

What is a
Good
Hook?

Beginning
Hooks

Chapter
Hooks

Tips

Slow Beginning? Saggy Middle?
Beat Them into Shape with a Good Hook!
by
Tanya Stowe

+ What is a Hook?

- A hook is one or two lines at the beginning or end of a paragraph. It can be dialogue, description or action.
 - “Bill, I did it!” Drina Gallagher almost dropped her cell phone in her excitement.
“Did what?” Bill Underwood’s sleepy voice rolled across her senses, setting off a faint thread of regret for waking her boss in the middle of the night. Excitement quickly overrode the flash of remorse.

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- It should capture the reader’s attention with something unique, original, unpredictable or intriguing.
 - “Phoebe Somerville outraged everyone by bringing a French Poodle and a Hungarian lover to her father’s funeral.”

Susan Elizabeth Phillips – It Had To Be You



- It can also establish the central conflict, tone, mood or setting.
 - “Night gripped the city with cold, misty darkness. The threat of winter heavy in the air. Acid smoke stung the nostrils and the throat, for in every home fires were stoked against the seaborne chill that pierced to the bone.”

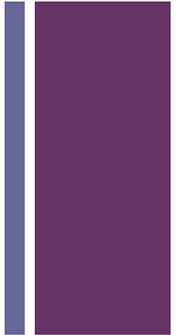
Kathleen Woodiwiss - Shana

- Good hooks often do more than 1 of these things.
 - “You sure you want to do this?” Benny Hiroshita asked, his hand on the door handle of Pete’s Bar and Grill. Cheryl Lopez nodded. “We’re just going to talk to the man, Benny. It can’t hurt to hear his story.” Shrugging, he pressed a hand to the pistol in the pocket of his fatigue jacket and opened the door. The smell of burnt French fries rushed out to them. Somewhere in the dingy little bar was a grill and someone had forgotten the food. Cheryl waited for the acrid smell to flow out before she entered and looked down the length of the narrow room.

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Chapter Hooks



- Chapter Hooks can buoy a sagging middle by following the same principles. One or two sentences at the end of a chapter will compel your reader to turn the page.
 - End the chapter with action.
 - A surprising statement of dialogue.
 - A change of scenery, locale or drastic weather.

- Add bounce to a saggy middle by finding plot points and starting each new plot twist with a finely crafted beginning hook.
 - Plot points of Star Wars
 - Leave Luke's Tatooine with Obi Wan Kenobi
 - Leia's Rescue/Obi Wan Kenobi's Death
 - Battle to destroy the Death Star



- Use Scene and Sequel developed by Dwight Swain in *Techniques of the Selling Writer*.
- End the chapter with the scene
 - “A young girl like you, taking on the most difficult situations life has to offer. But something happened. You changed. Dropped your volunteer work to focus on your studies, graduated earlier and went on to a career in electronic warfare. What happened, Drina?”

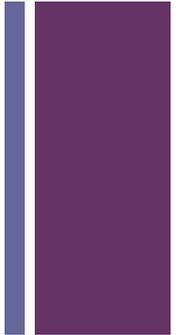
Maybe shock had loosened Drina’s previously tight-lipped attitude. To Cal’s surprise she answered him.

“I fell in love.”

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- Begin the next chapter with the sequel.
 - Cal was silent for a long while as the wind whistled through the shed. Then he shook his head “I don’t see the connection. Your first love died in battle so now you build weapons?”

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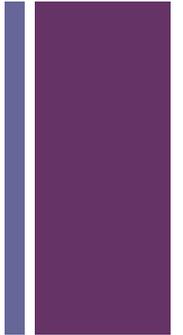


More Tips on Creating Hooks



- In her book *Write a Brilliant Hook*, Susan May Warren teaches the SHARP method to create good hooks.
- S—Show what's at stake? Why is it important? Why should we care?
- H—Hero and heroine I.D. What do THEY care about? What's important to them?
- A—Anchoring. Use strong words to anchor the reader in the action, environment or perspective of the character.
- R—Run! Create action, danger adventure in your hook.
- P—Problem. Give a hint of the story's central action, conflict or theme.

+ Resources



- Write A Brilliant Hook – Susan May Warren
- First in Fiction - Aaron D. Gansky
- Advance Fiction Writing Blog _ Randy Ingermanson
 - <http://www.advancedfictionwriting.com/articles/writing-the-perfect-scene/>
- Writer's Helping Writers
 - <http://writershelpingwriters.net/2015/01/writing-patterns-fiction-scene-sequel/>