

As a book collector, I thought it might be helpful for you to know the different formats in which you can find books.

The first is the manuscript. Think of the author, sitting at their computer toiling away and finally creating the final draft of their story. Spiral bound, sometimes typeset, but doesn't have to be. Very unique, limited number of quantities.

The next is the uncorrected proof. Proofs are known because they are plain. They're the standard in the industry until advanced reading copies came into play, and that's when graphic design was able to create more elaborate covers for the books.

Understanding where advanced reading copy or proof fits into the food chain might be helpful for you. About six to eight months before it goes to hardcover edition, or final publication, publishers create advanced or proof copies. They send them out to book dealers like ourselves, reviewers, and other interested parties that can create buzz about the author, the storyline, or the series. Unique story, unique concept for a collector, very scarce, and if you can get them signed, all the better.

Next comes the first edition. That could be for us because VJ Books focuses on US and UK first edition titles. It can be the US or the more elaborate, usually jacketed UK edition. It's important for me to mention to you here the paperback, and typically collectors don't have paperback books in their collection, but in this case, a publisher may not feel comfortable about a series or an author or the story enough to invest in the production of hardcover editions, so they create a paperback. It becomes the true first edition of the book and it sits gingerly on a collector's shelf. Frustratingly, it's not the hardbound edition that you can jacket, but it does add value to a collection nonetheless.

Next are the limited editions. It might help you to understand why these types of books are so much more expensive than the other editions I pointed out. The reason is, binding and scarcity. VJ Books Norwood Press creates the limited editions Clive Custer titles, both numbered and lettered editions. Slip cased, deluxe bindings, signed by both authors and special deluxe bindings on the lettered. Going again for the collector's desire for scarcity. There are more numbered editions, but a limited number of editions than there are lettered editions.

Then finally, is the unique or special limited edition that a publisher might create. Sometimes, and particularly the case of *The Da Vinci Code*, a book is so popular that a publisher will go back to press and create different formats for the collector market. In this case it's an illustrated edition. It's a valuable asset to any particular collection, and if I were to guide someone on which to collect, the manuscript, advanced reading copies, UK or US editions, limited numbered lettered editions, or illustrated editions, I would suggest that you look at what your interests are and then go from there. What is going to add interest for you in your collecting hobby, and add value to your overall private collection asset.

I'm Virginia with VJ Books, Norwood Press, and we're talking books.