

Favourite First Lines

aka “Opening Hooks”

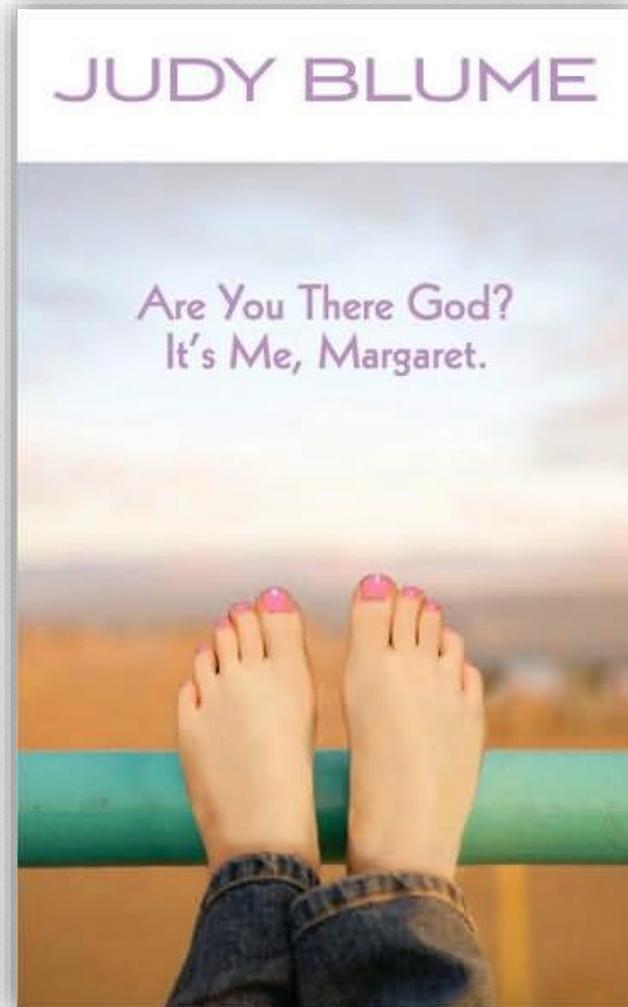
A good book cover usually makes you want to pick it up, but more often than not, a gripping first sentence or paragraph prevents you from putting the book back down.

When we write, sometimes the first line is the hardest. Even though we shouldn't judge an entire book by its first couple of pages, it's interesting to take note of how authors chose to begin their work.

Here are some of my favourite first lines:

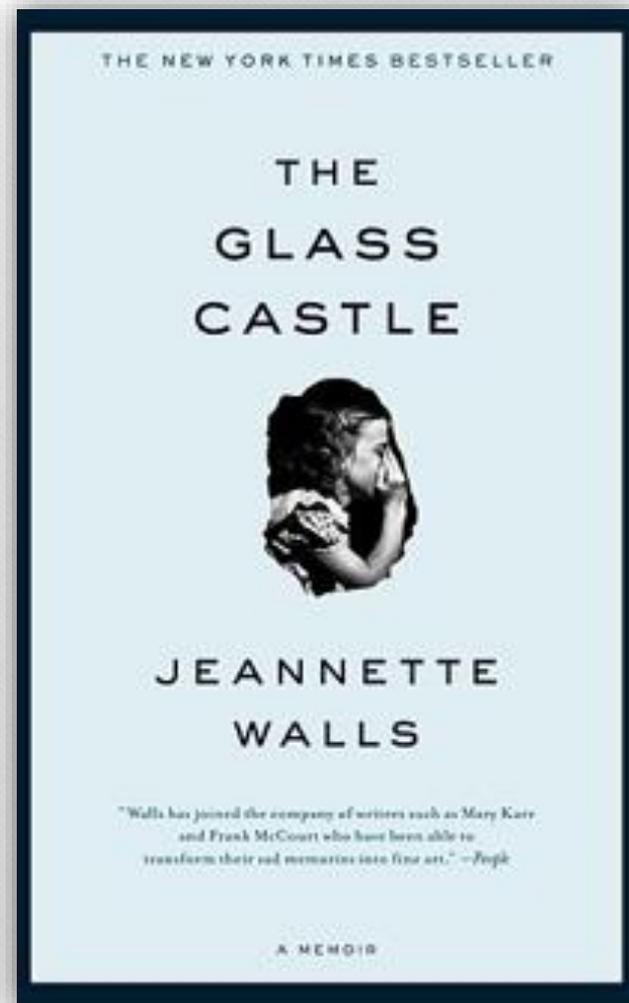
"We moved on the Tuesday before Labor Day. I knew what the weather was like the second I got up. I knew because I caught my mother sniffing under her arms."

