KABEL

The Story of a Typeface, a Boardgame, and Deceit

Come learn the story of the fascinating typeface, Kabel, and the even more fascinating story of the boardgame it has enriched for years. © 2018

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The Story of a Typeface, a Boardgame, and Deceit

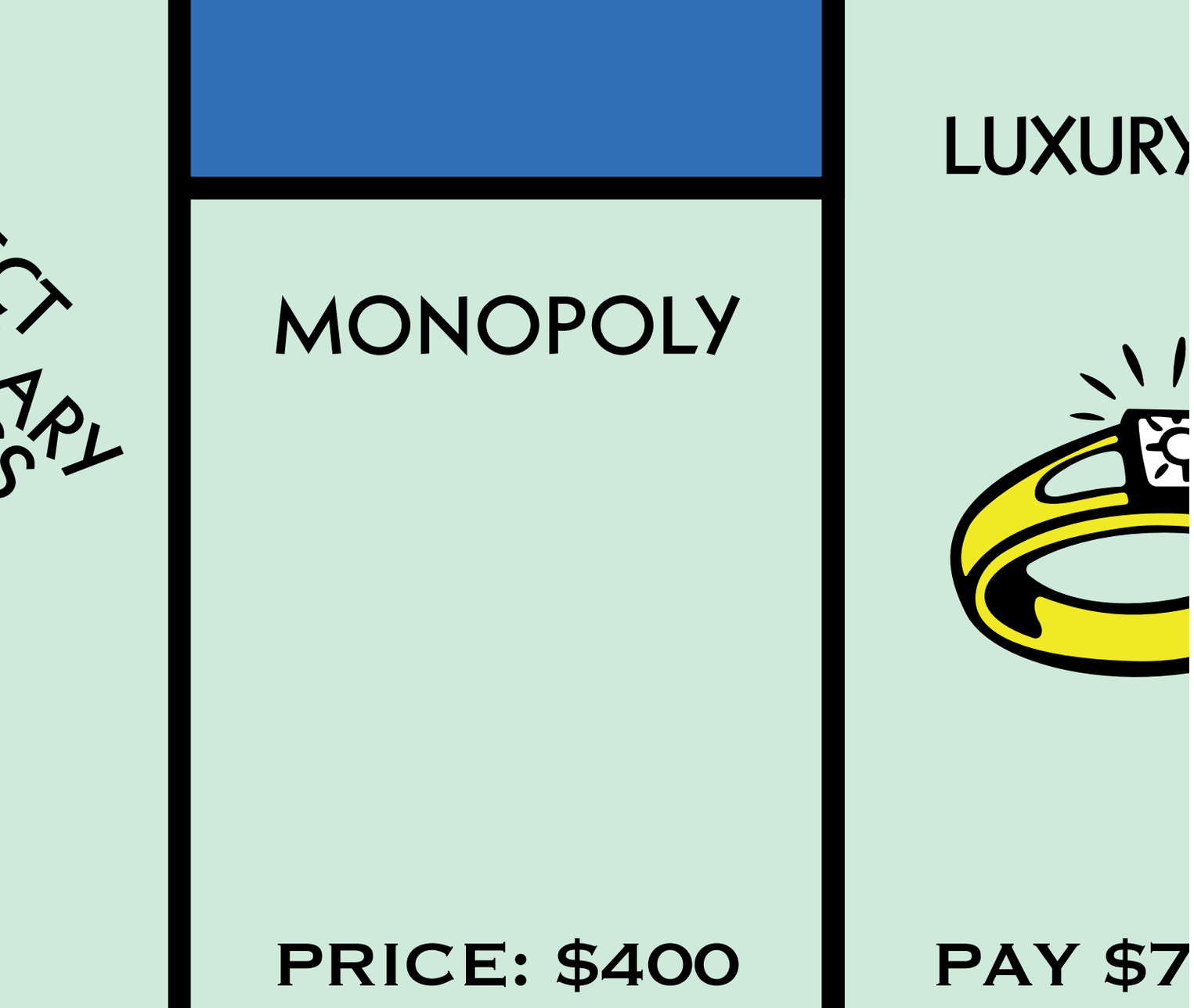
in 1902,

an activist named Elizabeth Magie invented the "Landlord's Game," a boardgame about the injustices of capitalism. She took her game to Parker Brothers, but was told the game was too complicated and was rejected.

