How to Design a Book in InDesign

These notes describe how I design my fiction books in Adobe InDesign. I am sharing them in case they might be useful to other self-publishers. This is a simplified version of my original instructions, which were for a nonfiction book and included some more complex steps and options. That version is still on my website if you're interested. (That version also is a bit messy, so I'd start with this one, regardless.)

My goal here is to be as simple as possible, so I simply list what I do, step by step. I follow these steps to create a PDF I can upload at Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) and IngramSpark to create print-on-demand books.

These instructions are for Adobe InDesign on a Mac. Some of the keys may be different on a PC. In general, when I need to learn to do something in InDesign, I search online and find a third-party tutorial.

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Getting Started

Before you open InDesign

You're going to copy your novel from whatever program you have the text in (I use Microsoft Word) to InDesign. Make sure you are completely, totally, 100 percent done writing your novel. Once you set it up in InDesign, you will have two copies of it that you need to keep updated. This is a huge bother! So wait to move it into InDesign until you have all copyedits made.

Also, put all front and end matter in your Word document. Put it in the order it will appear in the print book. Here is the order I use: simple title page, page with list of books in the series, main title page, copyright page, dedication, map, Chapter 1, … Chapter X, epilogue, author note, acknowledgments, about the author page.

Traditionally published fiction books usually do not have a table of contents; it's not needed because readers read the book in order, and the chapter titles are often just "Chapter 1, Chapter 2 . . ." Self-published fiction books sometimes have a table of contents; I hypothesize that it is created automatically from an ebook version or in an online creation tool.

Finally, InDesign can be . . . let's lovingly call it "quirky." Don't give it an excuse to do quirky things. You can start by having a neat and tidy Word document: Use styles properly instead of manually changing fonts and font sizes (for example, the entire main text is Body Text style, and all chapter titles are Heading 1 style). Insert a page break to move each chapter title to the next page; don't hit Return 30 times to do it. Don't indent paragraphs with tabs.

If you think your file is messy, you can use "Clear Formatting" in the Styles sidebar to remove all formatting from your Word doc, and then carefully apply the right styles. Also, don't worry about what the styles look like in Word.

Document setup

Create a new InDesign document by selecting File > New > Document. Enter the page and margin sizes. Select "Facing Pages" so that you'll have "mirror margins" (the inside margin will be wider than the outside margin). Here are the sizes I use (all sizes are in inches):

- Page size: 6 × 9
- Number of pages: 2
- Outside margin: 1/2 (0.5)
- Bottom margin: 1/2 (0.5)
- Inside margin: 3/4 (0.75)
- Top margin: 7/8 (0.875)

I leave the other items as the defaults, for example, Bleed as 0. The top margin is big because the header will be in the margin. Note that we use facing pages because we need this setup to get mirror margins, but when we export the file, we will export it as single pages.

If InDesign is showing you units that are not inches, open Preferences > Units and Increments to change to inches.

Headers

To create headers, you draw text frames using the Type Tool (T, yellow arrow below) and then type your header text in. Insert the text frames on the document's master pages to make them appear in the same place on each page. To access the master pages, open the Pages window and double-click on the pages labeled Master at the top (other yellow arrow). Draw the text frames from one margin to the other, and position the top of the text frame 0.5 from the top of the page.
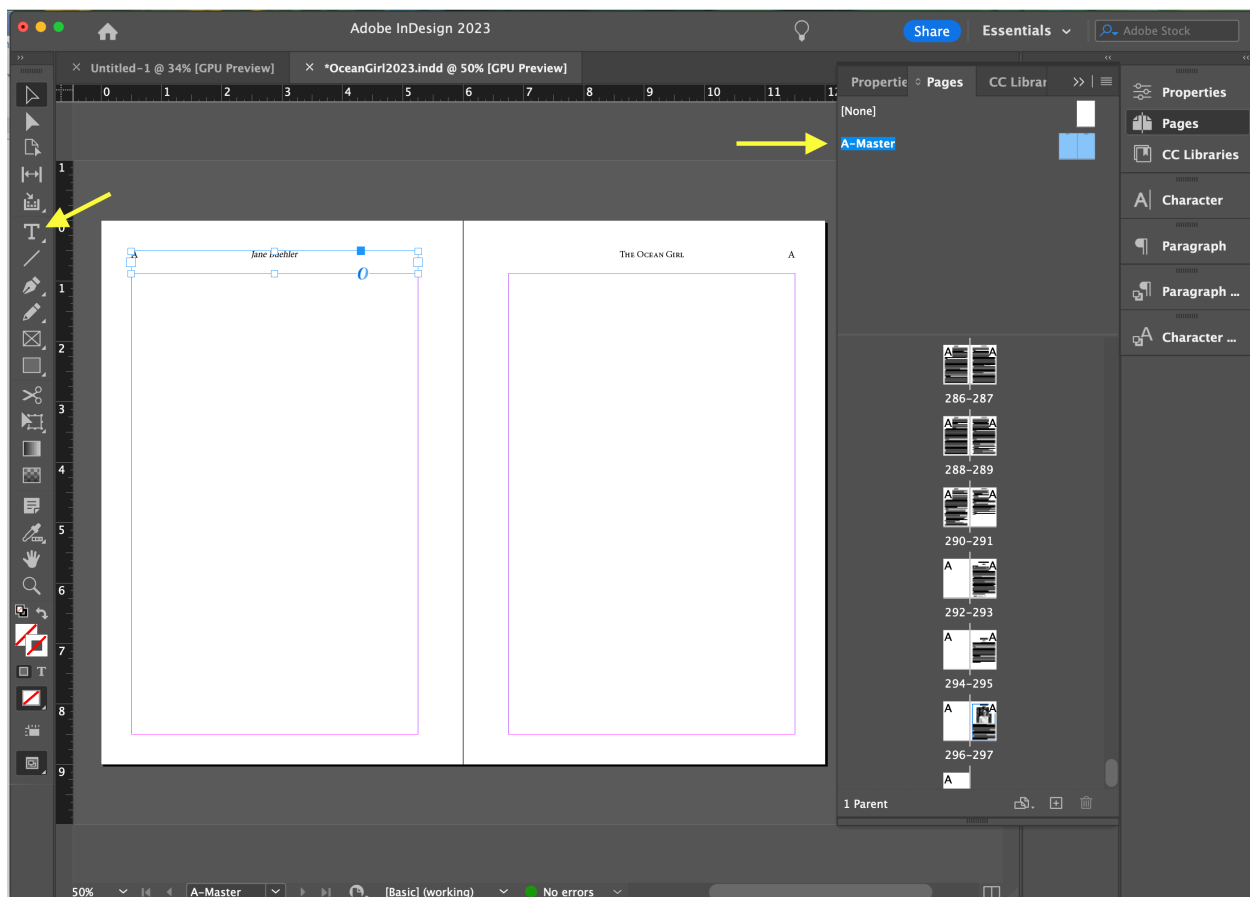
I type the author name in the left header, centered and in italics; and the book title in the right header, centered and in small caps. To access the formatting options, you'll need these windows:

- To center text, open the Paragraph window. The cursor must be somewhere in the text. Select the centered text icon.
- To get italics, open the Character window. Select the text you want italics on. In InDesign, you don't exactly apply italics to your text; you choose a font that is already in italics. So, if you want the font Sabon in italics, choose the font "Sabon Italics."
- To get small caps, open the Character window. Select the text you want small caps on. Click on the menu icon at the top right (horizontal lines) and select Small Caps.

Later, you will need to remove the header from select pages. To override the master page and delete the header, go to the page you want to delete the header from, hold down Command-Shift, click on the header's text frame, and hit delete. If you mess up and delete a header you want to keep, you can reapply the master page to restore it (in the Pages window, Control-click on the page and select "Apply Parent to Pages…").

Page numbers

On the master pages, draw a small text frame in the top outside corner of each page. Put the cursor into this text frame. Select Type > Insert Special Character > Markers > Current Page Number. A symbol should appear (A in the above image). Use the Selection Tool (the top arrow in the toolbar) to move the text frame and line the A up with the margin and header text.

The A will appear as the correct page number in the header on each page of the book because the master pages are applied to all the pages. You can format the page number (font, size, italics, and so on) by formatting it on the master pages.

