**Hooks:** **How to Grab Your Reader’s Attention**

One of the most difficult things to do in writing is to catch your reader’s attention and hold it. However, that initial grab is a very important part of your story. It is called a **hook**.

There are several different ways to hook your reader’s attention:

* ***In medias res***: This is where you begin telling the story in the middle of things rather at the beginning of it all. This catches the reader’s attention because they want to know what’s happening and will feel motivated to keep reading to find out.
* **Dialogue:**  Here, you would just open the story with a line of dialogue. You should make it something that would make the reader ask what happened and then fill in the blanks. However, this method should be used with caution because sometimes it can fall flat or leave too many questions.
* **Emotion:** If your character has a typical emotion that they feel a lot of the time, start with that emotion. If the character is angry have them throw something and the reader may just want to know more about them.
* **Emotion 2.0:** Starting the story with something that will make the reader feel a strong emotion such as fear or excitement can motivate them to keep reading. Books/stories that can evoke strong emotions are worth being read.
* **Contradictions:** “I have a good job, a loving wife, and three children. I’m healthy. So why did I feel as if something was vitally wrong?” Being contradictory in your opening sentence is a good approach for emotional stories. It leaves the readers feeling something and wanting to know more.
* **Description:** Again, this is a method you have to be careful with. Description can catch the reader’s attention but too much can be overwhelming and bore the reader. Any description you open with needs to move the plot along. Don’t get stuck.

**Don’t:**

* **Give Up:** If you can’t think of a hook right away, just get to writing and then you can come back and write one up.
* **Be a Cliché:** Open with something more original than a character yelling “I hate you!” Try to make something that’s more unique to you and to your story.
* **Be afraid:** The hook won’t make or break your story. It can help draw a reader in but it’s not the be all, end all. A story with a great hook can still fall flat. Back your hook up with great writing.
* **Use Bad Grammar:** Bad grammar turns readers away. Sometimes it can be okay later on in the story but at the beginning you need to be at your best.
* **Be too Confusing:** Some confusion is okay. The reader can have questions and not know everything but if you’re starting with an action scene the reader needs to understand what is happening in that scene.