# Fantasy romance authors face backlash over unedited AI prompts in published novels



In late May 2025, authors K.C. Crowne, Rania Faris, and Lena McDonald found themselves embroiled in a controversy that sparked intense debate within the literary community. Readers uncovered what appeared to be AI-generated prompts in their recently published fantasy romance novels. With the presence of unfinished notes and editorial cues embedded within the text, the incident raised questions about authenticity and the author's creative process, setting off a backlash that reverberated across platforms such as Reddit, Goodreads, and Bluesky.

What made this particular case alarming was not merely the use of AI tools, which have become commonplace in various writing contexts, but the startling revelation that unedited prompts had been included in final copies of the authors' works. This was particularly glaring in McDonald's *Darkhollow Academy*, where a specific passage referred to revising a scene to mimic another author's style. Readers noted that the text seemed more akin to a rough draft note than a polished narrative. One user remarked, "It's like she copied and pasted directly from her AI draft and forgot to clean it up." Such discoveries sparked significant concern regarding the integrity of the work.

Reactions from the reading community were divided. Many perceived the use of AI as a practical adaptation to the demands of contemporary publishing, where rapid production cycles pressurise authors to deliver content at an alarming rate. Conversely, a substantial segment of readers felt deceived. A 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." This backlash was exacerbated by the speed at which the authors were producing works; one critic pointed out that one of the authors had released three full-length novels in under three months, drawing comparisons to industry legend Stephen King's renowned output.

This controversy encapsulates an ethical dilemma that has gained traction in the literary world, particularly as AI technologies evolve. The question remains whether authors should disclose their use of AI in the creative process. As many experts suggest, transparency is vital not just for maintaining reader trust, but also for preserving the essence of storytelling. Vania Margene Rheault, addressing the issue, noted that while AI can serve as a tool for brainstorming and minor edits, its misuse could lead to significant oversights, as seen in this incident.

The legal landscape surrounding AI in creative industries further complicates this matter. While publishing works created with AI assistance is permissible in both the US and the UK, significant differences exist in copyright law. In the US, only content with human authorship is protected, leaving fully AI-generated material without legal backing. Conversely, UK law allows for computer-generated works to qualify for copyright, attributing authorship to the individual guiding the AI process. Despite these legal frameworks, the publishing industry is increasingly insisting on the need for stricter regulations and clearer standards surrounding AI usage to maintain reader confidence.

Indeed, the ongoing conversation about AI's role in creativity invites scrutiny not only concerning the methods by which works are produced but also about the implications for artistic integrity. As Dr. Anas Al-Ghamdi emphasized at a symposium in 2024, AI cannot replicate the emotional complexity intrinsic to human storytelling. While AI may enhance certain operational aspects, it must primarily serve as a companion to human creativity rather than a replacement.

As more authors like Crowne, Faris, and McDonald navigate the blurred lines between inspiration and authorship in the realm of AI-assisted writing, one thing remains clear: readers are not merely looking for perfection; they seek honesty. This episode has catalysed a broader discussion about the balance between embracing innovative tools and upholding the trust that inherently binds storytellers to their audiences. The path forward calls for a measured approach that acknowledges the potential for AI as a collaborative tool, while also safeguarding the authenticity that readers cherish.

### 📌 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), [[4]](https://techxplore.com/news/2023-10-ai-panic-authors-courts-involved.html)
* 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://vaniamargene.com/2025/01/20/kc-crowne-and-the-case-of-the-ai-prompt/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2023-07-19/artificial-intelligence-9000-authors-sign-letter-rebuking-ai-companies-books), [[5]](https://www.nprillinois.org/2024-03-13/authors-push-back-on-the-growing-number-of-ai-scam-books-on-amazon), [[6]](https://www.arabnews.com/node/2583647/saudi-arabia)
* Paragraph 4 – [[7]](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice/resources/law-practice-magazine/2025/may-june-2025/the-prompt-illusion/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.inkl.com/news/ai-prompts-left-in-print-three-fantasy-romance-authors-face-backlash-over-alleged-chatgpt-use), [[2]](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2023-07-19/artificial-intelligence-9000-authors-sign-letter-rebuking-ai-companies-books), [[4]](https://techxplore.com/news/2023-10-ai-panic-authors-courts-involved.html)

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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.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2023-07-19/artificial-intelligence-9000-authors-sign-letter-rebuking-ai-companies-books> - In July 2023, over 9,000 authors signed an open letter accusing AI companies of exploiting their copyrighted works to train chatbots without consent or compensation. The letter, organised by the Authors Guild, highlighted the use of millions of books, articles, essays, and poetry as 'food' for AI systems, arguing that such practices threaten the livelihoods of writers and the integrity of creative industries. The authors called for AI companies to obtain permission and fairly compensate writers for the use of their works in AI programs.
3. <https://vaniamargene.com/2025/01/20/kc-crowne-and-the-case-of-the-ai-prompt/> - In January 2025, author Vania Margene Rheault discussed the controversy surrounding K.C. Crowne's use of AI prompts in her writing. Rheault noted that Crowne had admitted to using AI for minor edits and brainstorming, but the inclusion of unedited AI-generated prompts in the final published book led to reader backlash. Rheault emphasised the importance of transparency and the potential impact of AI on the writing process, suggesting that while AI can be a tool for authors, its use should be disclosed to maintain reader trust.
4. <https://techxplore.com/news/2023-10-ai-panic-authors-courts-involved.html> - In October 2023, TechXplore reported on the growing concerns among authors regarding the use of their works to train AI programs. The article highlighted lawsuits filed by authors, including the Authors Guild, against companies like OpenAI, alleging that their copyrighted materials were used without permission to develop AI systems that now compete with them. The lawsuits sought damages for lost licensing opportunities and market usurpation, as well as injunctions against future such practices, underscoring the need for clearer standards and disclosures in the publishing industry.
5. <https://www.nprillinois.org/2024-03-13/authors-push-back-on-the-growing-number-of-ai-scam-books-on-amazon> - In March 2024, NPR Illinois reported on authors' efforts to combat the proliferation of AI-generated 'scam' books on platforms like Amazon. The article discussed how AI-generated biographies and copycat books were flooding the market, often of low quality, leading to confusion among readers and potential financial losses for original authors. Authors and industry experts called for stricter regulations and transparency regarding AI-generated content to protect both creators and consumers in the literary market.
6. <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2583647/saudi-arabia> - In a 2024 symposium at the Jeddah Book Fair, Dr. Anas Al-Ghamdi, an academic and author specialising in AI, stated that artificial intelligence cannot replace human creativity in literature. He acknowledged that AI can provide vast amounts of information quickly but cannot replicate the emotional depth and imagination inherent in human-authored works. Al-Ghamdi suggested that while AI can enhance certain aspects of the publishing process, it should be viewed as a tool to support human creativity rather than a competitor.
7. <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice/resources/law-practice-magazine/2025/may-june-2025/the-prompt-illusion/> - In May 2025, the American Bar Association's Law Practice Magazine published an article discussing the complexities of authorship in the age of artificial intelligence. The article highlighted that while AI can assist in generating content, meaningful human creativity is still required for copyright protection. It emphasised that merely directing an AI system is not sufficient to claim authorship; there must be a significant human creative contribution. The article also addressed the challenges in determining authorship and ownership of AI-generated works, calling for clearer guidelines and legal frameworks.