Some decisions to think about

First page of chapter: I like when the first page of each chapter is on the righthand side. However, sometimes this leads to many, many blank lefthand-side pages. I always have Chapter 1 start on the righthand side, but usually allow later chapters to begin on the left- or righthand side. All special pages/sections (dedication, author note, etc.) begin on the righthand side.

Sections within chapters: Lately I avoid having sections within chapters to make the design simpler, which is probably not the best way to craft stories. If you do have sections, you need to decide how to delineate them. I think a blank line (i.e., a blank space) between sections looks classier than symbols like ***. It's also usual to use small caps at the start of a new section (purple arrow below). To do this, you will need to create one extra paragraph style that has the first five words styled with small caps, and apply the paragraph style to the first paragraph of each new section. (This should make more sense after you read the upcoming instructions about creating styles.)
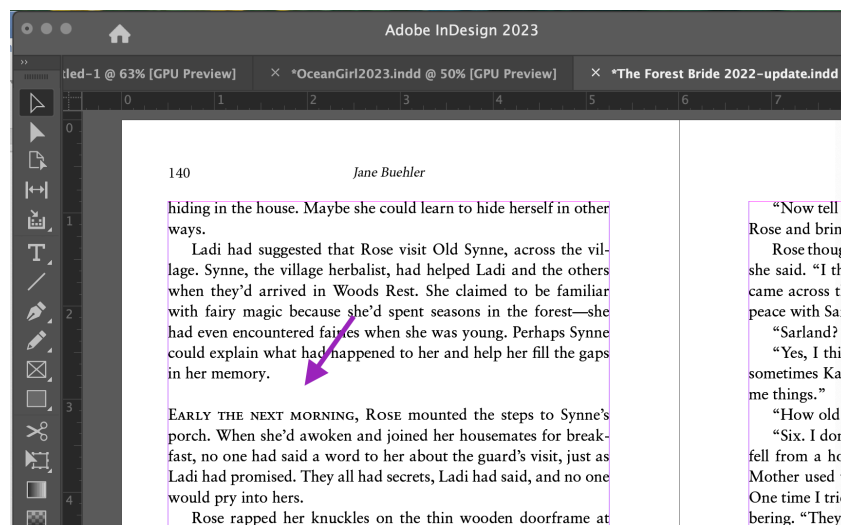
Font: You must choose a font for the body of your text. Two considerations are the font's readability and the space it takes up. Also, the font should not distract the reader.

Fonts are copyrighted. Even if they are old and in the public domain, the digitized version may be protected. Stick to the fonts that come with InDesign to avoid trouble. You can see the fonts from the Character window. Note: Adobe seems to have additional fonts that you can use, that may not immediately appear in InDesign. I'm not totally clear on how to access them, although I've done it. (I tend to forget things after I do them if I don't write them down.) If you open the Creative Cloud app (which is like the all-seeing Adobe app that constantly runs in the background), look for "Manage Fonts" to get started (pink arrows, below).
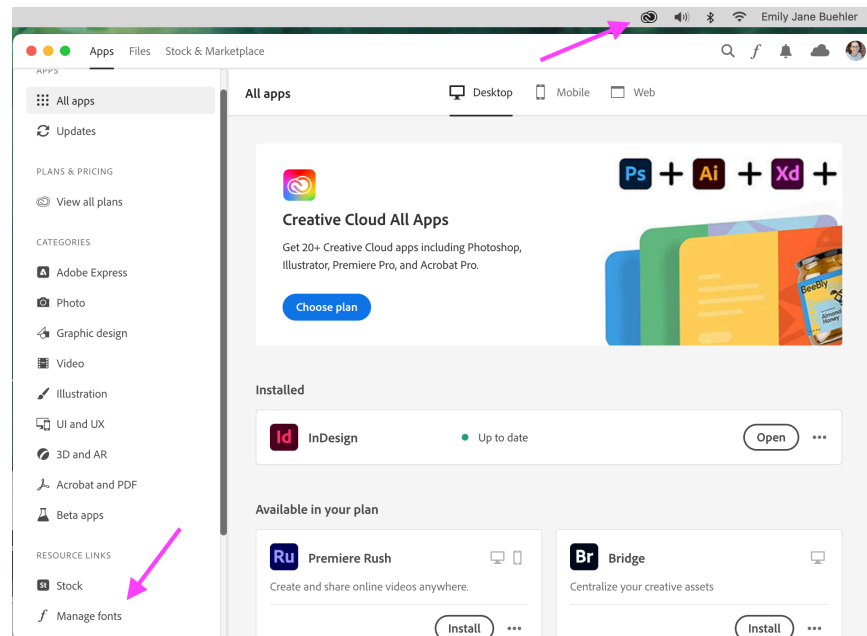
For example, my bike trip memoir was on the long side, so I wanted a compact font that would condense the text into less pages while still being readable. I used the What the Font app and searched online for suggestions. I tested fonts in InDesign (one of the advantages of using styles is you can easily change the font of all the text) and printed test pages. I chose Garamond.

For my cozy fantasy romance novels, I use Sabon. It has a pretty roundness to it that seems to fit with plots like fairies living in the woods and making love spells out of flowers. It also has an italic version available (but, if your font doesn't have an italic version, I'm betting it is going to qualify as "distracting" to the reader and you shouldn't use it anyway).

Using Styles

Styles are extremely important and can be difficult to understand. There are two types of styles in InDesign: character styles and paragraph styles. I'm going to (attempt to) explain how they work first. Then, in the next section, I'll explain how to bring your novel's text into InDesign and actually apply styles to it.

When you place text from Word into InDesign, you can bring the Word styles in, too. So, if your Word document has styles in it—like Heading 1 on all the chapter titles—and you choose to import the styles, you may find some styles created for you in InDesign. One bonus of bringing styles in is that if you use the Emphasis style throughout your novel (for italics), it will come over.

On the flip side, I've noticed that sometimes, unwanted aspects of the Word style come over into InDesign (like one time my Heading 1 was blue and I had to change it back to black). So you might be safer **not** bringing styles in from Word and instead creating them all in InDesign, especially if your Word document is filled with all kinds of messy styles. But if you do this, I'm pretty sure you will need to reapply things like italics used for emphasis.

Some styles must be created in InDesign regardless, because they don't exist in Word.

Character styles

I think of character styles as useful for accomplishing simple formatting, while paragraph styles are needed for more complicated tasks. For example, the character style Emphasis simply applies italics to the handful of characters it is applied to. You could also simply select the text and manually format it as Sabon Italics. I use the style because it is automatically created from the same style in Word. Also, if I decide I want all my emphasized words to be bold instead of italic, or some other global change, I can easily accomplish it by updating the style.

Character styles are also used within paragraph styles. For example, the Drop Cap character style seems a little silly when you create it, but having it is a necessary step to create a drop cap; the Drop Cap character style is used by the paragraph style called Body Text First Para.

Here are the character styles I use and the settings applied; all other settings not listed below are left as the defaults:

- **Emphasis:** Font Style = Italics
- **Book title:** Font Style = Italics
- **Drop Cap:** Font Family = FairyTaleJF, Font Style = Regular, Size = 12
- **Body First Line:** Font Family = Sabon LT Pro, Font Style = Roman, Size = 12, Case = Small Caps

I chose the font of my drop cap letter to match my chapter titles, but you don't necessarily have to do this. Also, I recommend not using the font FairyTaleJF at all unless you think about it hard and it seems to fit your book and your marketing plans. Which I thought it did for me, but I'm always kind of winging it so who knows if it was a smart decision. It's a weird little font.

Paragraph styles

Paragraph styles can accomplish more complicated formatting tasks. For example, I use the style Heading 1 to make chapter titles be a certain font and size, with certain spacing above and below. Paragraph styles can also use "nested" character styles. For example, I want the first letter of each chapter to be a drop cap. To select the drop cap option in the paragraph style menu, I

need to select the character style I previously set up for the dropped letter—the character style called Drop Cap.

Note that styles can be created independently or based on an existing style. For example, my main text is the style Body Text. The first paragraph of each chapter needs to have its own style (because of the drop cap), so I create the style Body Text First Para, which is based on Body Text. That way, if I decide I want my main text to be Comic Sans instead of Sabon, and I change Body Text to Comic Sans, Body Text First Para will update also. But, having styles based on each other can get confusing, so if you want to keep them all separate, that works, too.

