

# DO'S & DON'TS FOR INDIE AUTHORS

Submitting a manuscript for Interior Formatting

Rubre Art

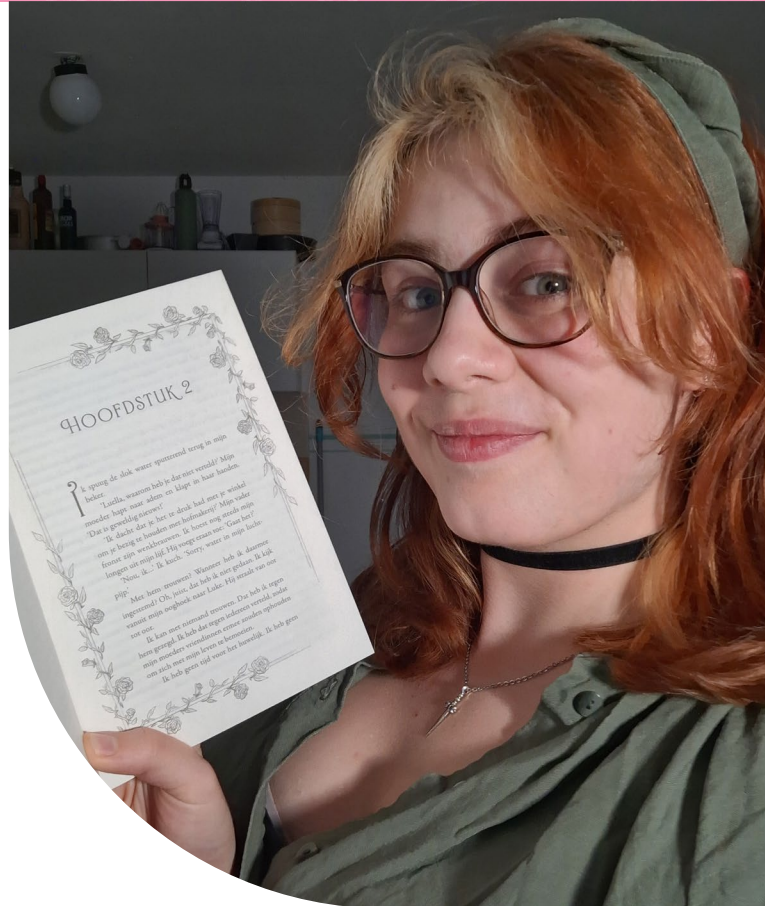


# MEET THE DESIGNER

## Hey, I'm Mariska Maas (aka Rubre Art)

I'm a book designer, illustrator, and full-on *book nerd* who spends most her waking life turning stories into professionally designed books. I've helped bring over **180+ interiors** and **20+ covers** to life, each one custom-tailored and illustrated to make sure that it's a Cinderella one-of-a-kind fit. (Some of which are included in this guide)

Over the last five years I've immersed myself in every corner of publishing. I've worked in both traditional and indie publishing, designing books, attending fairs, working as a foreign rights assistant, all while learning all the little nooks and crannies that make the book world tick.



After creating over **70+ tip videos**, it felt like time for the next step, which is this lovely guide in front of you.

If you ever want help with your covers, interiors, or illustrations, I'd love to work with you. You can always find me here:

Instagram: [@rubre.art](https://www.instagram.com/rubre.art)

Tiktok: [@rubre.art](https://www.tiktok.com/@rubre.art)

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Go to the next page for the guide!