In 1935, an unemployed man named Charles Darrow took a game he called "Monopoly" to Parker Brothers. He sold the game, it became a national success, and Darrow became a millionaire.

Charles Darrow didn't invent Monopoly, though.

This is the story of Monopoly and the typeface that has been on its boards since the beginning.



the early Days

Mrs. Magie was a progressive woman.

Donovan, T. (2017). It's All a Game. New York: St. Martin's Press.

An activist and advocate of the economic theories of Henry George, Magie wanted to find a creative way to show Americans that the economic state of the country was unjust. She created the "Landlords Game," which demonstrated the consequences of the rich taking advantage of the poor. It involved buying properties, charging rent, and even passing a starting space with the words "Labor upon Mother Earth Produces Wages" and collecting $100.

She patented the game and distributed them. Though she failed to get the game published, the Landlord's Game spread from person to person, as friends would lend boards to one another or make copies.

Donovan, T. (2017). It's All a Game. New York: St. Martin's Press.

It slowly changed as it spread, with contributions from various people. Some people started calling it "Monopoly" or "Business". One man named Daniel Layman made his own version of the game called "Finance," and invented the Community Chest space. Ruth Hoskins named the property spaces after streets in Atlantic City. Hoskins' version eventually made it into the hands of a man named Charles Todd.

Todd made a copy of Hoskins' game for himself and his wife. Even though he misspelled a few names, it remained the same. One night, they invited over a friend and her husband, Charles Darrow, to play the game. Darrow was enticed by Monopoly and asked for a copy of the board and the rules. Todd gladly obliged, and made Darrow a copy.

That was the last time the Todds saw Darrow.

Charles Darrow, the conman

Charles Darrow was a man down on his luck in the depression.

Donovan, T. (2017). It's All a Game. New York: St. Martin's Press.

