# Fantasy romance authors face backlash after AI notes appear in published novels



In late May 2025, fantasy romance authors K.C. Crowne, Rania Faris, and Lena McDonald became embroiled in controversy after readers unearthed AI-generated prompts embedded in their recently released novels. As snippets of text circulated on platforms such as Reddit, Goodreads, and Bluesky, the excerpts revealed editorial annotations and revision notes that indicated the use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, in their writing process.

This incident stood out not merely due to the integration of AI—an increasingly prevalent tool in modern writing—but because unfinished AI-generated notes appeared in the final published works. For readers expecting a polished narrative, encountering phrases that resembled rough drafts felt both disconcerting and deceptive. McDonald's "Darkhollow Academy" provided a particularly glaring example, where a passage seemed to reference rewriting a scene to mirror another author's style. One user commented, "It's like she copied and pasted directly from her AI draft and forgot to clean it up," highlighting the disconnect between author intent and reader expectation.

The response from the literary community was immediate and divisive. While some hailed the use of AI as a pragmatic strategy in the fast-paced realm of publishing, others felt a poignant sense of betrayal. A scrutiny-laden comment on Goodreads encapsulated this sentiment: "It's not just about AI. It's about trust. When you buy a book, you expect the voice behind it to be human, not a chatbot." A recurring theme in many critiques was the rapidity with which some authors were producing work—one reviewer pointed out that one author managed to release three full-length novels in under three months, suggesting a reliance on AI assistance.

The implications of this episode resonate deeply, especially in a genre where emotional depth and immersive world-building are essential. In an age where readers often form strong attachments to the storytellers behind their beloved narratives, doubts about authenticity can shatter the very illusions that bind reader to text. This incident underscores a larger ethical debate: should authors disclose their use of AI tools during the writing process? If an AI tool serves as a brainstorming partner or a means of drafting scenes, do readers have a right to be informed?

The publishing landscape is responding to these challenges. While it remains legal in both the US and the UK to publish AI-assisted works, differing copyright laws complicate matters. In the US, copyright only protects works that feature human authorship, leaving fully AI-generated content unprotected. Conversely, UK law permits computer-generated works to hold copyright for 50 years, attributing authorship to the individual steering the process.

While the legal definitions may be clearer, the ethical implications remain murky. The call for increased transparency is gaining momentum, particularly within the self-publishing sector, to preserve editorial integrity and bolster reader trust. Major players in the industry are navigating through this complexity. For instance, Amazon has mandated that authors use its e-book platform disclose any AI-generated material in their works. Following persistent concerns raised by groups such as the Authors Guild, this new regulation aims to ensure that consumers are well-informed about the nature of the content they purchase, although current protocols do not include public labelling of AI-generated works.

Prominent voices within the literary community are advocating for clarity around AI use in writing. Wiley has issued guidelines that encourage authors to employ AI as a supportive tool, rather than a replacement for their craft. These guidelines stress the importance of human oversight and recommend that authors disclose their use of AI in manuscript preparation.

As AI tools continue to evolve, the boundary between inspiration, assistance, and authorship will inevitably become more blurred. The incident involving Crowne, Faris, and McDonald serves as a lightning rod for broader discussions about the role of technology in literature. Readers are not necessarily demanding perfection in literary output; rather, they seek honesty and genuine care in the stories presented to them.