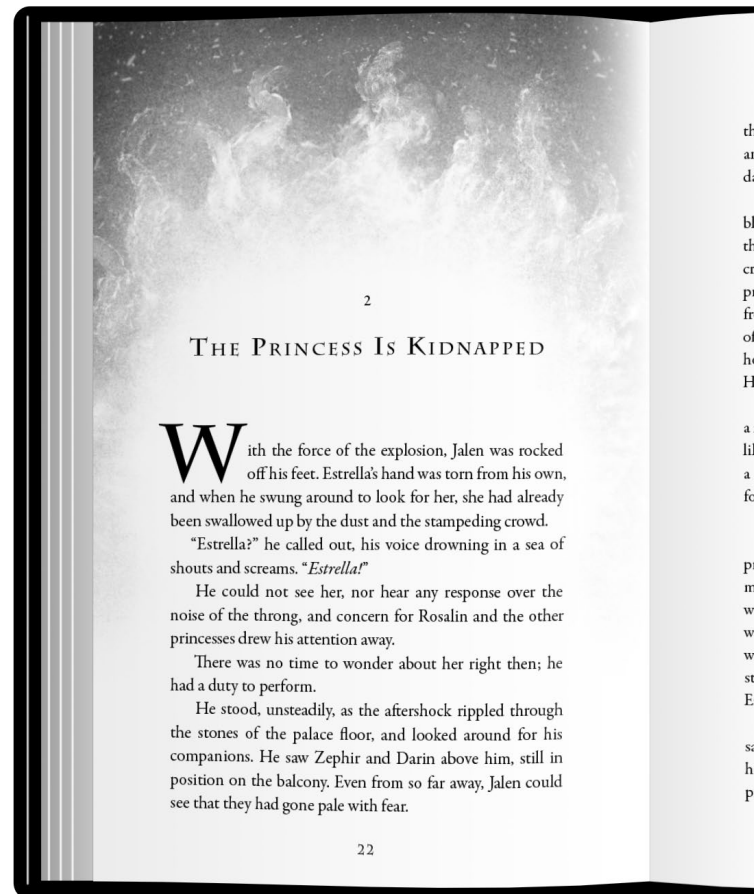
# ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide is the second tool in your book design toolbox. And more bookish tools can be found here: <https://rubreart.com/resources>

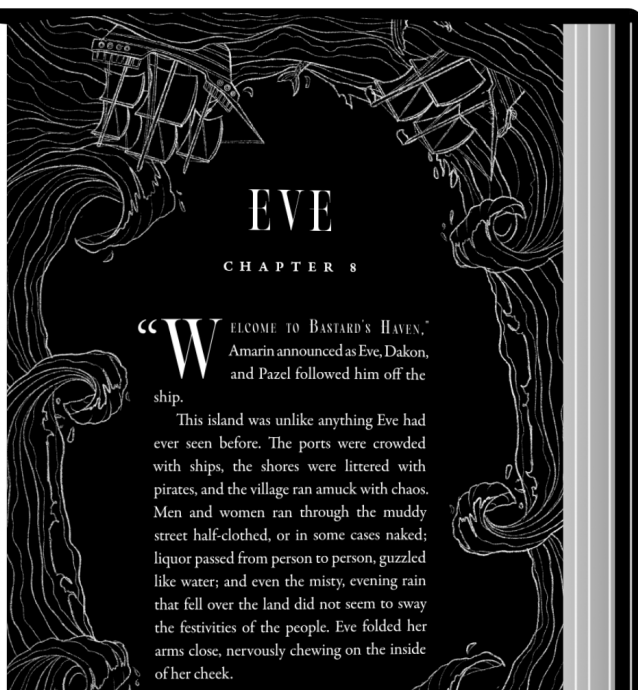
Writing a book is absolutely not an easy task. It is a journey that not many dare to take. I just want to say before we start, that you are an absolute fantastic person for doing it. You are adding amazing stories to this world, which will find a place in other's homes and their hearts. It is a little piece of your soul that you are willing to share and me and your readers will treasure that forever.

Now, in this guide you will find some tips of what TO DO and what NOT TO DO. Take these tips with a grain of salt. Don't get scared off by them, but see them as a learning opportunity, which will make the design process not just easier for your formatter, but also for you if dare to take the task of design upon yourself.

*The Sorceress and the Soldier – Emily Mundell*



*Flame in the Silverstorm – Rocío Carranza*



I'll keep updating this guide, and create others whenever I have new tips and resources. To stay in the loop with fresh content, make sure to sign up for my newsletter!

I can't wait to help you optimise your manuscript for your next interior formatting step. Let's get started!

@Rubreart

# WHAT NOT TO DO

Before we get to the “things to do,” let’s cover what to avoid. These little traps might look fine in Word, but they can sneak in mistakes and make formatting way harder. Think of this section as your guide to keeping your manuscript clean and smooth, so your book gets the care it deserves.

