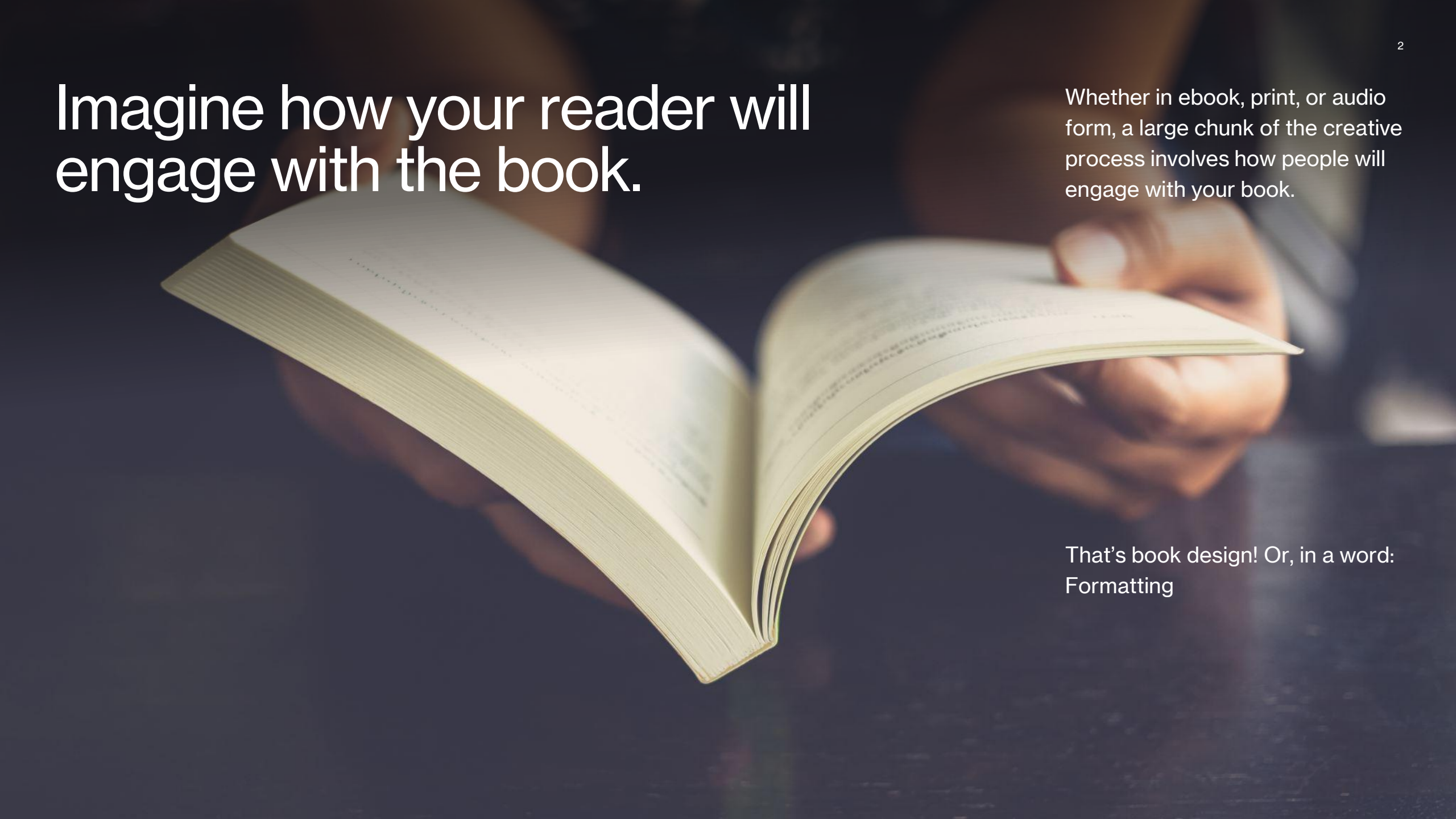
Formatting Your Book

An author’s second least favorite task

Don Jacobson

Imagine how your reader will engage with the book.



