

## To Err is Human

Don't get us wrong: as technical writers and editors, we at KB COMM are sticklers when it comes to spelling, usage, grammar, and punctuation. But we're also human, and as you may have heard, humans sometimes make mistakes.

In this issue, we're keeping things humble by highlighting typos and mistakes in Great Works of Literature. Yes, even the best of the best (not to mention the army of proofreaders and editors at their disposal) have been known to goof it up from time to time.

## What's Up at KB COMM?

At KB COMM, we provide mission-critical communication and learning services to clients in a variety of industries. Thanks to our established and new clients for keeping us busy. Recent and ongoing projects include:

- Writing and editing numerous information products for a healthcare diagnostics manufacturer, including employee communications, customer presentations and letters, product marketing brochures and data sheets, and training materials
- Formatting and revising technical reports and manufacturing standard operating procedures, work instructions, forms, logbooks, and batch records for a pharmaceutical company
- Revising and maintaining GMP facility drawings
- Drafting, reviewing, and editing for consistency and accuracy response documents and associated modules for electronic submission to health authorities on behalf of pharmaceutical companies

KB COMM LLC is a certified Women's Business Enterprise. We are officially qualified to participate in corporations' woman- and minority-owned vendor programs.

Please keep us in mind for your communication or training projects.

## Bookish Blunders

If you've ever used the wrong "there" in an email or pressed send on a text that wasn't finished, don't sweat it. Even the pros make mistakes, and sometimes the pros who are supposed to catch them also make mistakes, and then the mistakes end up being printed in millions of books.

If a book has a typo, most of the time it will be corrected in future printings. But if the book doesn't sell well enough to go into a second edition, the typo will just...be there, an eternal mistake in the great literary canon.

And typos happen more frequently than you might think! Here are a few first edition goofs that were caught and fixed in later printings:

*The Road* by Cormac McCarthy: "...a moment of panic before he saw him walking along the bench downshore."

*Cat's Cradle* by Kurt Vonnegut: "...then I'm dumber than an eight-year-old."

*Survivor* by Chuck Palahniuk: "...you're whole life is gravy."

In the case of very famous books, sometimes typos can turn into dollar signs. If you have first editions of these books on your shelf, tiny errors might make them very valuable to collectors:

*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* by J.K. Rowling: in some first editions of the U.S. printing, Harry's shopping list includes "1 wand" twice. One such misprinted copy sold at auction for a whopping \$34,500, but take note: some later-round printings also include the typo and are far less valuable.

*The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck: this 1932 Pulitzer Prize winner includes a misspelling to the tune of dogs being covered in "flees." First editions of the book are quite rare to begin with, and some can fetch thousands of dollars.

*Moonraker* by Ian Fleming: the 007 novel that later became one KB COMM's favorite Roger Moore flick is highly collectable among James Bond fans. You could be looking at \$10,000 or more if your copy has an amusing error on page 10 where "shoot" becomes the less deadly "shoo."

Typos like these are good for a chuckle, but some books contain errors not as easily fixed. We wonder if Daniel DeFoe was kept up at night by an inconsistency in *Robinson Crusoe* in which the title character strips naked, swims to a shipwreck to salvage supplies, and returns to shore after "[filling] my pockets with biscuit."

Mistakes like this clearly didn't bother Raymond Chandler, who was asked by filmmakers adapting *The Big Sleep* which character killed a chauffeur named Owen Taylor. After poring over the famously dense crime thriller, the studio concluded that the detail must be missing and figured they'd better check with the author. "They sent me a wire asking me," Chandler explained, "and dammit, I didn't know either!"

Have you ever spotted a mistake in a book? Are you sitting on a typo-laden first edition and about to cash in? Let us know!

And please remember, *when it has to be right*, KB COMM is here to help.

Sincerely,

*Kathy*

Kathy Breuninger

KB COMM

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