## 1. DON'T USE TABS AS INDENTS

Tabs might feel like a quick fix and they can even look nice in Word. But when it comes to formatting a book, tabs can cause a lot of extra work. Let me show you why.

In picture 1, you can see a manuscript in Word where all the indents were made with the tab key. It looks okay at first, but mistakes can sneak in, like forgetting to press Enter and leaving only a tab.

In picture 2, you can see what happens when the book is formatted. The sentences that should be separated are suddenly pasted together, with only a tab separating them.

Normally with a book, all tabs are removed at once, but here this was not possible. If you look at picture 3, you can see that the two paragraphs are now pasted together. And that, of course, shouldn't be the case.

To avoid this, and to make sure that we don't have to check all 2000+ tabs manually, it is recommended to use word styles instead of using tabs. (How to do this will be explained in number 2 of Things to Do)

A few tabs now and then is not the end of the world. I will catch them when formatting your book. This tip is mostly to prevent mistakes before they happen because your book deserves to look perfect.

### PICTURE 1

“I wish I had our Dinah here, I know I do!” said Alice aloud, addressing nobody in particular. “She’d soon fetch it back!”

“And who is Dinah, if I might venture to ask the question?” said the Lory. “I didn’t mean it!” pleaded poor

### PICTURE 2

“I wish I had our Dinah here, I know I do!” said Alice aloud, addressing nobody in particular. “She’d soon fetch it back!” “And who is Dinah, if I might venture to ask the question?” said the Lory. “I didn’t mean it!” pleaded

### PICTURE 3

“I wish I had our Dinah here, I know I do!” said Alice aloud, addressing nobody in particular. “She’d soon fetch it back!” “And who is Dinah, if I might venture to ask the question?” said the Lory. “I didn’t mean it!” pleaded poor



# 3. DON'T ADD EXTRA ENTERS FOR VISUAL SPACING

Sometimes you are at the end of the page in Word, and you will think: 'This doesn't end nicely, let me do an extra enter to make it look nicer.'

Please don't do this because it is very confusing for your interior formatter. For they are not always sure whether there should or shouldn't be a scene break.

In picture 1, you can see what it would look like in Word with a page break in the middle. It looks normal.

But in picture 2 you can see how it will look when we prepare the book for printing. That enter that was added in Word, doesn't belong there in the middle of the page. And although the typesetter can usually pick them out, it is better to avoid them. To not risk any chances for mistakes to pop in.

## PICTURE 1

“Would you tell me,” said Alice, a little timidly, “why you are painting those roses?”