Here are the paragraph styles I use and the settings applied; all other settings not listed below are left as the defaults:

- **Body Text:** Font Family = Sabon LT Pro, Font Style = Roman, Size = 12, Leading = 16, Alignment = Left Justify, First Line Indent = 0.25 inch; Keep Options Start = 1 and End = 2
- **Body Text First Para:** Font Family = Sabon LT Pro, Font Style = Roman, Size = 12, Leading = 16, Alignment = Left Justify, First Line Indent = 0; Drop Caps and Nested Styles as follows . . .
  - Drop Caps Lines = 2, Characters = 1, Character Style = Drop Cap, Scale for Descenders (checked)
  - Create a New Nested Style, Body First Line through 5 words
- **Normal:** Font Family = Sabon LT Pro, Font Style = Roman, Size = 12, Leading = 14, Alignment = Left Justify, First Line Indent = 0
- **Heading 1:** Font Family = FairyTaleJF, Font Style = Regular, Size = 22, Leading = 22, Alignment = Center; First Line Indent = 0

I use the style Normal on pages where I don't want the text indented, such as my copyright page and dedication page. If your novel has sections within chapters, this is where you need to create an additional style, similar to Body Text First Para but without the drop cap.

Actually Designing Your Book

Placing the text

When you place the text from Word into InDesign, you want it to thread automatically from one page to the next. In addition to saving you from manually threading the text boxes, this will create additional pages until all the text is placed.

Go to page 1 of your empty InDesign document. It shouldn't have any text frames on it yet, but if it did, you'd want to make sure no frame is selected. Select File > Place. A window will pop up in which you can choose the Word document. (The Word document is not open.)

Before you click Open, if you want to see some additional options, click Options and check off Show Import Options. If this box is checked, when you click Open, an additional pop-up will appear. This is where you can select "Remove Styles and Formatting from Text and Tables" or "Preserve Styles…" as discussed above. You can also preserve page breaks. (If you don't open this options popup, I'm honestly not sure what the defaults are. It might clear formatting, but it

also might do whatever was done last time. When I tried it, InDesign cleared the formatting but preserved page breaks, and randomly inserted one blank line at each page break, which I had to delete.)

When you click Open, the program might take a moment to load your entire novel. Your cursor in InDesign will now have a texty-looking icon attached to it. With this "loaded" cursor, go to the top margin of page 1 and click. InDesign will create a text frame using your margins and fill in the first page of text from your Word document.

At the bottom right of the text frame is a small red box with a + in it. This + indicates that there is more text that does not fit on page 1. Click on the + to "reload" your cursor with the rest of the text. You need to use the Selection Tool (the top arrow in the tool bar) to do this.

Hover over the top margin of page 2 and hold down Shift. The loaded cursor icon should change to have a squiggle on it. Click in the top left corner of page 2, within the margins. The rest of the text should appear and should flow into as many pages as are needed.

Remember I mentioned how InDesign can be quirky? It's best if you can do this placing step one time and get it right. InDesign often seems to get confused if I try to undo steps and redo them. For example, if I place the incorrect Word file, and then I undo the step and select a different Word file, InDesign may stick with the original, incorrect file. At times, after tinkering around in it, I've gotten so frustrated with InDesign doing the wrong things (probably because of all my tinkering) that I've simply started the process over with a new, clean file.

Once the text is placed, you have two versions of your book: the Word document and the laid-out InDesign document. You may want to keep both up to date, for example, if you plan to use the Word document to create an ebook. So, if you make changes in one document, you must make them in the other. If you hire a proofreader to check the proofs (the laid-out pages) before they go to press, this might generate some edits to be made in both places.

Adding page breaks

If you preserved page breaks (or even if you didn't), every chapter may already start on a new page. If you need to add page breaks, scroll through and add them on the front matter pages and all the chapter first pages as follows. Position the cursor at the start of the text that needs to move to the next page. Select Type > Insert Break Character > Page Break.

Scroll through your front matter. Some of it might appear on the lefthand side, when you want it on the righthand side. For me, the first five pages are fine (simple title on the right, list of the books in the series on the left, main title on the right, copyright page on the left, and dedication on the right). But page 6 is the map, and I want it to appear on the righthand side (purple arrows below).

You COULD insert two page breaks or an odd page break, to bump the material ahead. I think it is neater to simply delete the text frames on the pages you want to be intentionally blank. This will bump the content to the next page; the blank page will be truly blank. Note that once you delete a text frame, it is a hassle to replace it and get the text flowing properly again. You have to

manually draw the missing text frame and use the "ports" on the text frames on the adjacent pages to "rethread" the one you added, putting it back into the chain. So for now, only delete the unneeded text frames in the front matter, because the other pages in your book are going to shift around as we start adjusting the styles.

Before deletion

After deletion

There is no longer a text frame on this page
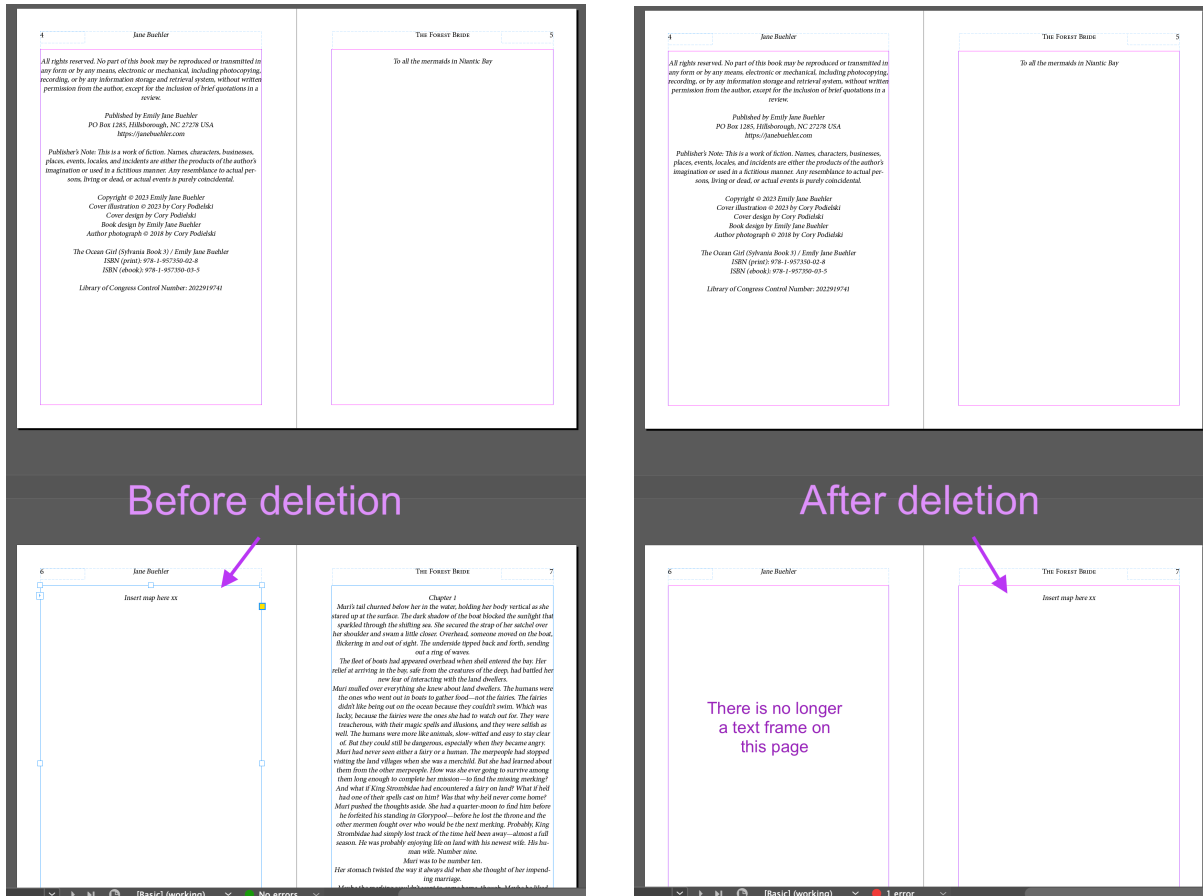
Adding styles

First, add the styles listed above to your InDesign project (without applying them to any text). Do the character styles first, and then the paragraph styles. When you add a style (or later, click on a style to check or modify it), InDesign may apply it to any text you're currently working in; to avoid this, make sure nothing is selected. I choose the Selection Tool and click in a margin. Or, use Edit > Deselect All.