- Judy Bloom



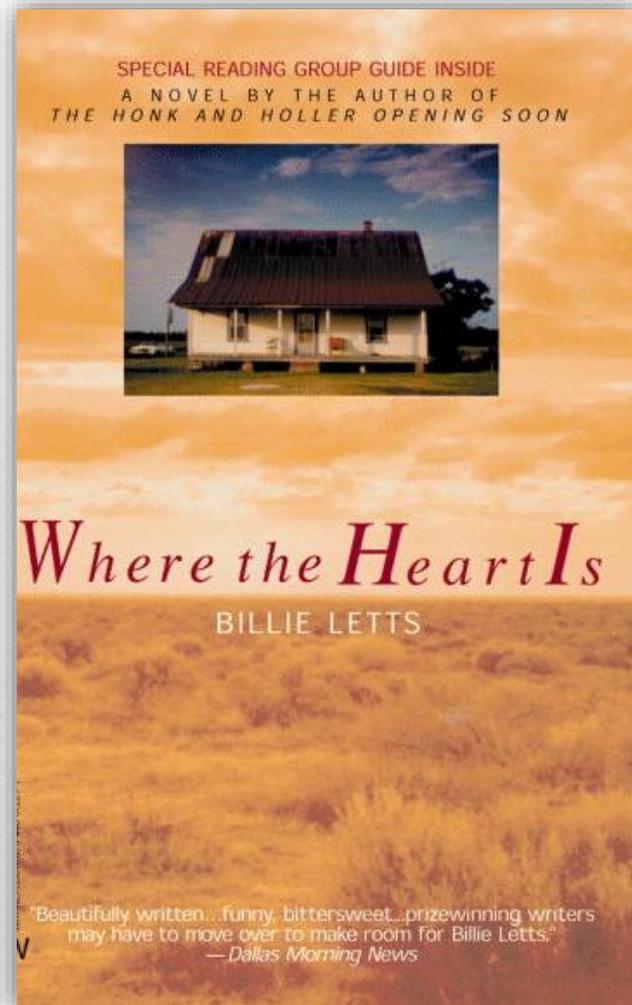
“I was sitting in a taxi,
wondering if I had overdressed
for the evening, when I looked
out the window and saw Mom
rooting through a dumpster.”

