

Stumpf by name

PUBLISHER'S NOTE:

We think it both fair and necessary to inform readers that we have been obliged, it has to be said with the greatest reluctance and the deepest sadness, and solely on the advice of our in-house Stumpf lawyers as well as that of an independent legal firm, to subject the following account to a little light editing. We have only done so after long and profound soul-searching and the most rigorous analysis of what under the circumstance was both the wisest and morally most acceptable policy.

We have been counselled that it is the only possible course of action to be taken to avoid what, we were assured, might lead to misunderstanding in, and misinterpretation by, the reader, and resulting in the real risk of suits for libel. Just as we value and cherish our own unblemished reputation, we believe we should, as a courtesy and a matter of honour, value and cherish the reputations of others equally.

We stress that the house of Stumpf, its directors and its staff, from the most senior to our most junior, will yield to none in our passionate and longstanding commitment to freedom of speech and our complete and unalloyed abhorrence of any kind of censorship.

We are proud of our track record of publishing, and thereby acknowledging the sanctity of literary endeavour, the work of those authors which other, more risk-averse and thus lesser, houses have shied away from publishing. They have sought to justify their timidity by citing the potential consequences of doing so as being commercially unacceptable.

We at Stumpf, though, pride ourselves on having always acceded, and continuing to accede, to the imperatives of pure art, and we believe it would be shameful to surrender to such timidity. Our steadfast resolve is solidly based on the founding principles of the house of Stumpf: to publish solely in the interests of good literature and never those of naked profit.

In addition to our conscious concern not to impugn the good name of anyone, high or low, we must also highlight a nice, but crucial, distinction between 'editing' and 'editing'. They are not the same. Lesser houses might prefer to 'edit' with a view to promoting a publication's commercial value. At Stumpf we eschew such a crude objective, and it is our proud practice to edit work submitted by our writers in the spirit and with the same infinite care with which a jeweller will polish a rough or halfway decent diamond to produce the most exquisite gem possible.

We would thus also ask our readers to view the changes made to the following piece in that light: we always aim for perfection.

‘WE WERE surprised when — —, the guiding light and chief executive of — —, acknowledged as one of the world’s leading companies in the — — industry, was supposedly seen in the company of the married Duchess of — —. The Duchess, a woman of high standing in her native — —, but whose adventurous behaviour often featured in the gossip columns of France’s notorious — — and similar magazines in Italy and Spain, had held an intimate dinner at her chateau in — — at which, it was said, only — — was present. The meal had hardly ended when the Duchess accompanied — — to the first floor to show him her — —. He was impressed and showed her his — —. . .