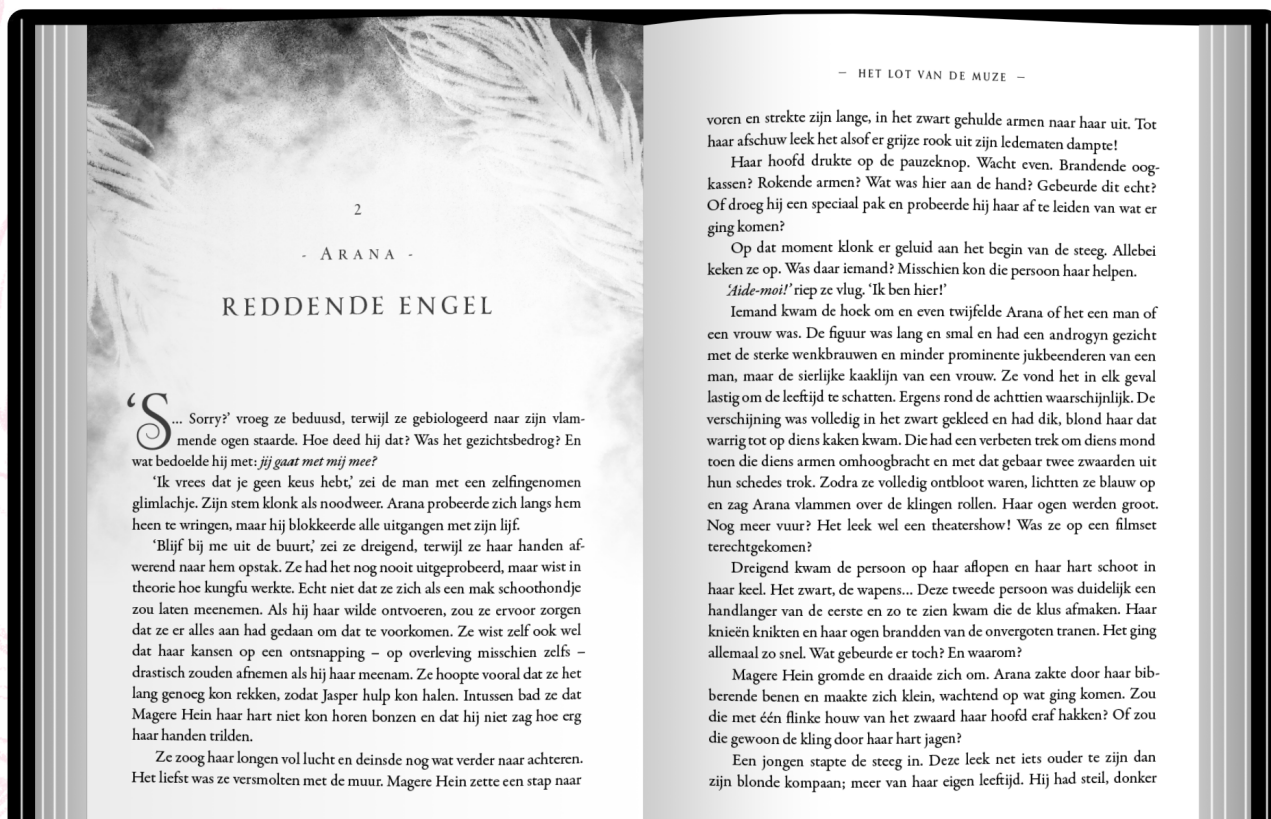
Five and Seven said nothing, but looked at Two. Two began in a low

## PICTURE 2

“Would you tell me,” said Alice, a little timidly, “why you are painting those roses?”

Five and Seven said nothing, but looked at Two. Two began in a low voice, “Why the fact is, you see, Miss,

*Het Lot van de Muze – Marijke F. Jansen*

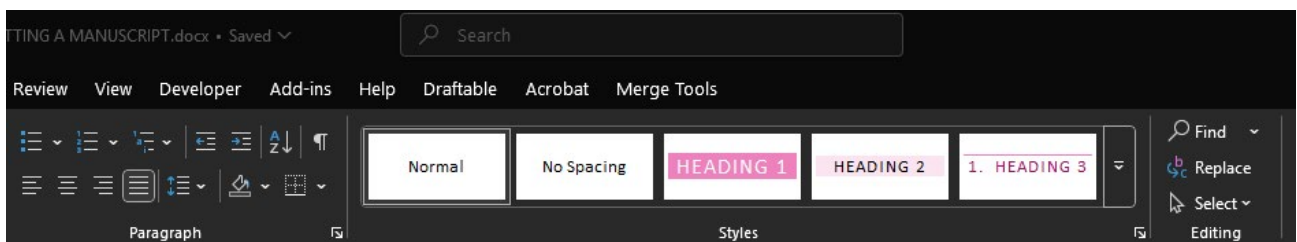


# WHAT TO DO

Now that we know what to avoid, let's talk about the good stuff. These simple steps will make your manuscript easier to format, cleaner to read, and faster to turn into a finished book. Think of these tips as little helpers for you and your formatter. Follow them, and your book will look polished, professional, and exactly how you imagined it.

