The Gutenberg Revolution

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In 1450, all Europe's books were handcopied and amounted to only a few thousand. By 1500 they were printed, and numbered in their millions. The invention of one man - Johann Gutenberg - had caused a revolution. Printing by movable type was a discovery waiting to happen.

Born in 1400 in Mainz, Germany, Gutenberg struggled against a background of plague and religious upheaval to bring his remarkable invention to light. His story is full of paradox: his ambition was to reunite all Christendom, but his invention shattered it; he aimed to make a fortune, but was cruelly denied the fruits of his life's work. Yet history remembers him as a visionary; his discovery marks the beginning of the modern world.

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