-Jeannette Walls



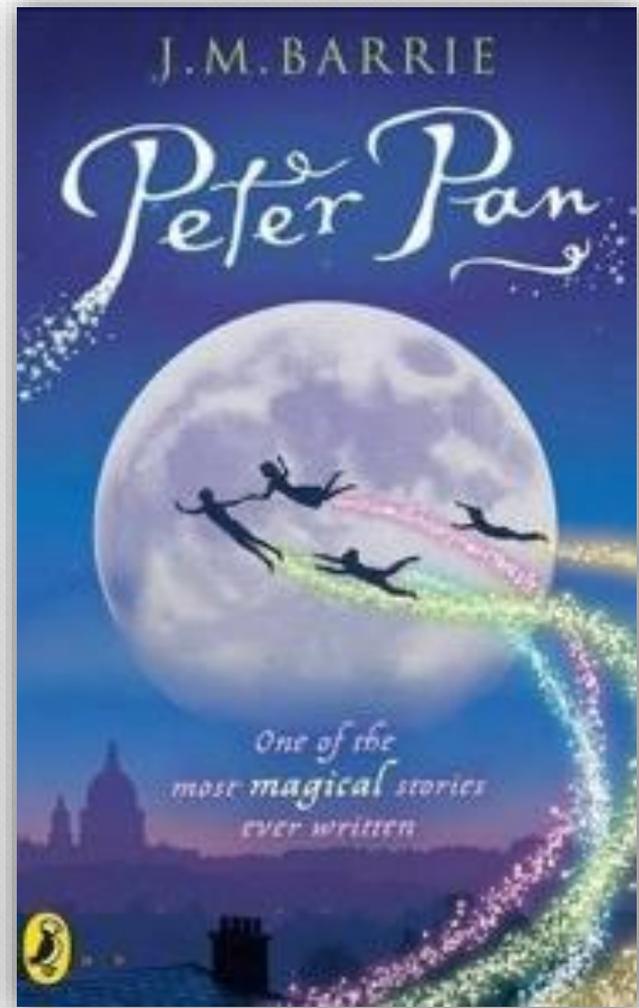
“Novalee Nation, seventeen, seven months pregnant, thirty-seven pounds overweight – and superstitious about sevens – shifted uncomfortably in the seat of the old Plymouth and ran her hands down the curve of her belly.”

- Billie Letts



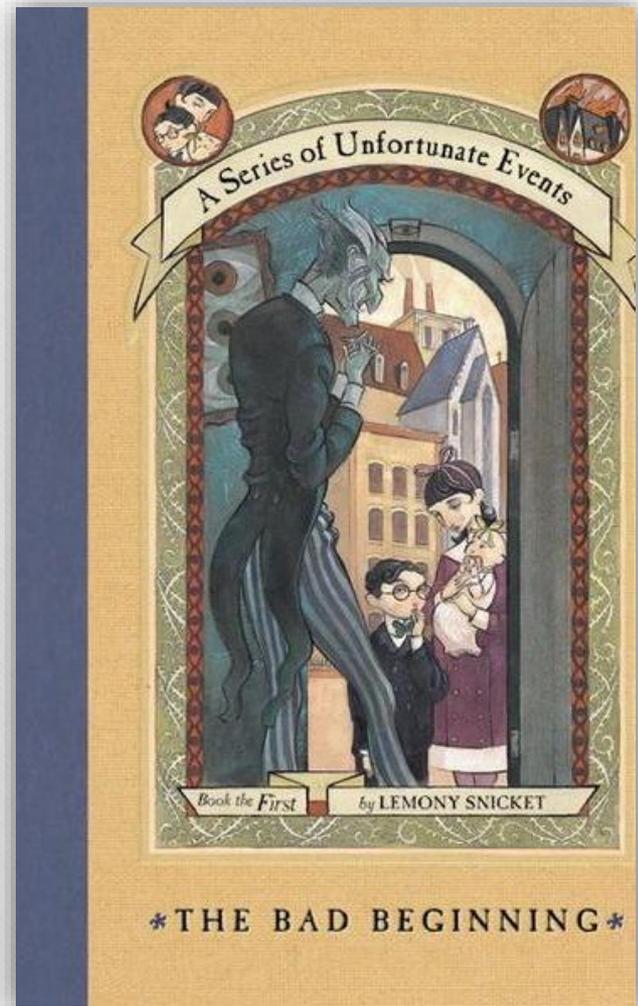
“All children, except one,
grow up.”

