# FIVE TRUTHS ABOUT AFTER-PUBLICATION ERRORS
## BOOK FOIBLES AND ABERRATIONS

All writers want their work to be perfect. Nobody wants to learn about errors in their manuscript after they have published it. Too many grammar, spelling, syntax, or punctuation errors in a published book are embarrassing, time-consuming, and expensive.

**Unfortunate Truth**: We are often defined by our mistakes as much as by our successes.

Whether you love it, hate it, or love to hate it, editing is a critical investment before publishing. An editor's value is how close we come to perfecting your manuscript in every way. My brand identity is "A writer's best resource. A reader's best advocate." I take my mission seriously because my work will have lasting effects on authors and their readers.

**One Uncomfortable Truth**: No matter how rigorous or meticulous writers and editors are, all published books contain errors.

Obviously, you want to avoid hearing this from your editor. I recognize this is a narrow, brittle limb I rest upon, but I cling to it. Writers make mistakes, and editors miss mistakes. We are human and humanize everything we touch. The trick is to humanize things for the better.

**Three Comfortable Truths**:

1. A trained editor *will* catch most mechanical errors in your manuscript before you publish.

2. Editors focus on different things depending on the type of editing they are doing. If your editor serves as your developmental, line, and copy editor, they must effectively wear each of these hats at different stages of the editing process.

   Developmental editors are the first set of eyes on your manuscript. They focus on the big picture and ways to illuminate your story but will address common and egregious mechanical errors.

   Copy editors focus on clarity and readability and will address most of the mechanical errors in your manuscript.

   Proofreaders will meticulously scour your manuscript for mechanical errors. This is why they are the last set of editing eyes. This type of editor lives to seek and destroy any remaining mechanical errors.

3. If your editor has done their job, most readers will never find errors, though they exist. Readers who stumble upon errant errors in well-edited books will find it easy to overlook them.

The latter of these three truths is the rubber on the tire.

**Rule of Thumb**: A book that is 95% error-free is acceptable by most standards.

If your book is published and a reader messaged you last night to point out you have misspelled "bizarre," "apparently," and "canceled," you should probably take a closer look at what you are distributing. If you are unfortunate enough to have someone mention your main character's name is spelled differently, along with multiple other typos and something that requires an Errata, you are in for a sleepless night.

On the other hand, if you have published your book only to find the error "to" instead of "too" escaped your notice and is scoffing at you from page thirty-two, relax. It is going to be okay!

More than a 5% error rate distracts readers and will result in poor reviews and readership. If I find one egregious error in a sample or excerpt, it is improbable I will purchase the book. Book highlights should be scrutinized, so when an aberration pops out, it tells me the rest of the book will likely be poorly edited or carelessly written. However, the occasional error within the body of text will likely be overlooked and quickly forgotten. A well-written and well-edited book ensures the story is the celebrity; readers will disregard the foibles but remember the book.

I have found that the writing community on social media is unmatched in its support for writers grappling with various writing obstacles. Published authors will instantly rally to share tips and tricks; editing almost always makes the list of advice given regardless of the question. While it does not replace the need for professional editing, knowing how to edit your work is a necessary part of being a writer.

Even editors need editors. Once you have written, rewritten, and read something multiple times, your mind will naturally exclude certain elements, including basic English grammar. This is one reason I will provide developmental editing and copy editing services, but I recommend a professional proofreader when it is time for proofing.

**Bottom Line:** Pobody's nerfect, so it is important to appropriate the time, resources, and energy needed to produce quality work. We advocate for ourselves when we advocate for our readers.

## About The Absent-minded Bookworm

As a developmental, line, and copy editor, my clients receive personalized guidance and feedback to help them craft immersive stories with captivating characters and engaging language. It is important to me to build meaningful relationships with clients to understand their unique writing styles, strengths, needs, and goals.

I offer resources and techniques to spark creativity and refine content. My purpose-built approach includes a comprehensive report with detailed editorial commentary and examples to improve the plot, pace, character development, readability, and flow. I am readily accessible to assist clients with questions, challenges, writing obstacles, and managing their deliverables.

My editing method balances technical expertise, good instincts, and purposeful communication. As a writer's best resource, I am committed to helping writers transition to successful authors and developing their writing skills along the way. As a reader's best advocate, I assist writers with transforming their manuscripts into well-crafted, compelling stories.

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