**Write Powerful Fiction . . .**

**Secrets to Building Strong Starts & Satisfying Endings**

By Tim Shoemaker

***“A weak opening line greets us like a LIMP HANDSHAKE.”***

**HOW DO YOU MAKE AN OPENING STRONGER?**

* **START with a ONE-LINER that GRABS the READER**
* **START with HYPERBOLE … an EXAGGERATED STATEMENT**
* **Hint at TROUBLE ... or that something bad will happen…**
* **Be a little MYSTERIOUS …**
* **Make the reader wonder *…“What’s going to happen here?”***
* **CREATE a QUESTION**
* **ASK a QUESTION**
* **INTRIGUE the READER**
* **START with ACTION**
* **START with SUSPENSE**
* **START with HUMOR**
* **START with DIALOGUE**
* **Hint at DANGER**

**Take a look at YOUR writing ...**

* **Does it *GRAB YOU*?**
* **Where is the *FIRST PLACE* it *GRABS YOU BY THE COLLAR* and won’t let go?**
* **How can you *START YOUR STORY THERE*?**

**STRONG START *KILLERS*… Often seen in novels, but not the best at holding interest.**

1. **ZOOM-IN START …** Start by showing the reader the big picture and narrowing to the point of interest.
2. **DESCRIPTION START …** Similar to the Zoom-in Start. “Here is what the setting looks like … got it? Okay … now let’s start the story.”
3. **BACKGROUND DETAILS START …** Here’s everything you need to know for this to make sense. Got it? Okay … now let the story begin!
4. **WEATHER START …** “*It was a dark and stormy night.”* This has been so overdone, it is hard to pull off and do it well enough to intrigue readers to keep reading.
5. **DREAMY START** … High action or drama start—only to find out it is a dream. You’re setting yourself up for trouble with this one ...

**A word about PROLOGUES ...**

**WHAT MAKES FOR A SATISFYING ENDING?**

* **If it is a MYSTERY …**
* **If it is SUSPENSE …**

*Readers want the hero to dig deep for the strength of character they never thought they had. A great ending must address these two things …*

* ***The Protagonist’s OBVIOUS GOAL***
* ***The Protagonist’s INNER NEED***

*What if these two are in conflict—where you can only choose one … for the most satisfying ending, go with the INNER NEED.*

***Why so many books don’t have truly satisfying endings ... and why our stories can be different ...***