- J.M. Barrie



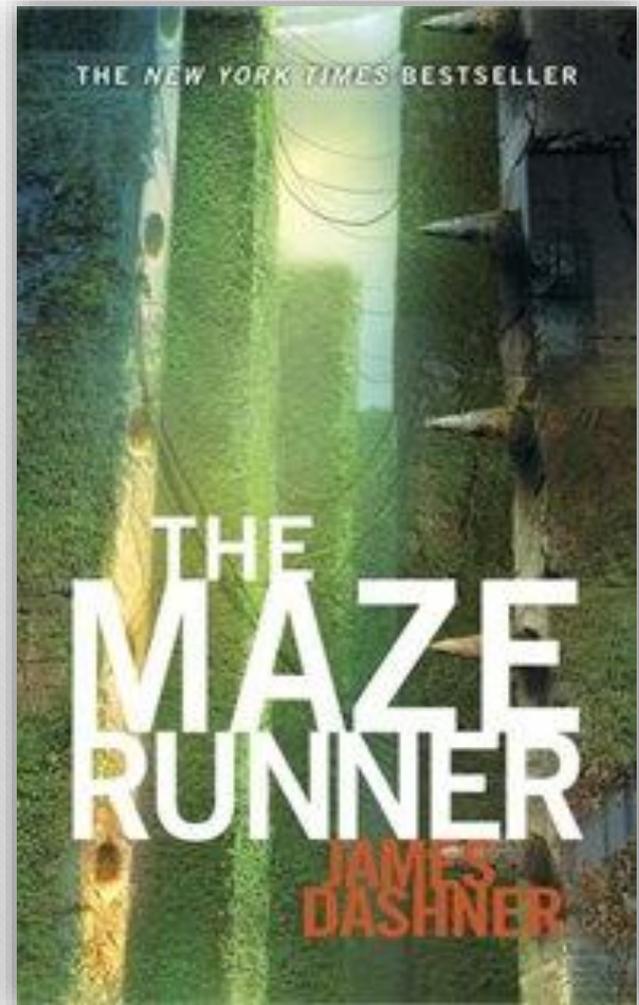
“If you are interested in stories with happy endings, you would be better off reading some other book.”

- Lemony Snicket



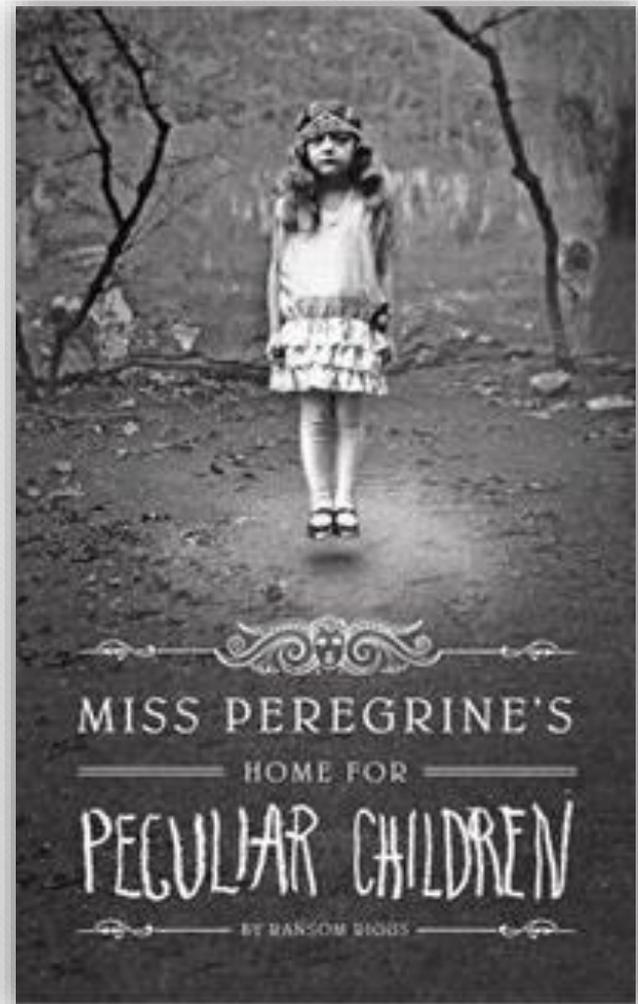
“He began his new life standing up, surrounded by cold darkness and stale, dusty air.”