Whether in ebook, print, or audio form, a large chunk of the creative process involves how people will engage with your book.

That’s book design! Or, in a word: Formatting

Formatting is a “This” to “That” job!

Chapter Three

Young Miss Darcy’s appeal soared to the chamber’s high corners. Her well-modulated soprano bespoke of exclusive seminaries and vibrant connections throughout the *ton.* Lydia’s agile mind quickly sifted through five or six gothic clutchers before settling on a romantic formulation.

Her widowed father has bound himself to a younger wife, a woman who is jealous of the attention he showers on his child from his first marriage. The new mistress has arranged an abduction to the Highlands, with Miss Georgiana spirited away to be wed to a Scottish farmer, no duke he, who wants a woman to bear him plenty of children to work the land. There will be no ransom demanded, just a sorrowful mistress comforting her husband after his tragic loss.

Clever Georgiana to thwart the witch’s design!

Emerging from her rosy Imaginarium, Miss Bennet noticed an expectant stare in her direction. A rarity, Lydia blushed at her failure. “I am sorry. Your call for help stunned me, and I forgot myself. I am pleased to meet you, Miss Darcy. I am Lydia Bennet. This is my mother’s house. My four sisters and I all live with her.”



Prologue

April 30, 1833, Pemberley, Derbyshire

Mary moved toward the Wardrobe. Elizabeth Darcy’s sister, younger today by seventeen years than her current self, never faltered or looked back. To Elizabeth's eye, this Mary Benton, unmarked as of yet by Peterloo, gave a foretaste of the iron-jawed crusader who, in this age, was in London with her husband, petitioning Parliament to regulate children's working hours in the mills across the country. Always a woman who championed the causes of the least fortunate, Mary had earned the richly deserved sobriquet of “Britain’s Social Conscience.”

Elizabeth left the room and closed its richly stained oak door to afford her sister privacy. Then she laid her hands and forehead on the richly stained oak and waited for the sound. Soon, she heard the faint *pop* as a rush of air filled a woman-shaped void.

Standing tall, Elizabeth calmed herself, erasing the grief brought about by the departure of her sister’s younger self. She was comforted by the knowledge that, once the agitation and lobbying could bear no more fruit, the Mrs. Benton of this *here/now* would come north to gather her children, Rory and Bridget, and the Wardrobe. Then, she

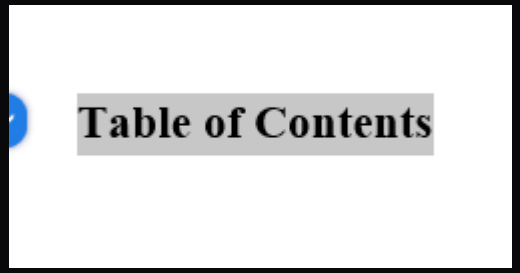
My method is not yours.

This works for me.

- I write in MS WORD.
- I write in sequence...literally from the title page to the last. Rarely jump ahead or compose chapters/scenes independently.
- I use SpellCheck, Grammarly, and MS Editor to clear text.
- I do not use composing software like Scrivener, so no aggregating is needed. I load the final-final MS WORD doc into the prep program.
- My book layout goes through KindleCreate, where I build my book, as opposed to uploading the MS WORD document to KDP. Then I upload to KDP. Oh, KC lets you export an EPUB.