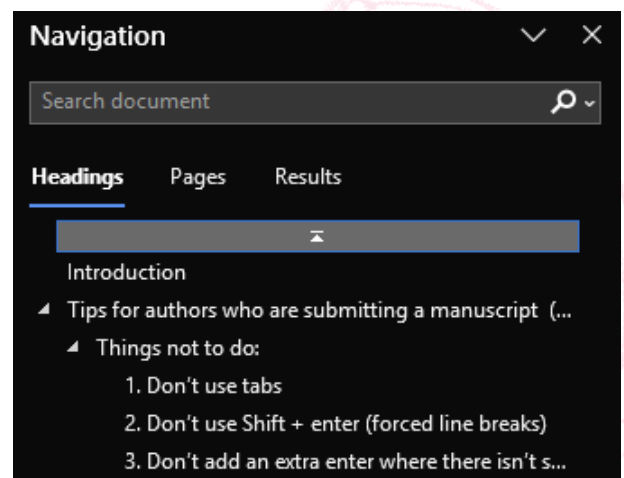
## 1. USE WORD STYLES FOR SECTIONS AND CHAPTERS,

Word styles are one of those little tools that make a big difference. Using them will make life easier for your typesetter, your e-book formatter, and for you down the line. You can find them easily in Word's style menu. Of which you can find the example below



Styles keep your manuscript clean and organised behind the scenes, even if everything already looks fine on the page. They also create a clear navigation structure, which is especially important for e-books. As you can see on the right.

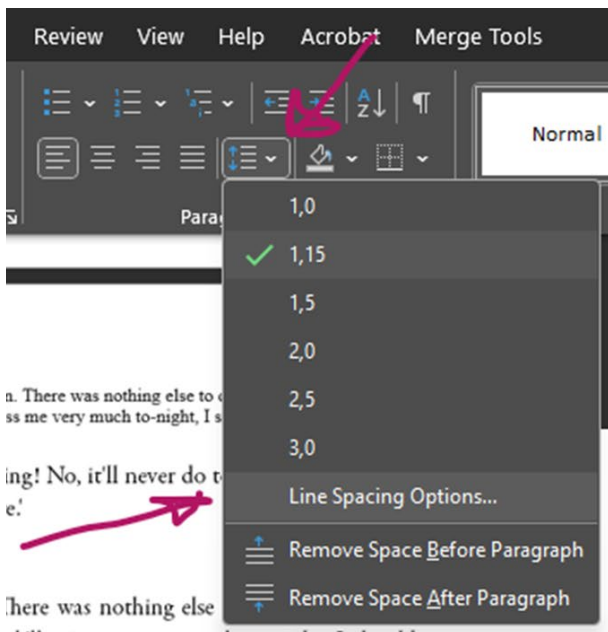
And here's the bonus. If you ever want to tweak your chapter titles or headings, you can change them all at once instead of fixing each one manually. Simple, tidy, and very satisfying.



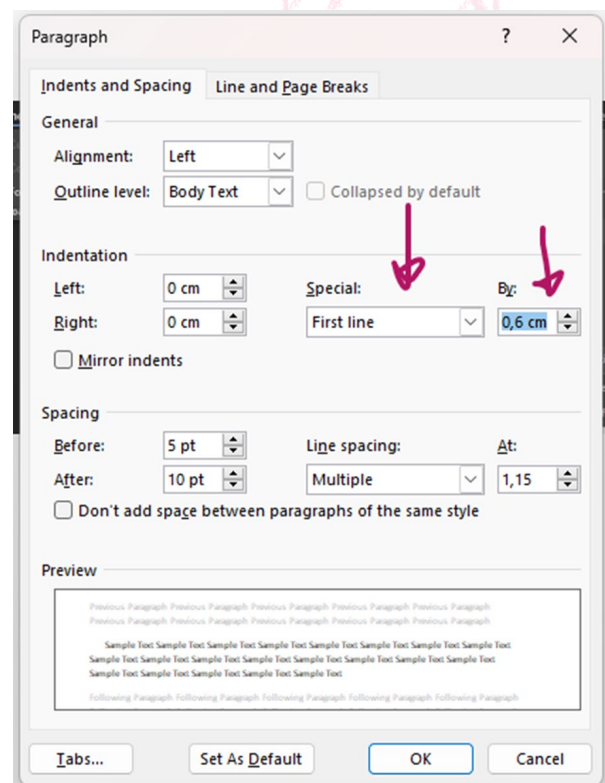
# 2. USE INDENTS TO KEEP THE OVERVIEW

To avoid accidentally using tabs or shift enters, it is best to use indents from the start. You can do this by following the steps below:

## STEP 1



## STEP 2



*Child of Shivay – J.R. Cathers*

use to hide a great weakness. One of the first lessons Leanna ever taught me: perception is the greatest strength of any Fea Dien.