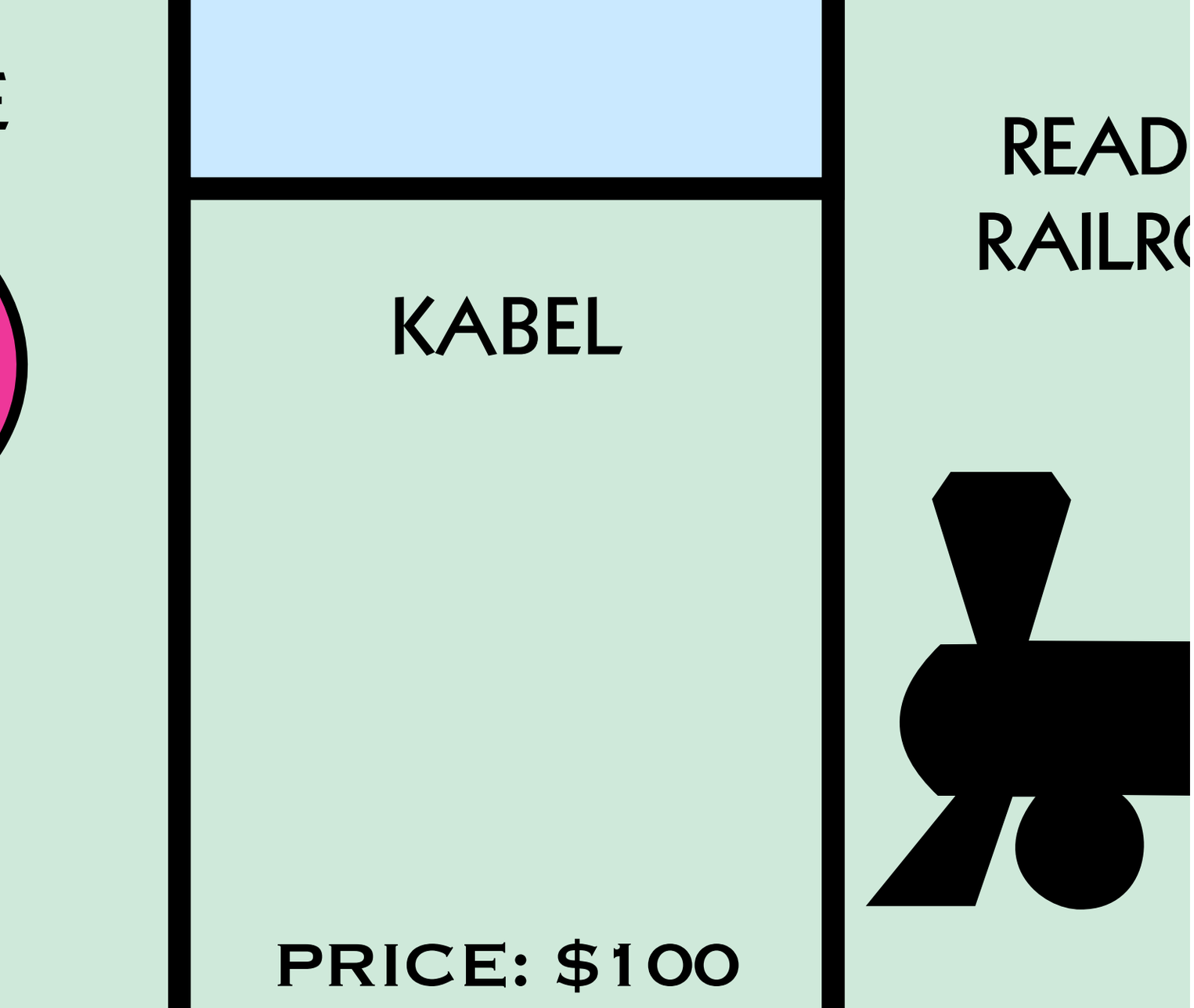
He was out of work and had a sick kid. He thought the game, Monopoly, was brilliant, though. After getting his copy from Todd, Darrow immediately asked a cartoonist friend of his to make some illustrations and then started selling the game, complete with Todd's misspellings and all. He began selling the game to local department stores, and it quickly gained popularity. After a couple of rejections from Parker Brothers, the game eventually was too popular to ignore.

Parker Brothers was willing to buy the game from Darrow as long as he was the sole developer. He assured them that he was. Parker Brothers tweaked a few things about the game, added Mr. Monopoly, and sent it off for production.

Monopoly mania ensued, and Parker Brothers sold over a million copies across the country. There was a problem, though. Lawsuits came in from those whose work Darrow had stolen. Parker Brothers went to each and reached a settlement. They even managed to settle with Elizabeth Magie, on the condition that the Landlord's Game would be published.

The Landlord's Game was published, but the game was a failure.

Darrow accepted reduced royalties on Monopoly but still became a millionaire.

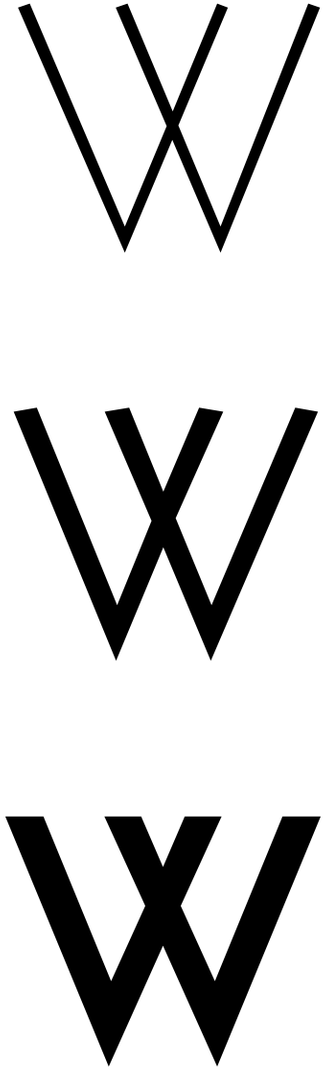


what is Kabel?