- James Dashner



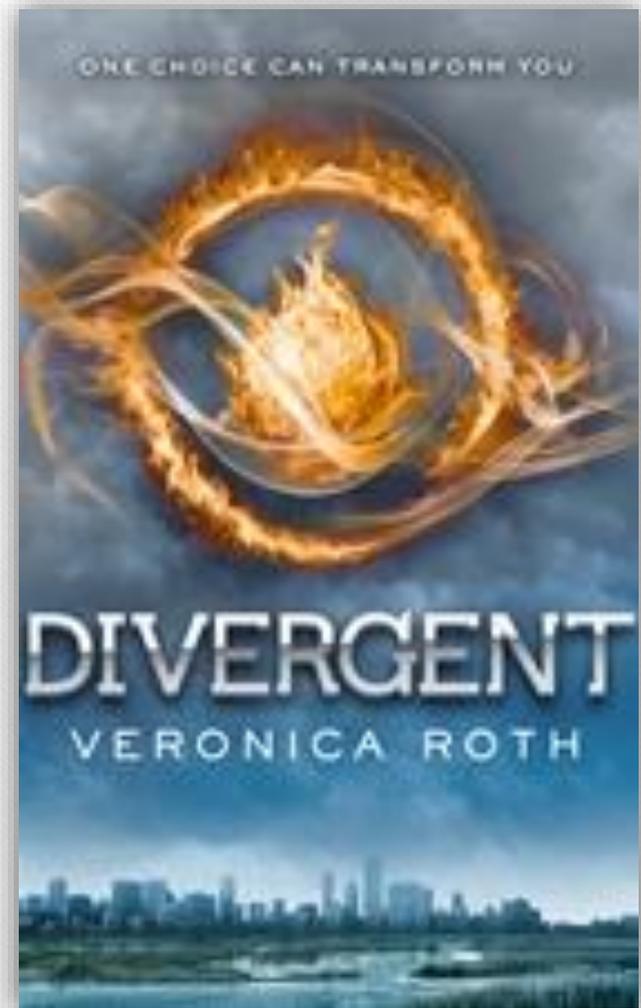
“I had just come to accept that my life would be ordinary when extraordinary things began to happen.”

- Ransom Riggs



“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.”

- Veronica Roth

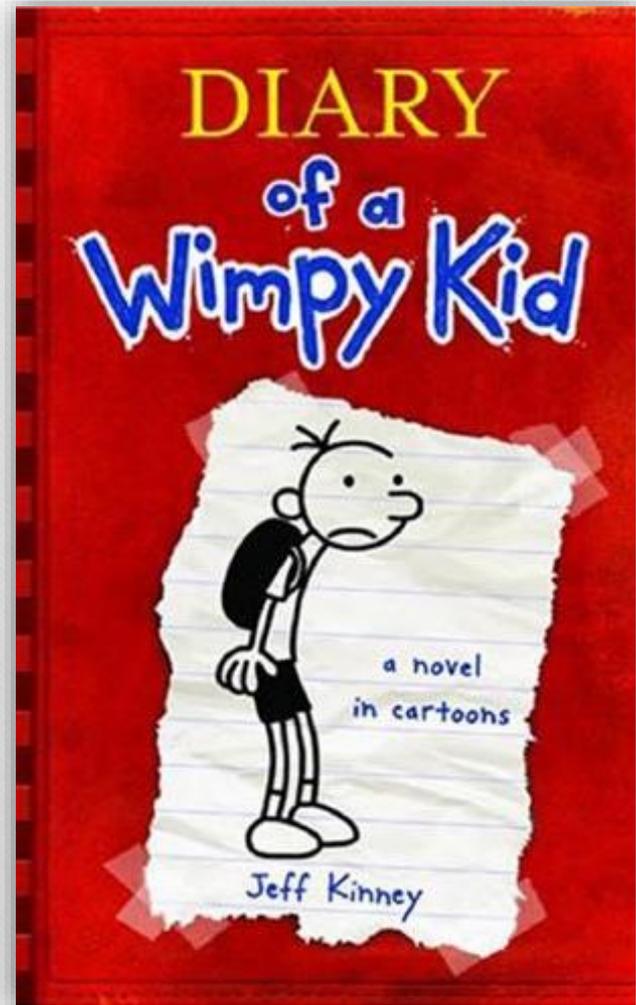


“SEPTEMBER

Tuesday

First of all, let me get something straight: This is a JOURNAL, not a diary. I know what it says on the cover, but when Mom went out to buy this thing I SPECIFICALLY told her to get one that didn't say "diary" on it. Great. All I need is for some jerk to catch me carrying this book around and get the wrong idea.”

