The

S.P.R.I.N.G.S.

Method:

*(Propel your book forward with a powerful first paragraph)*

Every book/chapter needs a powerful first paragraph to spring the story forward and compel the reader to invest his or her time on reading further. A good opening paragraph drives a story onward, it sets the tone and mood for what follows, and draws the reader deeper.

3rd Person

**Scott McNally concealed** the **rose bouquet** under his **wrinkled** **sport coat**. He **tugged** at his **bowtie**, **gulping** from the **uncomfortable heat** of the **dance recital hall**. **Sarah would be devastated from her fall. What would he say?**

1st Person

**Sarah would be devastated from her fall. What would I say? Concealing** a **rose bouquet** under my **wrinkled** **sport coat**, **I** **tugged** at my **bowtie**, and **gulped** from the **uncomfortable heat** of the **dance recital hall**.

Set The Tone

Use objects, behaviors, senses, and setting to set the tone of the scene. If you are writing a love story full of hope and excitement, you should use positive words to describe the elements of the scene, behaviors of the characters, etc. But if you are writing a dark horror story you would not want to describe your scene with hope oriented words or phrases. Instead you would want to describe things with dark, desolate, and frightening verbiage.

In the above sample, the Mood would have changed based upon the description of the heat in the room. What if the room was frigid? It would change the mood of the scene drastically. What if the sport coat was freshly pressed and wrinkle free? It would reveal that the main character was either a perfectionist or maybe a wealthy man with butler. Instead the coat is wrinkled revealing a character who is rushed and overwhelmed.

Personality Leaks

Personality leaks out of every character’s action, dialogue, emotion, etc. and each leaks reveals snippets of the character’s personality and mood. The way he or she moves, thinks, observes, reacts, or responds all show different traits of the character and help the reader to form a connection.

Reveal the Genre and/or Setting

It is important to give the reader a frame or reference for what is happening in the story. Don’t take too long to give the reader an idea of the genre of the story and make sure to reveal the setting.

Initiate Action

Readers don’t want to be bored. Spring them into the story with action-oriented verbs that compel the story forward. Choose the best word to reveal more about your story. I could have used the verbs *hid* or *covered*, but *concealed* is a much more descriptive and interesting word choice. Think about every verb you use if you want your story to stand out.

In my sample, the setting is a modern day dance hall, but in a fantasy setting dragons might be described as flying overhead, or for historical manuscripts the character may be walking through an ancient castle teeming with life.

Name Your POV Character

Give you character a name that fits the setting and genre of your book. Make sure it is easy to pronounce phonetically and establish it in the first or second sentence. Jethro Bodine is not an appropriate name for a Wall Street tycoon, nor is Jamal Jones the proper name for an elven warrior. Choose names that work and will be believable by the reader.

Go Deep (Use Deep POV to get into your characters head)

We need to experience the world from the main characters viewpoint we see, hear, taste, smell, and touch only what the character does, and it is important to get deep into the main characters point of view as soon as possible. The reader wants to know what the character is thinking and feeling; it helps the reader form an emotional bond.

Set The Scene

Every word matters. In the example above, Scott adjusts his bowtie, but the feeling of the scene would change if it was a rental bowtie, a clip-on bowtie, or even a regular tie fixed perfectly into a double Windsor knot. Every word chosen shares insight into the scene, character, mood, or emotion.

It’s the same with the flowers, if the rose bouquet had been carnations, daisies, or lilies, that choice would have given the reader a different insight to the setting and the main character. What if the sport coat had been a leather motorcycle jacket, or a sweatshirt? They would have revealed unique and interesting details about the character.

Examples:

"There is one mirror in my house. It is behind a sliding panel in the hallway upstairs. Our faction allows me to stand in front of it on the second day of every third month, the day my mother cuts my hair." ***Divergent*** *by Veronica Roth*

"Prayer candles flicker in my bedroom. The Scriptura Sancta lies discarded, pages crumpled, on my bed. Bruises mark my knees from kneeling on the hard tile, and the Godstone in my navel throbs. I have been praying― no, begging― that King Alejandro de Vega, my future husband, will be ugly, old, and fat."

***The Girl of Fire and Thorns*** *by Rae Carson*

"The assassins dropped into the palace grounds at midnight, four fleet shadows dark against the wall. The fall was high, the ground was hard; they made no more sound on impact than the pattering of rain."

***Ptolemy's Gate*** *by Jonathan Stroud*

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort. ***The Hobbit*** *by J.R.R Tolkien*