

FREE BEGINNER GUIDE ✦

How I Built My ManhwaSeries from Scratch

The step-by-step beginner guide

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS GUIDE

- ✦ The 4 steps that took me from 0 to 13K followers
- ✦ Which tools I use to create manhwa content (free ones!)
 - ✦ How to pick your story concept and art style
 - ✦ Where to post and how to build a loyal audience
 - ✦ The mindset shift that changed everything for me

13K+

Followers

10M+

Views

3.1M

Peak reach

by [darcie_diary](#)

@darciediaries · bookishduke.com

This guide shares the framework.

The real magic happens when YOU take action.

Welcome, creator

A NOTE FROM DARCIE

Hey! If you're reading this, you probably saw my post and thought — wait, she made 10 million views from her bedroom with no team and no budget? How??

I get it. I had the same question about everyone I admired. So here's my honest, no-fluff answer: I started with a simple idea, the free tools I already had, and I just kept going. That's the whole secret — for real.

This guide walks you through the FRAMEWORK I used. It won't hand you a viral formula (because that doesn't exist) but it WILL show you exactly what to focus on so you're not wasting time on the wrong things.

Let's go.

— *Darcie*

MY STORY IN NUMBERS

Day 1 0 followers. Just an idea about a manhwa romance story and a phone.

Week 1 First post. 47 followers. Felt like nobody cared. Posted anyway.

Day 15 First viral moment. Woke up to 50K views. Couldn't believe it.

Day 30 10K+ followers. 3.1M views on one post. Bills paid. Still shocked.

Today 13K followers. 10M+ total views. Commissions. Digital products. Growing.

■ Important note before you start

This guide gives you the WHAT and the WHERE. The HOW deep comes with doing it yourself — every creator's path is different. Mine worked for me. Your version of it will work for you.

STEP 1 What To Create

THE MINDSET FIRST

Most beginners overthink this. They want a perfect idea before they start. But here's what I learned: you don't find your content style by thinking about it. You find it by posting.

THE 3 TYPES OF MANHWA CONTENT THAT WORK

■ Story Content

MOST IMPORTANT

Your actual manhwa series — recurring characters, episodes, cliffhangers. This builds loyalty and keeps people coming back. Ava & Gideon is mine. You need YOUR version of this.

■ Reaction / Emotion Content

GOES VIRAL

Short clips that make people FEEL something — laugh, cry, cringe, swoon. Think: "Gideon trying not to smile" energy. These go viral.

■ Educational / Relatable Content

BUILDS TRUST

Behind the scenes, "how I made this", creator journey posts. Builds trust and attracts other creators + brands.

CHOOSING YOUR STORY CONCEPT — THE BEGINNER QUESTIONS

What genre do I genuinely love?

Romance, fantasy, action, slice of life? Make something YOU would read. Passion shows.

What's my main character's conflict?

She wants him but can't have him. He's hiding something. She has to choose. Give readers a reason to come back.

Can I describe my series in one sentence?

If you can't pitch it simply, you haven't figured it out yet. Keep refining until you can.

■ The secret I can tell you

I did NOT have a perfect story plan before I started. I had "a girl, a CEO, slow burn" and I figured the rest out as I posted. Done is better than perfect. Always.

STEP 2 The Tools (All Free to Start)

YOU DON'T NEED EXPENSIVE SOFTWARE

Everything I used when I started was free. Here's the honest breakdown:

■ AI ART GENERATION

For creating your manhwa characters and scenes.

Leonardo AI · Free best quality for manhwa style · my main tool

Adobe Firefly · Free-great for backgrounds and decorative elements

Bing Image Creator · Free · fast · good for quick concept testing

Midjourney · Paid best overall · worth it when you can afford it

✂ ■ EDITING & LAYOUT

For putting your story panels together.

Canva · Free tier is enough to start · drag and drop · templates

CapCut · Free for reels and video edits · what I use for most videos

VN Video Editor · Free-more control than CapCut · great for transitions

■ PLANNING & SCRIPTING

For organizing your story and captions.

Notion · Free-storybible,episode planning, content calendar

Google Docs · Free-scriptwriting · episode outlines

Notes app · Free-yourphoneis enough to start · no excuses

WHAT I USE FOR AI ART PROMPTING

The tool matters less than the PROMPT. Here's the type of language that gets manhwa results:

Example prompt style:

"Korean manhwa style portrait, soft linework, large expressive eyes, [your description], pastel color palette, clean digital illustration, high quality, no text"

The key words: Korean manhwa style, soft linework, large expressive eyes, pastel color palette

■ On my exact prompts

I spent my first week testing prompts before I posted anything. The exact prompts I use are something I've developed over months of practice. That part you have to discover for yourself — but this gives you the starting point.

