

Retailers have difficulty keeping Twain's new book in stock

By Gina Kim, Sacramento Bee

Death may be the impartial friend – who treats the soiled and pure, rich and poor, loved and unloved equally – but Mark Twain transcends the grave with his autobiography, which has become the sought-after holiday gift of the year.

Published the stipulated 100 years after his no-longer-an-exaggeration of a death, the “Autobiography of Mark Twain” debuted at No. 2 on the New York Times best-sellers list last month and has remained in the top 10 since, landing at No. 5 this week.

Surprised retailers haven't been able to keep the dictionary-size tome on their shelves or in warehouses, relegating many would-be purchasers to waiting lists – or inflated prices reaching \$750 on Amazon.com.

“We've got 10 orders waiting to be filled,” said Stan Forbes, co-owner of the Avid Reader in Sacramento, which expects its supply to be replenished at midmonth. “It's a phenomenon ... like the interest in opening a time capsule.”

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