I assure myself that Vakesh will have ideas on how I can manage my demon after the crossing. I just can't afford to let him know how bad the dreams have become in the time since he last witnessed them.

He's been gone for years, tying up loose ends on the never-ending bombardment of missions Leanna crafted for him. If I thought my life was hard before knowing Vakesh, the last four years have been the hardest yet. I haven't felt whole since we've been parted. Not that there is a single soul on the continent I will speak those words aloud to.

I pinch one of the obsidian blades between two fingers and with a quick flick of my wrist throw it into the air. It spins in a timing I know well, and I catch it by the hilt when it falls back toward my hand.

I can't help but wonder how Vakesh managed to obtain a mission that put us aboard the same ship. The decision couldn't have been Leanna's. She would never allow us to be out of sight together for so long. If she knew, I wouldn't put it past her to ensure the shadow master never makes it to port. I only hope that the years of superficial greetings I have exchanged with him are over and that, finally, we can settle back into the ease we'd once had with each other. In this moment, I know that there will never be anything I want more.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE SOUTHERN KEEP, LA'TARI

Eight Years Earlier

"Yes, Shivaria, you *must* meet the new master of shadows and train with him. Don't ask me again."

Leanna has never been a patient woman and though I hadn't actually repeated myself, I'm not surprised when she responds like I've drawled the question at her eight times. I hate my shadow lessons, almost as much as I love my sparring lessons with Bront.

The previous shadow master was a slip of a man with thin, oily, black hair and a face so pocked it somehow distracted from the intense crook of his nose, though that wasn't why I hated him. He had no business being the master of anything. He was prideful,

### 3. PLACE \*\*\* WHERE YOU WANT A SCENE BREAK

To avoid scene breaks in your book where there shouldn't be any, it is useful to mark them with (\*\*\*). This way, the typesetter knows for sure that there should be a scene break there, and that it is for instance not a wrongly placed enter.

It also makes it a lot easier to replace later, when your custom illustrated scene breaks get added.

On the right you can see how the \*\*\* look, added in.

#### EXAMPLE \*\*\*

(it had, in fact, a sort of mixed flavour of cherry-tart, custard, pine-apple, roast turkey, toffee, and hot buttered toast,) she very soon finished it off.

\*\*\*

“What a curious feeling!” said Alice; “I must be shutting up like a telescope.”

### 4. PUT NEW CHAPTERS ON A NEW PAGE

When you start a new chapter, it is convenient if this is done on a new page. Don't do this by pressing enter several times, but by pressing CTRL + Enter only once. This will automatically take you to a new page. Again, do not forget to apply the styles here.

### 5. HIGHLIGHT TEXT THAT NEEDS SPECIAL STYLING

Sometimes you may have letters, text messages or other special things in your book, where the text needs to be made just a tad more special. Let your typesetter know this in your Word document, because unfortunately they can't always read minds (even if we wish we could ;)). And in order to avoid mistakes, this is also always nice to know.

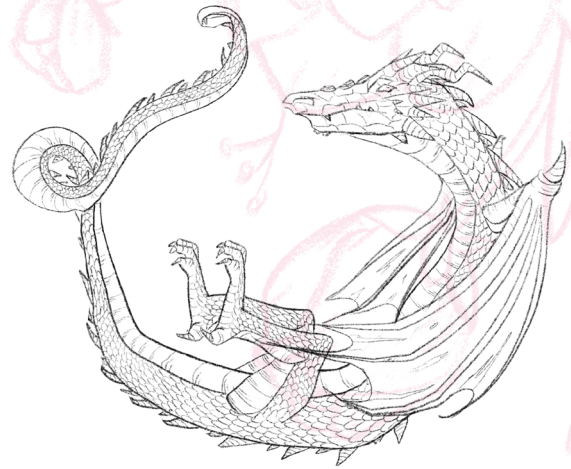
You can indicate your wishes in two ways:

1. Highlight the text and indicate in advance what it means (Example: pink means text messages)
2. Write a comment and select the text it belongs to.