- Jeff Kinney



"In an old house in Paris that was covered with vines lived twelve little girls in two straight lines."

- Ludwig Bemelmans



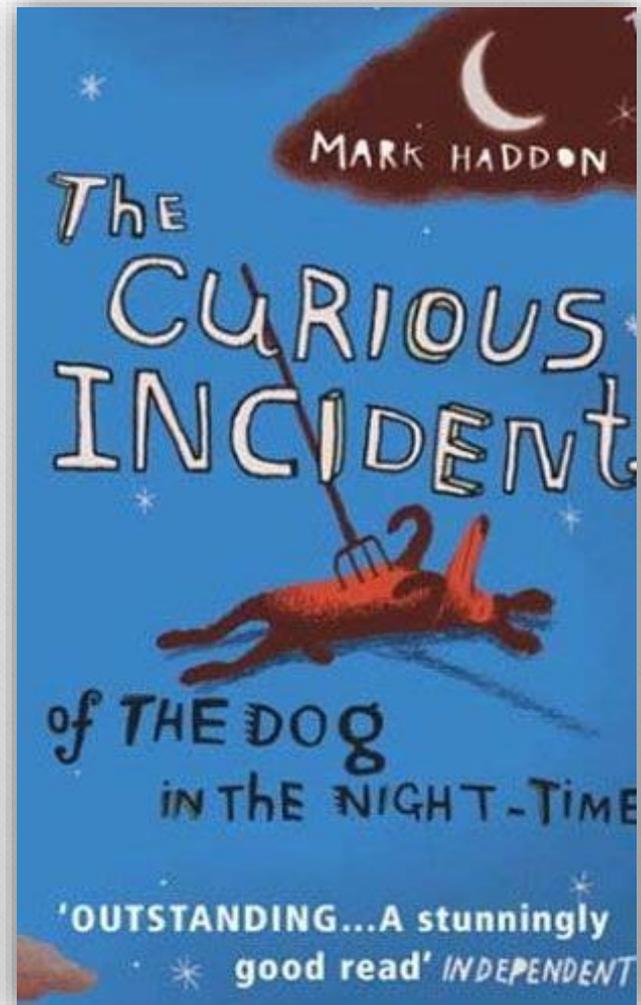
“The early summer sky was the color of cat vomit. Of course, Tally thought, you’d have to feed your cat only salmon flavored cat food for a while, to get the pinks right.”

