wish I'd written, **The Siege of Krishnapur** (Farrell), **The Member of the Wedding** (McCullers) and **True Grit** (Portis). Oh dear, I see now that won't do. Children's book, Rosemary said. Trouble is I don't read children's books; actually that's not altogether true. **Clockwork** (Pullman) ? read that and definitely wish I'd written it. Oh no! ? that won't do either. It has to be a book not previously chosen by someone else. Oh yes, and a ?recent? publication, Rosemary says. So I can't very well have, **How Tom Beat Captain Najork and His Hired Sportsmen** (Hoban/Blake), or **The Elephant and the Bad Baby** (Vipont/Briggs) or even, more's the pity, **Humpty Dumpty** (anon.).

Well, anyway, two hundred words ... must be nearly up. It's amazing really, how language just seems to run away with us, no matter how strict or severe or economical we are, don't you find? One minute flush with words, and the next, bankrupt. Hm ... and where did they all go? To what purpose? Ah yes, who can say?

Where was I? Got it. My choice for the book I wish I'd written (I am opening the envelope now) is assuredly, **Dear Diary** by Sara Fanelli. A lovely, ace book (you have to let me have done the pictures too). So graphic! So distinctive! Such fun!* Any man, woman, child, ladybird or chair, even, could not fail to enjoy it. And there we are: three hundred and twenty two words ... on the button.

*Plus: magical, mysterious, subtle, clever, simple and unfathomable. And short.

Dear Diary by Sara Fanelli is published by Walker Books (0 7445 8263 6, £5.99 pbk).

Allan Ahlberg's latest book, **The Little Cat Baby**, ill. Fritz Wegner, Puffin, 0 670 91286 7, £7.99 hbk, will be published in October.

Page Number:

16

Source URL (retrieved on Sep '20): <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/141/childrens-books/articles/i-wish-i%E2%80%99d-written/i-wish-i%E2%80%99d-written-dear-diary>

Links:

[1] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/allan-ahlberg>

[2] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/141>