Like this

## 6. SUBMIT YOUR IMAGES SEPERATELY AND IN HIGH QUALITY

Suppose there are images in your book. Then supply these images separately in high quality. This way, no quality is lost in printing.



*Chapter Icon for Tia Low*

## 7. MAKE SURE TO DELETE ALL DOUBLE SPACES FROM YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Double spaces can quickly slip in, and aren't always spotted by Word's autocorrect, because of this reason it is always good to double check before sending in your book for formatting.

This link gives you a quick tutorial on how to do so: <https://www.laptopmag.com/articles/remove-double-spaces-word>

# THE END (FOR NOW)

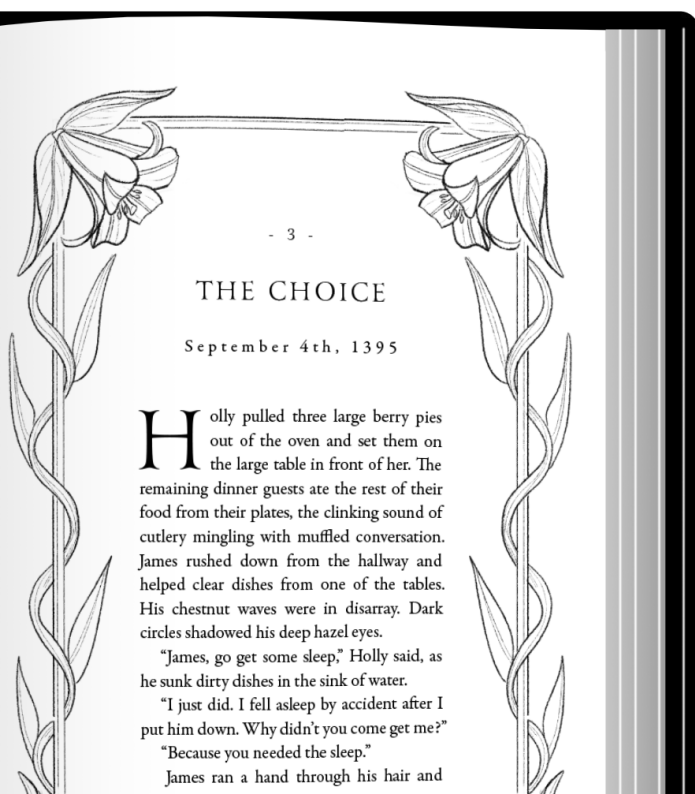
## And there you have it!

I hope it's given you a clearer idea of how to prepare your manuscript so your book looks polished, professional, and ready for formatting. Submitting your manuscript might seem like a small step, but it's actually huge, because these little details can save you time, prevent mistakes, and make the whole process smoother, for both you and me.

Remember, there's no one-size-fits-all approach. The best way to format your manuscript is the one that fits your story, your style, and your workflow. Follow these tips, play around a little, and trust your instincts.

If you want to keep learning, I'll be creating new resources as often as I can. [Sign up for the newsletter](#) so you don't miss anything.

*The Witchslayer Chronicles – Aryn Allysbeth*



*Villegents and the Dark Prince – H.R. Whipple*

And a little bonus note: if you see books featured in this guide, don't forget to give some love to the authors who wrote them, and who I had the pleasure of working with. Supporting fellow creatives is what keeps this lovely indie book industry going.

If after reading this guide you want some help with your cover, interior, illustrations, or just a second pair of eyes on your design, I'm always happy to help. Reach out anytime:

Instagram: [@rubre.art](#)

Tiktok: [@rubre.art](#)

Email: [rubreart@outlook.com](mailto:rubreart@outlook.com)

Website: [www.rubreart.com](http://www.rubreart.com)

And if you share your upgraded interior formatting online, I'd love it if you tagged me. I always get excited to see your creations.

Thank you again for letting me be a part of your publishing journey. Now go create a book that looks as magical as your story feels!