To create a new character style, open the Character Styles window. Click on the top-right menu icon to open the menu (yellow arrow below) and select New Character Style. In the pop-up window, go through the items on the left (purple arrow) and change the settings, as listed above. Paragraph styles are the same, but with the Paragraph Styles window.
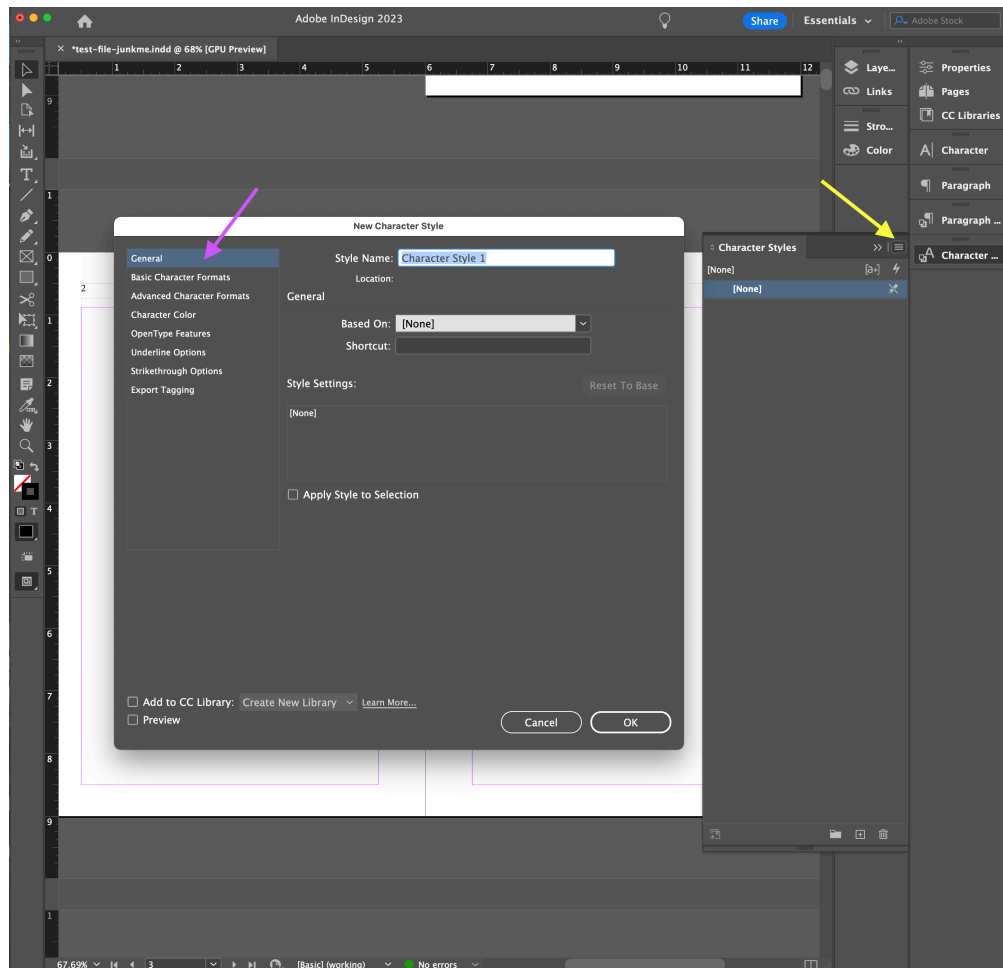
If any styles came over from Word, open them and check the settings. To open the style, go to the Character Styles or Paragraph Styles window, and double-click on the style.

When I practiced creating a new paragraph style just now, I noticed that InDesign randomly inserted some "junk" into the style; this might happen because the program is looking at the text from Word (which likely includes its own Word-related junk) and making assumptions; it also might look at the last style I created, or the last style I had the cursor in.

So, I had to select Based On = No Paragraph Style, and I had to click Reset To Base to remove the junk that had appeared in the Style Settings section (below; the image shows the box after I cleared it up). You might have to do this, so I thought I'd mention it.

Once you have your styles, apply them to the text as needed. Start with Body Text, so you can select all the text (Edit > Select All) and apply it at once. Keep the Paragraph Styles window open, and once the text is selected, simply click on the style Body Text. Then select the smaller sections of text (use the Type Tool, T, to select text) and apply the other styles.
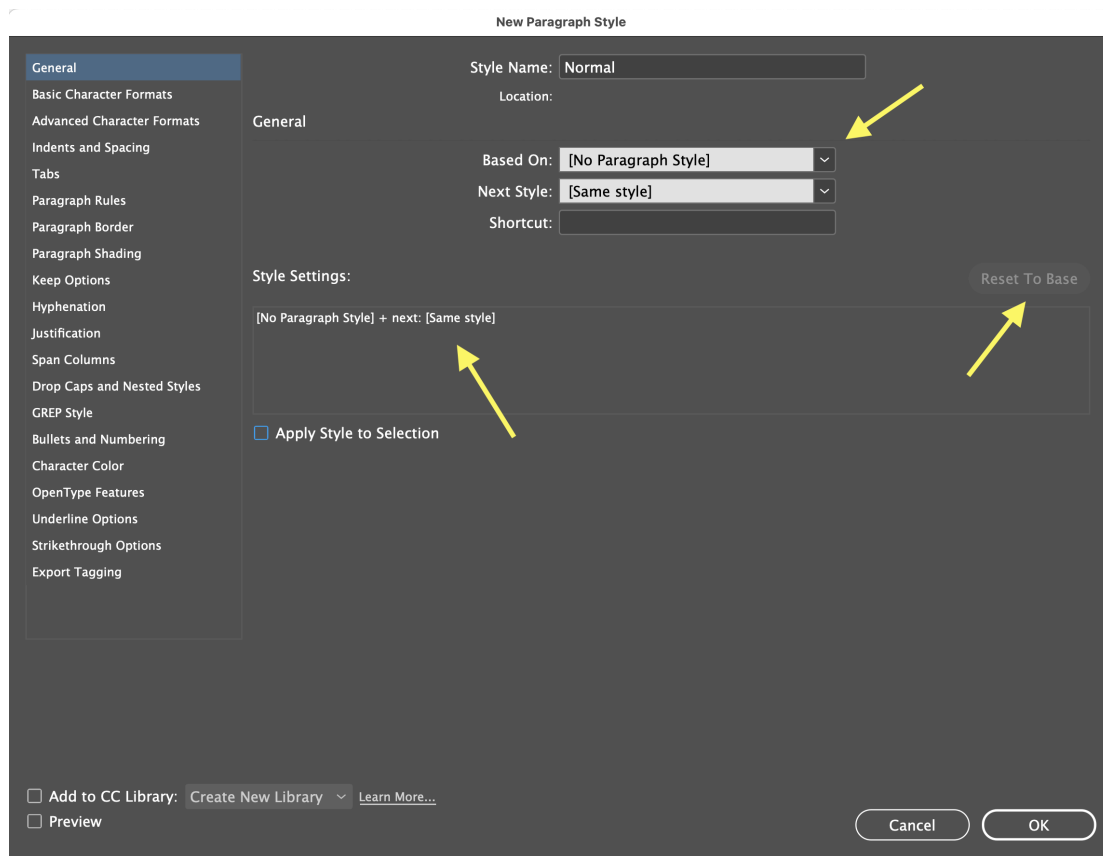
Here are the styles I apply:

