

Creating Stronger Openings

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- Begin with a stimulus as soon as possible
- Use mini-cliffhangers to keep readers engaged
- Only bring in backstory as it is needed
- When a character cares, a reader cares
- Use variety, don't become predictable

First page excerpt from “Iron Cross” by Greg Isles (Signet; later printing edition (November 1, 1995)

It's odd how death often marks a beginning rather than an end. We know someone for ten years, twenty years, longer. We see them in the course of daily life. We speak, laugh, exchange harsh words; we think we have some notion of who they are.

And then they die.