Kabel is a geometric sans-serif with life.

Vintage 1935 Monopoly. dknyc5280.

Designed in 1927 by master calligrapher, Rudolf Koch, Kabel is known for its lively, yet clean appearance. The logo of Monopoly has proudly boasted Kabel since the beginning, and the game has included the typeface more and more throughout the years, whether on tile spaces, deed cards, or even instruction manuals. What makes Kabel so appealing, though, goes back to its early days and the man who created it.



McNeil, P. (2017). The Visual History of Type. London: Laurence King Publishing

The 1920s saw the creation of numerous geometric sans-serif typefaces. Erbar-Grotesk was one of the first to be designed, and in 1927, Paul Renner designed Futura, which would go on to become one of the most ubiquitous typefaces of the 1950s.

Ulrich, F. (2016). Why We Need a New Kabel. Fontshop. Retrieved from https://www.fontshop.com/

Another typeface was designed in 1927, though, within a rival type foundry. Rudolf Koch, the calligrapher who had only ever made scripts and traditional serif was asked to design his first and only geometric sans-serif. Koch would combine the clean quality of geometric forms with his sensibilities from calligraphy. The result was a geometric typeface with the appeal of a typeface designed optically. Kabel, though it never obtained Futura's fame, continues to be valued for its lively and distinctive quality, standing out from the average geometric sans-serif.

The Weights of Kabel

Light

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Book

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Heavy

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Black

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

ER WORKS Heavy 16 pt. ELECTRIC CO
lack 16 pt. COMPANY Book 16 pt. ATLANTIC AVE Book 16 pt. COMPANY Light 16 pt. ATLANTIC AVE Black 16 pt. COMPANY Heavy 16 pt. ATLANTIC AVE Heavy 16 pt. COMPANY Light 16 pt. ATLANTIC AVE
NE RAILROAD Heavy 30 pt. PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD Black 30 pt. SHORT LINE RAILROAD Light 30 pt. PENN
11 pt. COMMUNITY CHEST Black 11 pt. PENNYBAGS Heavy 11 pt. MONEY Light 11 pt. LUXURY TAX Book 11 pt. COMMUNITY CHEST Black 11 pt. PENNYBAGS Heavy 11 pt. MONEY Light 11 pt. LUXURY TAX Book 11 pt. COMMUNITY CHEST Black 11 pt. PENNYBAGS Hea
ONOPOLY Heavy 170 pt. CHANC WATER
PARK PLACE Heavy 55 pt. BOARDWALK Book 55 pt. RULE Heavy 55 pt. CH
house Heavy 160 pt. THIMBLE Light 40 pt. FREE PARKING Black 40 pt. PIECE Book 40 pt.
WATER WORKS Black 45 pt. VIRGINIA AVE Heavy 45 pt. VE
LROAD CHANCE LUXU

a

Double Storeyed

e

Oblique Cross Stroke

g

Double Storeyed, with an Open Bowl

W

Narrower W, note the crossed center strokes, adding character

Characteristics of Kabel

McNeil, P. (2017). The Visual History of Type. London: Laurence King Publishing

Slanted Terminals

K

Crossed Center Strokes

W

Stem Leads into Rounded Bowl

b

e

The diagonal cross stroke produces a more dynamic effect

Compared to Futura

K

Slanted terminals make the letters appear lively on the baseline

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Vintage 1935 Monopoly. Image taken by dknyc5280. Retrieved from https://www.ebay.com/itm/Vintage-1935-Parker-Brothers-MONOPOLY/173254674392?_trkparms=aid%3D222007%26algo%3DSIM.

Colophon

This type specimen book is one of a series of 10 books designed under the direction of Prof. Jordan Kauffman by the VCD 02: Typography students at the University of Notre Dame during the Spring semester of 2018.

This volume explores the use and origins of the Kabel typeface created by Rudolf Koch in 1927. This book has been researched, designed and edited by Eric Carlson.