- Apply Body Text to the entire book
- Apply Normal to the front matter in pages 1–5; this removes the indent
- Manually format the front matter using the Character and Paragraph windows (also, remove any stray blank lines that appeared along with paragraph breaks (blue arrow below))
  - First title page: Font Family = Herculanum, Font Style = Regular, Size = 40, Leading = 40, Alignment = Center
  - Series list: Alignment = Center; then on the book titles only, I apply Font Style = Italic (the Font Family remains Sabon)
  - Main title page: Apply Alignment = Center to all the text; for the title and subtitle, I delete the text and paste in an image to match the book cover (more on this below); the alternative is to make this text bigger and choose a nice font; for the author name, I apply Font Family = Cormorant Garamond, Font Style = Light, Size = 34, Leading = 34, Case = All Caps
  - Copyright page: Mostly I leave this as is (Normal style), but I apply Font Style = Italic to the book title that appears
  - Dedication: Font Style = Italic, Leading = 16, Alignment = Center
- Apply Heading 1 to the chapter headings (Chapter 1, Chapter 2, etc.) and to the headings on the end matter (Author Note, Acknowledgments, About the Author)

- Apply Body Text First Para to the first paragraph of each chapter; this should make the drop cap appear; watch out for chapters that begin with dialogue—you'll end up with a drop-capped quotation symbol; delete the symbol so that the first letter is drop-capped instead

Note that when you are in a section of text, the Paragraph Styles window will show you which style is applied to that section. After you manually format text, a + appears next to the style name to show that you have applied some additional or "override" formatting. In the image below, the text on the righthand page is Normal style. The purple arrow shows the cursor location; this text is also Normal but has been manually formatted to be centered and italic. The yellow arrow shows that this text is Normal with an override (+).
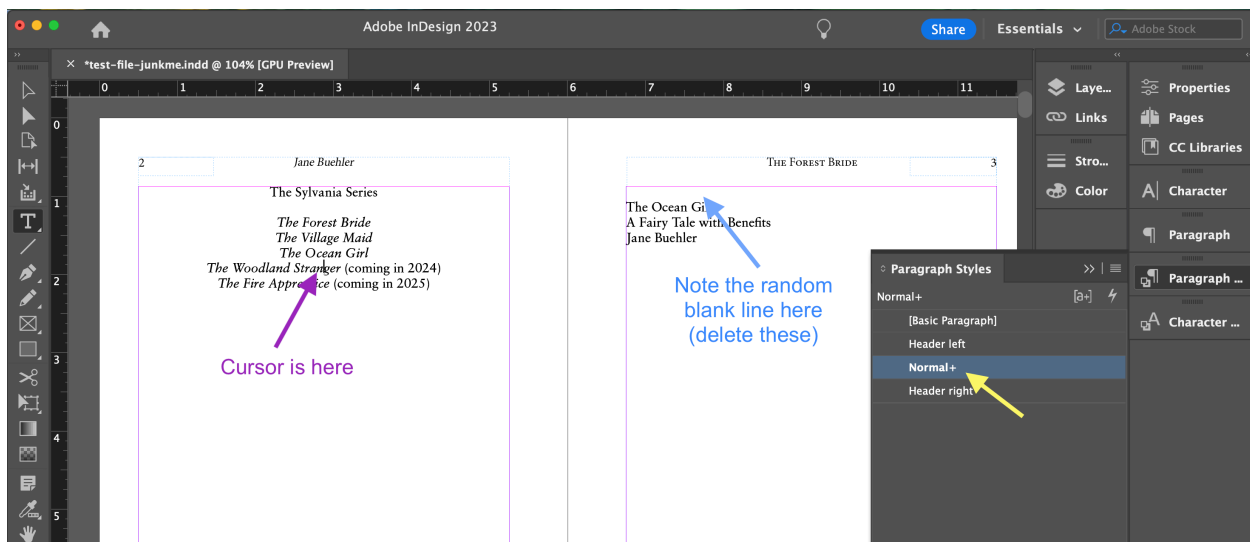
As a final note, it's likely that InDesign will do something weird and frustrating. I'm sorry I don't know it well enough to avoid all pitfalls.

Next steps in order

After you place the text and apply the styles, do the following steps. The order is important (in general, moving from the front of the book to the back) because you don't want to tinker with the front of the book, shifting the text, and then need to redo things at the back.

- Scroll to the final page. I like to check the page count to get an idea of how many pages I will have.
- Changing the styles probably changed the number of pages that have text on them. If your text increased in size, the end of the book may be missing. If so, add one new, blank page at the end. Go to the bottom of the final text frame and look for the red + sign at the right. Use the Selection Tool to click it, loading the missing text into your cursor. Go to the top of the new final page, hold Shift, and click at the top. (This is the same process you did when you first placed the text.) InDesign will continue flowing the text into new pages until the end.
- Go to the front of the book. Adjust the top of the text frames on the front matter pages to make the text look nice. For example, I move the top of the text frame on my dedication page to 3 inches.

- Adjust the top of the text frame on the first page of each chapter; I move it down 2 inches (purple arrow below). While you do this, watch for any random blank lines to delete, like the ones I mentioned earlier.
- I also add decorative icons (green arrow). I use Wingdings or other font characters so that I can simply type the icons, and I create a paragraph style called Chapter Decoration so that I can easily make sure the spacing is consistent from one chapter to the next. You could also insert a small image in each chapter; I imagine I'll do this when I run out of Wingdings I like.
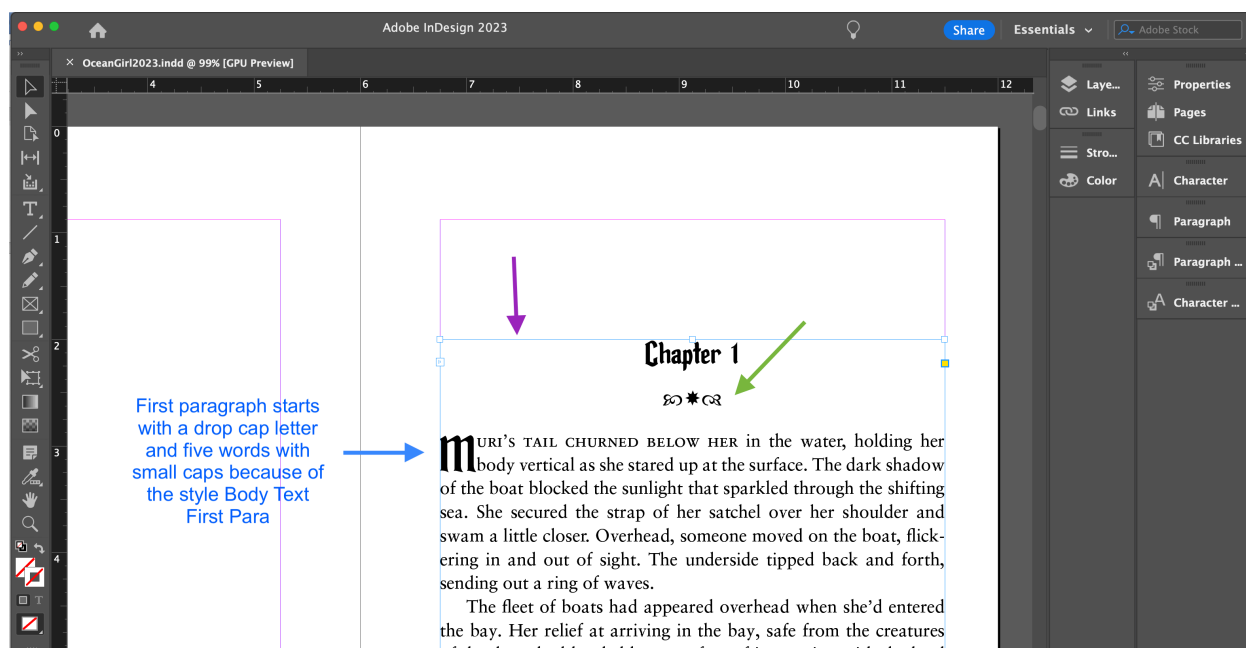