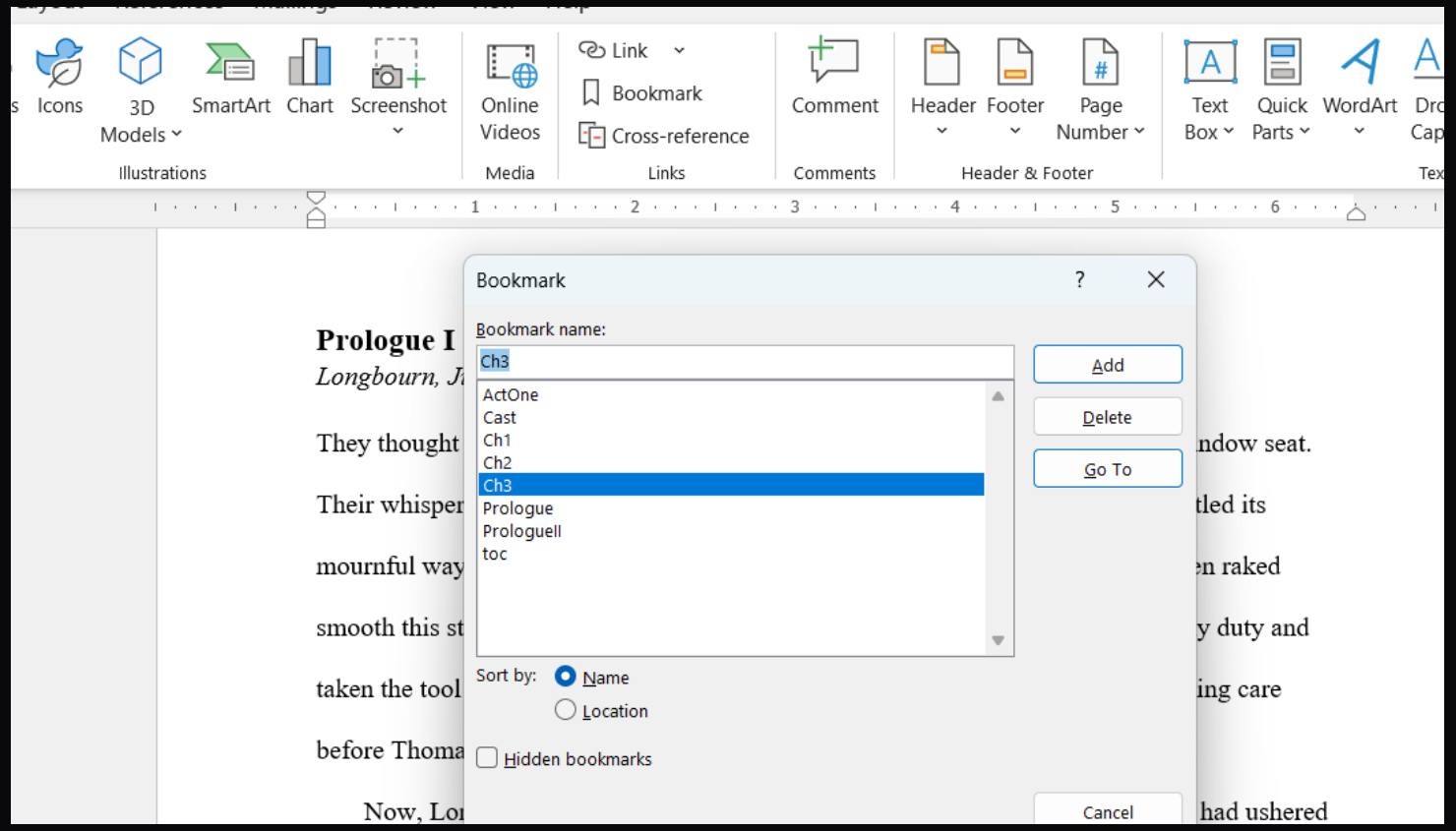
When do you format your book?

- When you hit “the end.”
- After all betas and edits are done. It’s the last step before hitting “Publish.”
- Throughout the writing process, beginning with the bookmark “toc” on the “Table of Contents header.
- All of the above.



A Dozen Little Things

- Title Pages
- Position of Chapter Heads
  - Bookmarks to Links for Table of Contents
- Style indents on opening paragraphs
- Getting ready for Drop Caps at Chapter Start (no quotation mark)
- Splits in chapters