In this rapidly changing environment, fostering trust and preserving the emotional connection between author and audience is paramount. The literary world must navigate these emerging challenges with integrity and transparency, ensuring that storytelling remains a uniquely human endeavour.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.inkl.com/news/ai-prompts-left-in-print-three-fantasy-romance-authors-face-backlash-over-alleged-chatgpt-use), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/44d530bc-a710-4705-be3a-9d11bc23b131)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.inkl.com/news/ai-prompts-left-in-print-three-fantasy-romance-authors-face-backlash-over-alleged-chatgpt-use), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/345bb1a2d80b0a6ddb26978b25c9fb4b)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/44d530bc-a710-4705-be3a-9d11bc23b131), [[5]](https://www.enago.com/academy/ai-unintentional-co-author-ethical-risks/), [[6]](https://www.wiley.com/en-it/publish/book/ai-guidelines)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.inkl.com/news/ai-prompts-left-in-print-three-fantasy-romance-authors-face-backlash-over-alleged-chatgpt-use), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/345bb1a2d80b0a6ddb26978b25c9fb4b)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/17470161231180449), [[6]](https://www.wiley.com/en-it/publish/book/ai-guidelines)
* Paragraph 6 – [[5]](https://www.enago.com/academy/ai-unintentional-co-author-ethical-risks/), [[6]](https://www.wiley.com/en-it/publish/book/ai-guidelines)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.inkl.com/news/ai-prompts-left-in-print-three-fantasy-romance-authors-face-backlash-over-alleged-chatgpt-use), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/345bb1a2d80b0a6ddb26978b25c9fb4b)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.inkl.com/news/ai-prompts-left-in-print-three-fantasy-romance-authors-face-backlash-over-alleged-chatgpt-use> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/44d530bc-a710-4705-be3a-9d11bc23b131> - The publishing industry is currently grappling with the implications of generative AI technologies, facing both opportunities and significant challenges. Author Parmy Olson, a past winner of the Financial Times and Schroders Business Book of the Year Award, uses large language models (LLMs) for idea development and research. However, many authors and industry professionals express deep concerns over AI-generated content replacing human authorship, especially when AI models are trained on copyrighted materials without consent. The Authors Guild and literary agents are pushing for new contractual clauses to protect authors' intellectual property, while publishers explore AI's capacity to support innovation. Wiley has issued guidelines advocating responsible AI use as a tool—not a replacement—for authors, following a survey of 5,000 writers and researchers. While AI shows promise in tasks like brainstorming, editing, and creating concise versions of educational materials, professional consensus maintains it cannot replicate the artistry and personal voice of skilled human writers. Moreover, AI threatens jobs in adjacent fields such as ghostwriting and copywriting. Despite experimentation, the publishing industry is cautious, emphasizing oversight and ethical standards. The late literary agent Esmond Harmsworth remarked that while AI has not yet matched top-tier authors, it’s uncertain how long this will hold true.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/345bb1a2d80b0a6ddb26978b25c9fb4b> - Amazon has mandated that authors selling books via its e-book program disclose if their work includes artificial intelligence (AI) material, following months of complaints from the Authors Guild and other groups. The newly implemented regulations aim to curb the surge of computer-generated books on Amazon’s platform, protecting traditional works and ensuring consumers are informed about AI content. The Authors Guild considers this a positive step toward transparency and accountability for AI-generated content. However, Amazon will currently not publicly label books with AI content, though this policy may change in the future. Discussions about these regulations have been ongoing since early this year. The Guild has also been active in urging AI companies not to use copyrighted material without authorization, supported by notable authors including James Patterson and Margaret Atwood.
4. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/17470161231180449> - This article discusses the ethical considerations of disclosing the use of large language models (LLMs) in scholarly manuscripts. The authors recommend that scholars disclose their use of LLMs in the introduction or methods section, through in-text citations and references, and as supplementary material or in appendices. They also suggest that interactions with LLMs be recorded and disclosed to enable verification. The article emphasizes the importance of transparency, openness, honesty, and fair attribution of credit in maintaining ethical norms in scholarly publishing.
5. <https://www.enago.com/academy/ai-unintentional-co-author-ethical-risks/> - This article explores the risks and ethical concerns associated with AI becoming an unintentional co-author in academic writing. It highlights how AI tools can influence or alter content and key arguments without formal acknowledgment, leading to ethical issues regarding academic integrity. The article also discusses the lack of transparency and acknowledgment of AI’s role in the writing process and suggests measures to prevent AI from unknowingly becoming a co-author, including proper disclosure and critical review of AI-generated content.
6. <https://www.wiley.com/en-it/publish/book/ai-guidelines> - Wiley has issued guidelines for authors on the responsible and ethical use of AI tools in writing. The guidelines emphasize that AI should be used as a tool to enhance creativity and streamline workflows, not as a replacement for human authorship. Authors are encouraged to disclose their use of AI in manuscript preparation and to ensure that AI-generated content is reviewed and aligned with professional publishing standards. The guidelines also highlight the importance of human oversight and maintaining the integrity of the author's work.
7. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s43681-024-00521-7> - This study examines the impact of generative AI on professional editing, focusing on the ethical implications for authors, editors, publishers, and the creative landscape. The authors conducted an experiment comparing edits by established literary editors with suggestions from ChatGPT, concluding that AI applications have been created within a development paradigm that is agnostic to notions of social and cultural capital and, at worst, at odds with the ethics and conventions that underpin the delicate balance of commercial, cultural, and individual interests in book publishing.