- As you adjust each chapter, watch for chapters that end with one or two lines of text on a page. Sometimes, this looks really awkward. You can manually adjust your text to alter this by (1) adjusting the bottom of text frames on previous pages to bump additional text to the end or (2) adjusting the leading or text height on previous pages to shrink the text, making room for more text on the previous page. If you adjust the text only a little bit, it's not noticeable, but don't overdo it. I try to do this sparingly, and I keep track of all manual adjustments in case the layout changes and I want to remove them.
- I also add the icons and adjust the top of the text frames on my end matter pages, but I do whatever looks nicest rather than 2 inches.
- The adjustments might have bumped the end of your text off the final page again. If so, go through the placing steps again (create a new end page, load your cursor with the additional text, and use Shift when you place it to have InDesign automatically create new pages for it). Or, if your text shrank and you now have many extra blank pages, delete them.
- Check your page count and the position of your end matter pages. The final page count needs to be an even number. Also, the final page must be blank so that the printer can insert some information on it.
- That said, I have some optional advice, with the caveat that the technology may change so that what I'm about to write won't be true. If the following sounds ridiculous, just move right on to the next bullet. When books are assembled, a certain number of pages get bound

together. This number varies at different companies. Print-on-demand books often have a bunch of blank pages at the end. This would happen if, for example, the printer bound 8 pages together, and the book had 73 pages; 7 blank pages (4 sheets) would be needed to fill the bundle. I hate the idea of blank pages at the end of my book. I can't find any consensus on how many pages are in a bundle at either KDP or IngramSpark, but based on the data below, I think it is 4, 6, or 12. So I try to have a page number that is a multiple of 12, or close to it, to avoid many blank pages. Here is the information I've gathered so far:

- *The Forest Bride* had 288 pages, no blanks added (bundle size could be 4, 6, 8, 12, or 24)
- *The Village Maid* had 264 pages, no blanks added (bundle size could be 4, 6, 8, 12, 24)
- *The Ocean Girl* had 298 pages, 2 blanks added for total of 300 pages (bundle size could be 4, 6, or 12, but not 8!)
- *Somewhere and Nowhere* had 322 pages, 2 blanks added for total of 324 pages (bundle size could be 4, 6, or 12, but not 8!)

- One way to adjust the total number of pages is with the spacing of your end matter. I like to have each page on the righthand side, as shown below. But if this resulted in 289 total pages, I'd move one of the end matter pages to a lefthand side to decrease the page count by one.
- Once you have your page count all settled and you know which pages will have end matter, delete the text frames from any blank pages the same way you did in the front matter. Remember, it is a pain to undo this, so be sure you have everything decided first.
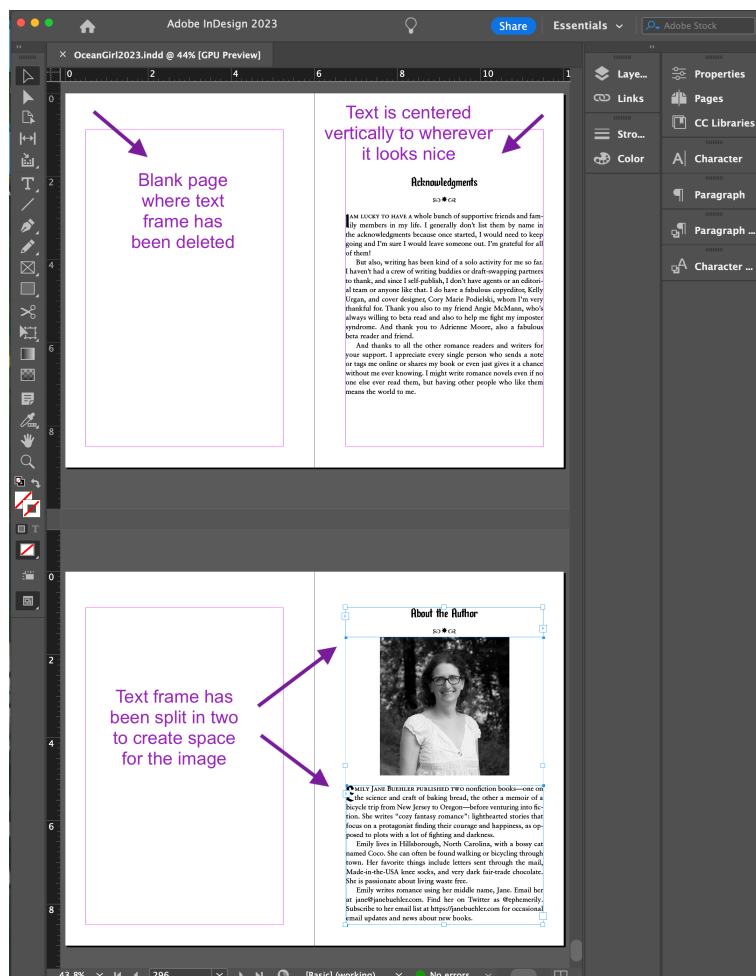
- Add any images; for me, this is the title page text, map, author photo, and author signature
  - The images should be grayscale TIFFs in CMYK mode (RGB mode is for digital, while CMYK is for printing) with a resolution of ~300 ppi
  - Resize the images to be the right size (in inches) BEFORE you place them in InDesign; if you insert a giant image and then shrink it, this increases its resolution and you may get an error message when you upload your files for printing
  - I've also used a PNG file for the title text and it worked
  - Place images by making sure nothing is selected (click in a margin or click Edit > Deselect All), and then clicking File > Place and selecting the image file; one the InDesign cursor is loaded with the image, click on the page where you want it; after you place it, you can move it around to center it and so on
  - Objects in InDesign can be on top of each other, so you can add line breaks to text to create a space for your image if needed; a nicer way to create space is to "split" a text frame, which technically means moving the bottom of a frame up, and then threading it to a new frame below it, with a space between (this is shown above)
- The final design step is to remove headers and page numbers from special pages
  - This includes front matter, any blank pages, and the first page of each chapter or end matter section (blue arrow below)
  - Make sure this is the final thing you do, because if you do it and then tinker with your text, and your pages shift around, you'll need to reapply the headers, which is annoying
  - To override the master page and delete a header, hold down Command-Shift, click on the text frame of the header, and hit delete


Header has been deleted

Chapter heading in Heading 1 style, and decoration beneath

Drop cap and up to five words in small caps (note the deleted quotation symbol here)

240   *Jane Buehler*

rest of the night here," he said, "and when I return, you'd better be prepared to talk."

He turned away. "Shut her in," he said. Angar grinned at her as he swung the door shut, leaving her in darkness. The boulder grated on the metal door as they slid it into place.

Muri waited to let them swim away. She felt her way to the door and pushed. It strained, but the bottom held fast with the boulder wedged against it.

She held the walls and made her way back down the tunnel until the glowing luminescence lit the way. She went straight to the shell.

It was three times bigger than the one she'd carried to Woodglen, but it had the same spiraling shape. She cupped her hands around it and lifted it carefully from its perch, bringing it to her lips.

"Hyacinth?" she whispered. She felt nothing. "Hyacinth? Gray?" She projected her voice. The shell warmed with a slight vibration and went still. Had she imagined it? In the wan blue light, nothing felt real. She moved her fingertips across the surface of the shell. It was dull and cold.

Hyacinth wouldn't hear her. She was in her flower shop, not under the water. The shells worked only in the water.

Muri rested her cheek against the smooth shell. "I have to save Jack," she murmured, tears leaking from her eyes. "I have to save him, and I need a boat to get him back to Sylvania or he'll be trapped in Glorypool forever and his life will always be in danger. I don't know what to do."

Muri cradled the shell in her palms and rested her forehead on it. She repeated the words, calling to Hyacinth, until her voice wore out. She hadn't slept well in days. She hugged the shell as she curled her tail in. She had to rest. When she rescued Jack, she'd need all her strength to get him to the surface fast enough.

Chapter 20

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Muri?"

Muri curled into a tighter ball, not wanting to leave the peaceful emptiness of sleep.

"Muri?"

But reality worked its way in. She was back in Glorypool. Bullidae was the merking.

And Jack was trapped below the water.

Muri sat up, allowing the nightmare to return. The vault around her glowed with the eerie blue-purple light. The shell was on the floor beside her.

"Muri?"

Muri shot up. A merwoman's voice floated down the tunnel from the entrance. A young voice . . .

"Caly!"

Muri swam into the tunnel. The door to the vault was open and her friend hovered in the water outside.

"Oh, Muri," Caly said as she neared. "Thank the seas you're all right. We didn't know what he'd done with you."

"Has he hurt Jack?"

"No, Jack's fine. But we need to get him to the surface."

"You'll help me?"

Caly took her hand. "We've been talking it over all night. Bull's behavior is wrong. And anyone can see Jack is more than a mindless beast. All of us want to help. And I think you'd find support among the older merwomen as well. After Bull took you away,

Next Steps

Exporting

You need a PDF of your book to upload at the print-on-demand websites. To create a PDF, you will export one from the InDesign file. You have to use certain settings to create a PDF that is high quality and has embedded the information that the printer needs.