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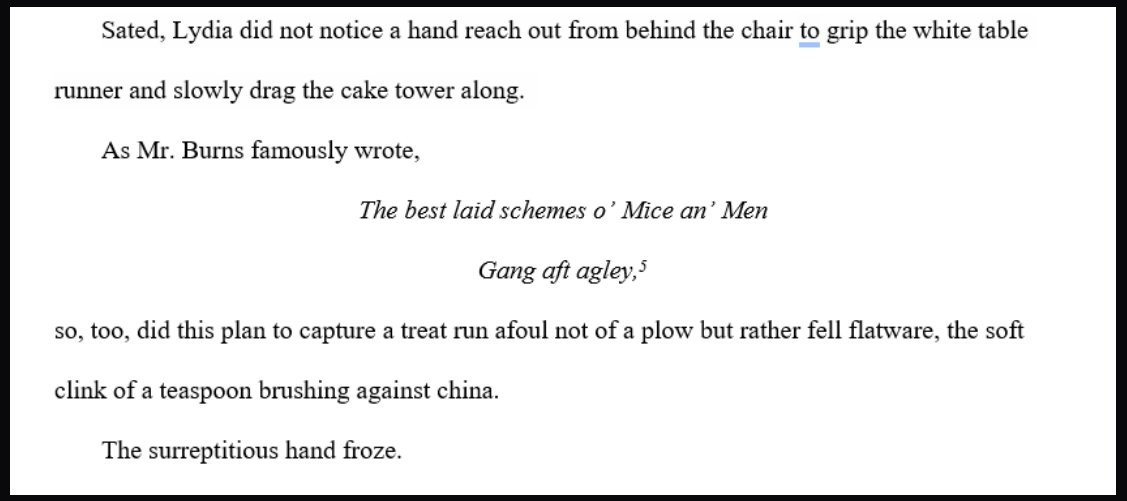
Hints

- Centering text – do it in MSS
  - Remember to center on the margin, not the indent! Esp. Chapter heads
- Italicize in MSS. It is easier when the spirit moves you than when you try to remember the feeling later.
- Additional spaces are useful to split out text from letters and other texts like songs. Use either “add space before/after paragraph” under line spacing options or manually adjust line spacing.
  - If MSWord is acting up, you can tweak line spacing in KC



Sated, Lydia did not notice a hand reach out from behind the chair to grip the white table runner and slowly drag the cake tower along.

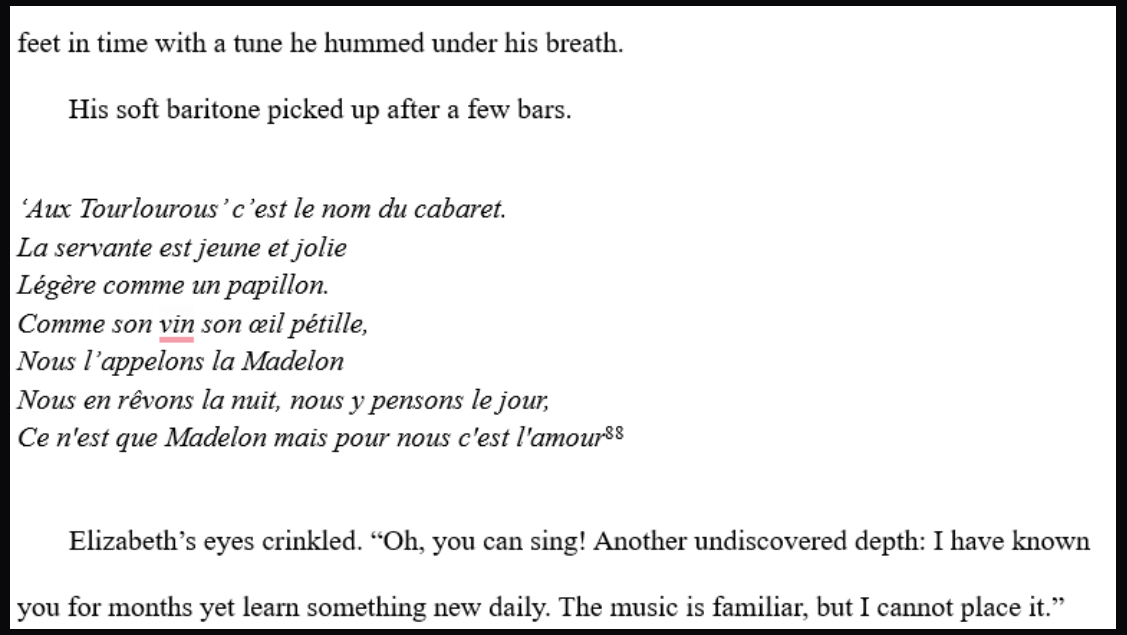
As Mr. Burns famously wrote,

The best laid schemes o’ Mice an’ Men

Gang aft agley,[5]

so, too, did this plan to capture a treat run afoul not of a plow but rather fell flatware, the soft clink of a teaspoon brushing against china.