PLATFORM BREAKDOWN FOR MANHWA CREATORS

■ Instagram

START HERE

Reach potential: HIGH

My primary platform. Reels get organic reach even with small accounts. Carousels build saves and return visits. The manhwa community lives here.

■ TikTok / Reels

POST

Reach potential: HIGH

Same content, different audience. I cross-post almost everything. TikTok algorithm is more forgiving for new accounts — good for early growth.

■ YouTube Shorts

OPTIONAL

Reach potential: MEDIUM

Lower effort — same vertical videos. Slower growth but builds long-term library. Good for chapters and longer story recaps.

■ Facebook

EASY WIN

Reach potential: HIGH

Older audience but massive organic reach for video. I got 11.6M impressions in 30 days just from cross-posting. Don't skip this.

■ Pinterest

SLOW BURN

Reach potential: MEDIUM

Underrated for manhwa. Mood boards, character art, aesthetic posts. Drives traffic to your website over time. Set it and forget it.

MY POSTING RHYTHM (WHEN I STARTED)

- Instagram: 1 reel per day (or every other day minimum)
- Facebook: cross-post automatically using Meta Business Suite
- TikTok: same video, posted same day or day after
- Pinterest: 3-5 pins per week, mostly repurposed content
- YouTube Shorts: whenever I had extra time — not a priority early on

■ What I'm keeping to myself (for now)

The exact timing, hashtag strategy and algorithm tricks I use are things I've tested and refined over months. What I can tell you: consistency beats perfection every time. Post something. Fix it later.

THE REAL REASON MOST PEOPLE DON'T MAKE IT

It's not lack of talent. It's not bad content. It's quitting too early. Most creators give up in the first 3 weeks — right before things start to click.

5 THINGS I DID EVERY SINGLE WEEK

- 1 Post even when you don't feel like it**
One post on a bad day beats zero posts on a good day. The algorithm rewards showing up. Feelings don't matter. The post does.
- 2 Watch your analytics but don't obsess**
Check what worked. Double down on it. Ignore vanity metrics like follower count in the early weeks.
- 3 Engage with your community**
Reply to comments. Respond to DMs. The people who comment "Manhwa" on your post? They're your first fans. Treat them like gold.
- 4 Save what goes viral and study it**
Not to copy—to understand. Why did that one resonate? What emotion did it hit? How can you recreate that feeling?
- 5 Rest without guilt**
Burn out kills more creator careers than bad content ever did. One day off per week is non-negotiable.

■ My honest truth

I went from 2,962 to 13,000 followers in 30 days. Not because I had a secret formula. Because I posted every single day and I didn't stop when it felt pointless. That's the whole strategy.

Building Income From Your Series

THE INCOME STREAMS AVAILABLE TO MANHWA CREATORS

Here's what's possible once you have an audience. This is the roadmap — not a promise.

- **Commissions** — Custom AI character art for fans. Simplest to start. No upfront cost. Beginner friendly
- **Digital Products** — Stickers, wallpapers, templates, ebooks, reading trackers. Sell once, earn forever. Scalable income
- **Brand Partnerships** — Brands pay to appear in your story world. K-beauty, books, lifestyle brands. Medium-term goal
- **Newsletter / Community** — Email list of loyal readers. Your most valuable long-term asset. Build from day 1
- **WooCommerce Shop** — Your own website shop for digital downloads. No platform fees. When you're ready

WHEN TO START MONETIZING

Don't wait until you feel 'ready'. Start with commissions when you have 500+ engaged followers. Add digital products when you have consistent content. Brand deals come naturally when brands find YOU.

Reality check ✦

Month 1 you're building. Month 2 you're learning. Month 3 things start to click. Most people quit in month 1. The ones who stay? They build something real.

■ Want the full income strategy?

My full income breakdown, exact commission pricing strategy and how I structure my digital product shop are things I share in detail with my inner community. Follow @darcie_diary for when that opens.

Your Beginner Checklist ✨

Tick these off before you post your first piece of content

- Choose your genre and main character
- Write a one-sentence story pitch
- Pick your 2-3 main characters
- Create a free Leonardo AI account
- Create a free Canva account
- Generate your first character test
- Set up your Instagram account
- Write your first bio draft
- Plan your first 3 posts
- Post your first piece. Don't wait.
- Set up Facebook Page and link to IG
- Create TikTok account for cross-posting
- Set up Pinterest for long-term traffic
- Build a simple content schedule
- Join manhwa creator communities
- Start your email list (MailPoet is free)
- Create your first digital product
- Set up commissions (link in bio)
- Track your analytics weekly
- Follow @darciediaries for what's next

You have everything you need to start. ✨

The tools are free. The platform is free. The only thing standing between you and your first post is the decision to begin. I made this from my bedroom with no team, no degree and no budget. So can you.

Follow for more ✨

Instagram: @darcie_diary · @ai.darcie_studios
Website: bookishduke.com