I follow IngramSpark's guidelines for exporting a file (with one exception, noted below), and use the same file at KDP. So far this has worked. I'll list the steps here, but if you want the source or to check for updates, the guide is here: https://www.ingramspark.com/hubfs/downloads/file-creation-guide.pdf. Here are IngramSpark's steps:

- Select File > Export
- In the pop-up window, for the Format, select Adobe PDF (Print)
- Click Save
- A new, more exciting window will pop up!
- At the top where it reads "Adobe PDF Preset" choose PDF/X1a:2001 or PDF/X3:2002 (I have no idea what the difference is; I went with PDF/X1a:2001; yellow arrow below)
- Choosing this will fill in all the correct settings on the other tabs, so don't go changing anything
- Note that "Spreads" is unchecked (other yellow arrow); this will export the pages "single file" as pages instead of side by side, as we have been viewing them
- Click Export
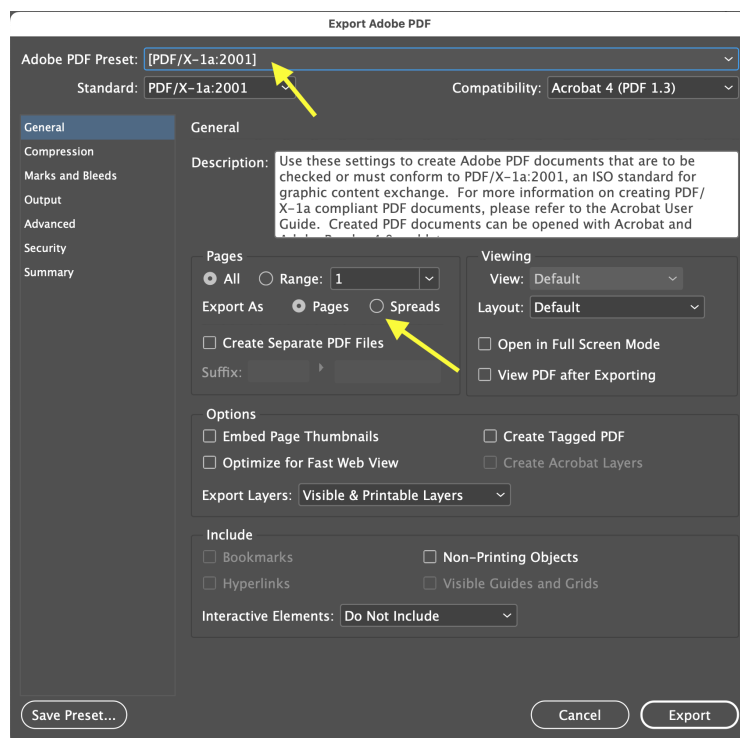
At some point, I saved a "preset" group of settings using the button at the bottom left (yellow arrow below). It's called "Export for Ingram2" and so when I export, I choose Export for Ingram2 instead of PDF/X1a:2001. As far as I can tell, this choice has all the same settings as PDF/X1a:2001, with one exception: On the Compression tab, I've removed all image compression. I don't remember why I did this, but I think it goes hand-in-hand with my process of resizing images before I place them in InDesign (so they do not need to be compressed).
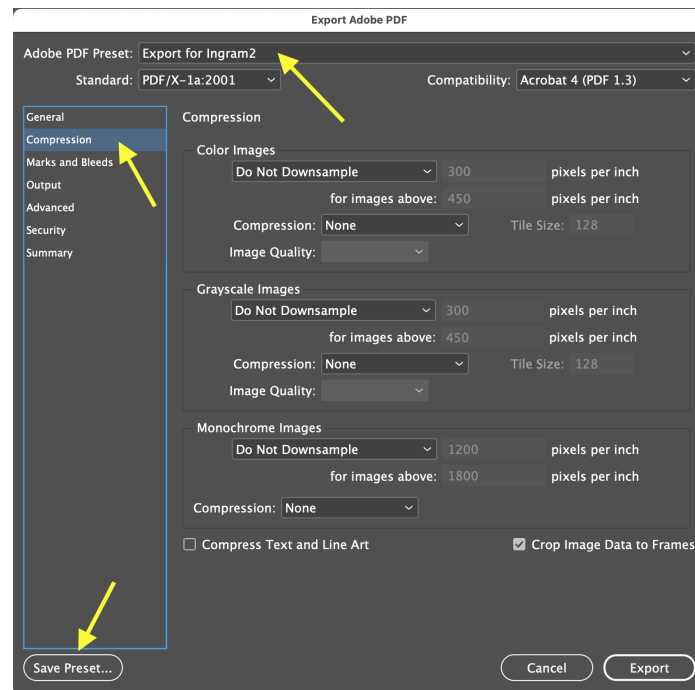
I might try reverting to the official guidelines next time to see what happens!

Proofreading

After your book is laid out in the form it will be printed in, it's time for proofreading, either by you or a proofreader. I've been doing it myself and think that the novelty of reading it in final form makes it different enough that I catch mistakes I previously overlooked. (I do work with a copyeditor, so she catches most of my mistakes earlier in the process.) Proofreading should turn up only a handful of changes to make: typos, small changes to fix something that pops out as super awkward, or the occasional text that is so awkward that looking at it will distract the reader (such as a place where four hyphens align to form a ladder in the text, which you'd have to remove manually). Now is not the time to be rearranging sentences or changing your mind about some random thing that no one else will notice.

Proofs are usually the final PDF, so you should export the file first and then proofread. This way, the proofreader does not risk accidentally typing anything in the InDesign document during proofing and can check that the PDF exported properly without any weird glitches.

You can proofread the PDF on the computer or print out a copy. You can also do additional proofreadings when you upload the files (they ask you to approve the upload, and you need to

flip through it and make sure it looks okay) and when you have an actual printed book. This might seem exciting, but after staring at your book for this entire process and looking over proofs multiple times, proofreading the final printed copy will be excruciating. This is especially true if imposter syndrome kicks in and the book you have loved since you drafted it two years ago suddenly seems like the WORST BOOK EVER that everyone is going to hate and laugh at you for writing. But, I always find at least one mistake when proofing the final book so I make myself do it.

So, here is my proofreading method, summarized:

- Proofread PDF on the computer, noting any changes
- Make changes in both my Word file and InDesign file
- Export a new PDF
- Upload the new PDF at KDP, along with the cover (more below)
- Check over the "proofs" KDP shows you to make sure the pages lined up right (I don't re-read, just skim)
- Approve the book and when it is ready, print 1–5 copies; these will have the ARC "not for resale" band across the front
- The book(s) arrives! Be sure to share a photo on social media before forcing yourself to proofread it, noting any final changes
- Make any changes in the Word and InDesign files
- Export a new, final PDF
- Upload the new PDF at KDP, and recheck the "proofs" KDP shows you
- Upload the PDF at IngramSpark, and check the digital proofs they generate

Cover

I'm not going to provide much detail on covers. Some print-on-demand services including KDP offer cover creator tools. I recommend working with a professional designer, who should know how to navigate the process. I work with a designer to create my cover, which she sends me as a PDF that I upload. This PDF is separate from the PDF with the book's interior.

Before anyone can design the cover, you need to know the final page count of your book and the paper type (I choose "cream" for fiction books). These two factors determine the book's spine width. KDP and IngramSpark each have a template for the designer to use, that knows the width of that platform's paper. You enter the book information and the platform generates a template with the correct spine size. The cover of *The Ocean Girl* (back, spine, and front) in the IngramSpark template is below.