The surreptitious hand froze.



feet in time with a tune he hummed under his breath.

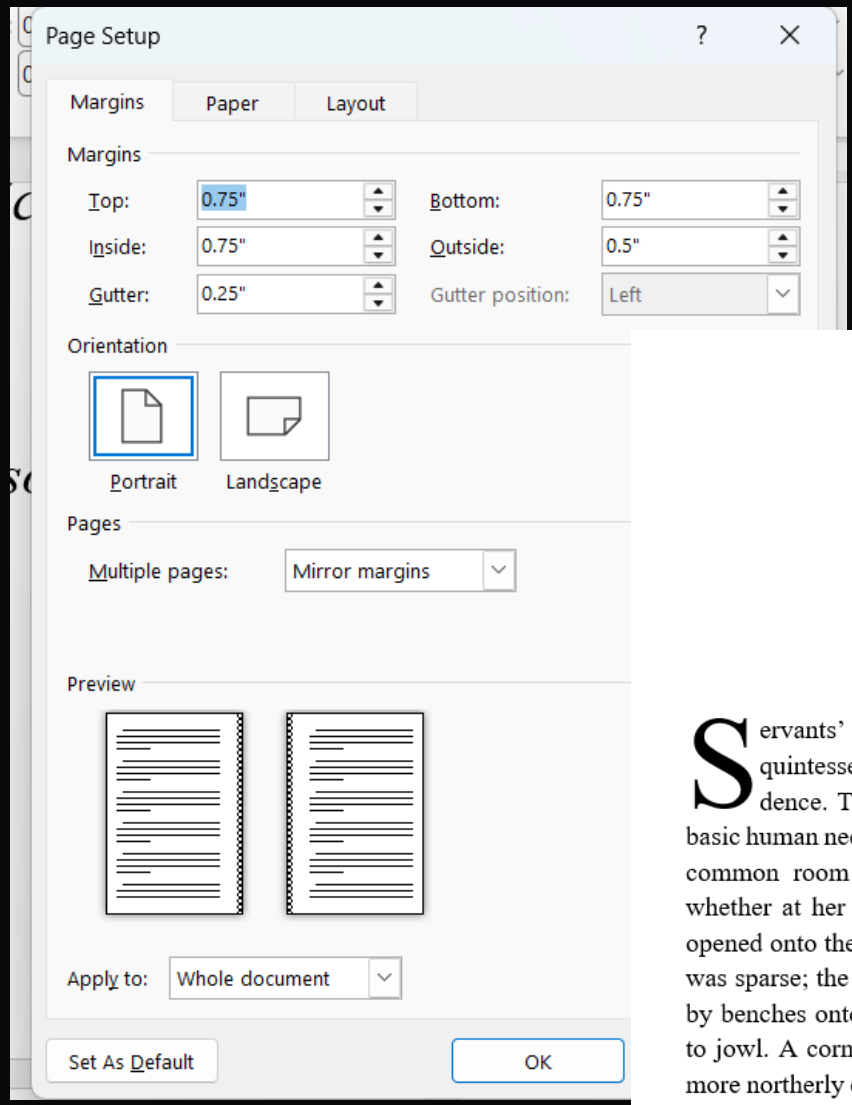
His soft baritone picked up after a few bars.