You can get your own ISBN and barcode, which your designer inserts on the back cover; or you can leave a space and KDP will give you one (but then they are listed as the publisher, not you).
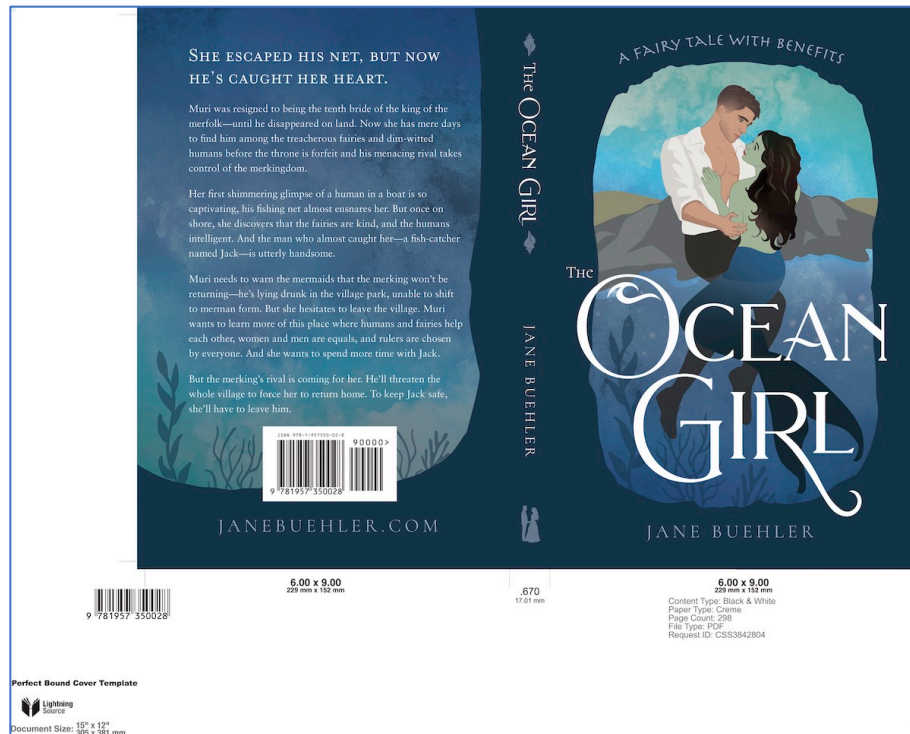
Uploading

I upload at Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) first because it is free to upload and make changes. I wait to upload at IngramSpark until I've done the final proofread and worked out any other issues that arise. IngramSpark charges for new uploads and for any re-uploads of your book files. (You can update details like the book description without paying.)

Uploading at KDP

You'll need to have an account at KDP. (Note, this is different than your regular Amazon buyer account, an Amazon third-party seller account, or your Amazon Author Central account, although they all might be linked.)

Once you are logged in, click the Create button. Note that if you already have an ebook, you can link the ebook and paperback by using the create button located beside the ebook on your "Bookshelf." (I do the paperback first, for proofreading, and then create the ebook after.)

KDP has you move through the creation tabs from left to right, saving as you go. If you later need to update something, you have to go through all the tabs again to "publish" any changes. Read carefully, because KDP seems to encourage you to take certain steps by having big yellow buttons for them, when they may not be the steps you want. (Assign me a KDP ISBN! Launch cover creator!)

The description is what will appear on the book's page when it is live on Amazon. I often end up with odd line breaks and have to come back and edit this after the book is live. The keywords

and categories tell Amazon how to categorize your book; there are entire workshops about how Amazon uses these details and how to make them work to your advantage. If you check "Adult content" your book may be blocked in some searches; I'm sure there is debate over this, but my current understanding is that this setting is for erotica but not for romance novels.

On the second tab, you upload your files (interior and cover) and choose the book's size and paper. If you have your own ISBN, the "Imprint" name you type here must match the publisher name you use where you bought the ISBN (in the US, the Bowker monopoly) because Amazon will compare them. (Aside: This is annoying if you actually have a hierarchy of imprints under one publisher name. I had purchased ISBNs as Two Blue Books when I started self-publishing, but I wanted my romance novels to have a separate publisher name. I decided to change my publisher name at Bowker to Two Blue Books / Jane Buehler, which is not ideal; the alternative is to open a second account at Bowker for Jane Buehler, but since Two Blue Books already owned enough ISBNs for the rest of my life, I didn't want to have to buy more as Jane Buehler.)

Save a draft and launch the previewer. Click through the book and make sure it looks okay. Once you've approved the files, fill in the pricing page.

So far, Amazon does not let self-publishers set a launch date for paperbacks. This means you have to click "Publish" as you near launch day, and at some later time the book will be live. I usually do this the night before my launch date, and the book is ready the next day. (Note: Ebooks can be set up for preorder, with a launch date set. Also note: If you publish the book at IngramSpark, that version may show up on Amazon, even if the KDP version is not yet published. It's important to publish the KDP version because you'll make more money selling that version on Amazon, with one less intermediary.)

Before publishing, you can buy up to five advance copies (per order), which will have a band across the front stating "not for resale." Once the book is live, you can buy author copies of the normal book at a reduced price from your KDP account. Author copies usually arrive quickly except for at the holidays or during times of extreme supply chain disruption.

Uploading at IngramSpark

You'll have to create an account at IngramSpark, which is the self-publishing arm of Ingram, which is a massive book distributor. You can create your book and use the platform only to print copies for yourself to sell, or you can have Ingram distribute your book. It will show up for sale at online bookstores that pull their content from Ingram (for example, Bookshop.com). It will also be available for physical bookstores to order.

A general note about IngramSpark: I've found it to work just fine usually, but everything happens more slowly. Once you upload files, you'll wait days before you get an email telling you to check the online proofs. After the book is marked "Available" it will be several more days before it shows up on retail sites. And if you ever contact IngramSpark, you'll think your message went astray, but someone will get back to you a week or more later. So you have to be patient and wait for things to happen. But occasionally things do get stuck and you should contact Ingram or Bookshop or whomever. For example, I have contacted Bookshop.com to ask

them to update my book on their site (I updated the blurb and the old one kept showing); their site might not continuously refresh the listings or look for updates to old books.

Once you are logged in at IngramSpark, click on the "Add book" button and fill in the information step by step. Once you've entered the basics, you'll see two tabs, Basic Info and Print Info. Much of this is similar to KDP. The "Full Description" is what will appear on retail sites; the spacing is wonky and it may take a few tries before it looks right at the retail sites. I've found that putting an entire extra line between paragraphs works. This is what it looks like after it is saved (the appearance changes when you go into editing mode):

Title Description

Keywords

fantasy romance;mermaid romance;romantic fantasy;cozy fantasy romance;fairytale romance;fish out of water;fairy magic;mermaid tales;not violent;romantic folk tales;women's fantasy fiction;fairytale kingdom

Full Description

She escaped his net, but now he's caught her heart.

Muri was resigned to being the tenth bride of the king of the merfolk-until he disappeared on land. Now she has mere days to find him among the treacherous fairies and dim-witted humans before the throne is forfeit and his menacing rival takes control of the merkingdom.

Her first shimmering glimpse of a human in a boat is so captivating, his fishing net almost ensnares her. But once on shore, she discovers that the fairies are kind, and the humans intelligent. And the man who almost caught her-a fish-catcher named Jack-is utterly handsome.

Muri needs to warn the mermaids that the merking won't be returning-he's lying drunk in the village park, unable to shift to merman form. But she hesitates to leave the village. Muri wants to learn more of this place where humans and fairies help each other, women and men are equals, and rulers are chosen by everyone. And she wants to spend more time with Jack.

But the merking's rival is coming for her. He'll threaten the whole village to force her to return home. To keep Jack safe, she'll have to leave him.

The Ocean Girl *is a cozy fantasy romance in a fairy tale setting with lighthearted magic. It's the beach read Éowyn packs when she goes on vacation.* The Ocean Girl *contains love scenes.* The Ocean Girl *can be read on its own but may contain spoilers for earlier books in the series.*

Regarding prices and discounts, if you want physical bookstores to stock your book, they will expect you to give them a large wholesale discount (55%) and to be able to return books. As far as I know, there is no way to offer these settings to physical bookstores without ALSO offering them to online retailers (who are not stocking 20 copies of your book or offering you shelf space or any of the other advantages of physical bookstores). Since I don't expect any bookstores to stock my book, I choose the lowest discount options and "No" for returns.

IngramSpark fills in the price you set for one market, into all the other markets. I use an online currency converter to adjust the prices somewhat, knowing that the conversion rate will change over time.

On the dashboard, you can see the status of your books. If you make edits, for example, to the book description, the status will show temporarily as "revision incomplete," but it usually updates a few minutes later.

You CAN set a launch date. You can preorder advance copies, and they will be the regular book (not marked as advance copies).