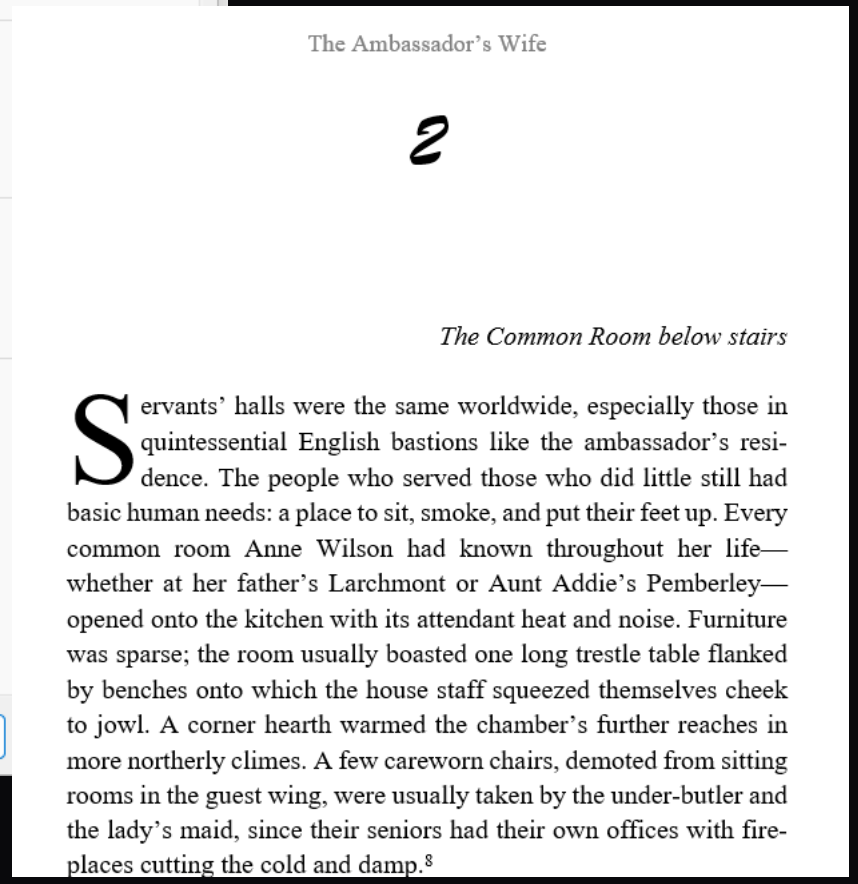
‘Aux Tourlourous’ c’est le nom du cabaret.
La servante est jeune et jolie
Légère comme un papillon.
Comme son vin son œil pétille,
Nous l’appelons la Madelon
Nous en rêvons la nuit, nous y pensons le jour,
Ce n'est que Madelon mais pour nous c'est l'amour[88]

Elizabeth’s eyes crinkled. “Oh, you can sing! Another undiscovered depth: I have known you for months yet learn something new daily. The music is familiar, but I cannot place it.”

A few words about print books

- I format print books in MS WORD.
- Book Trim size is 6” x 9”.
- Offset the margins so you allow for a .25” gutter; the inside margin is .75”, while the outside margin is .5”.
- Top and bottom margins are .75” to allow header and footer (pp).
- I use 12-point Times New Roman, 1.15 spacing, justify left-right, auto-hyphenate.
- Watch widows as you proof.
- Do the type treatments you wish. Drop caps are an MS WORD feature.
- Save as a PDF in MS WORD to lock everything. *Never upload a Word document; spacing and type will come unglued.*
- Tell your cover designer the final page count.




The Ambassador’s Wife

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The Common Room below stairs

Servants’ halls were the same worldwide, especially those in quintessential English bastions like the ambassador’s residence. The people who served those who did little still had basic human needs: a place to sit, smoke, and put their feet up. Every common room Anne Wilson had known throughout her life—whether at her father’s Larchmont or Aunt Addie’s Pemberley—opened onto the kitchen with its attendant heat and noise. Furniture was sparse; the room usually boasted one long trestle table flanked by benches onto which the house staff squeezed themselves cheek to jowl. A corner hearth warmed the chamber’s further reaches in more northerly climes. A few careworn chairs, demoted from sitting rooms in the guest wing, were usually taken by the under-butler and the lady’s maid, since their seniors had their own offices with fireplaces cutting the cold and damp.[8]

Let’s Go Live with KindleCreate