- Scott Westerfeld



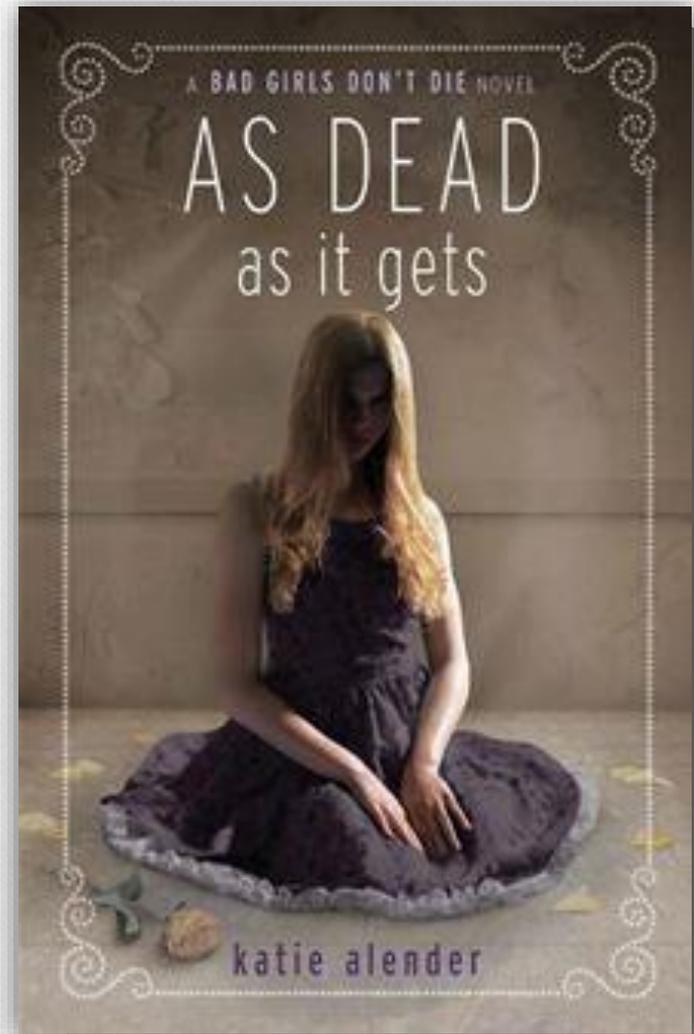
“ It was 7 minutes after midnight. The dog was lying on the grass in the middle of the lawn in front of Mrs. Shears’s house. Its eyes were closed. It looked as if it was running on its side, the way dogs run when they think they are chasing a cat in a dream. But the dog was not running or asleep. The dog was dead. There was a garden fork sticking out of the dog.”

- Mark Haddon



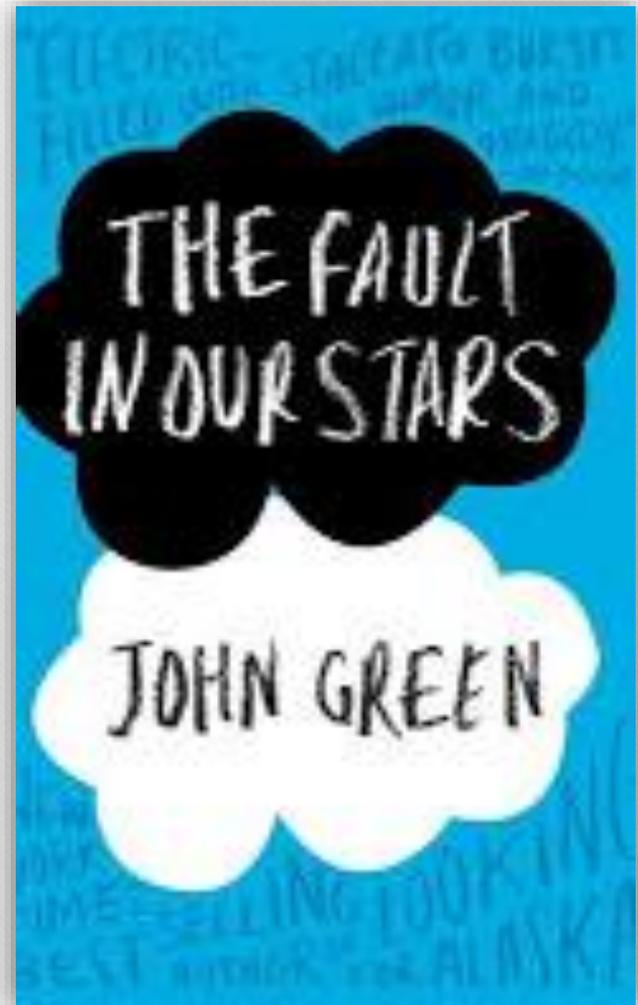
“The bad news is, ghosts are everywhere.”

- Katie Alender



"Late in the winter of my seventeenth year, my mother decided I was depressed, presumably because I rarely left the house, spent a lot of time in bed, read the same book over and over, ate infrequently, and devoted quite a bit of my abundant free time to thinking about death."

- John Green



Jazz opened his eyes.

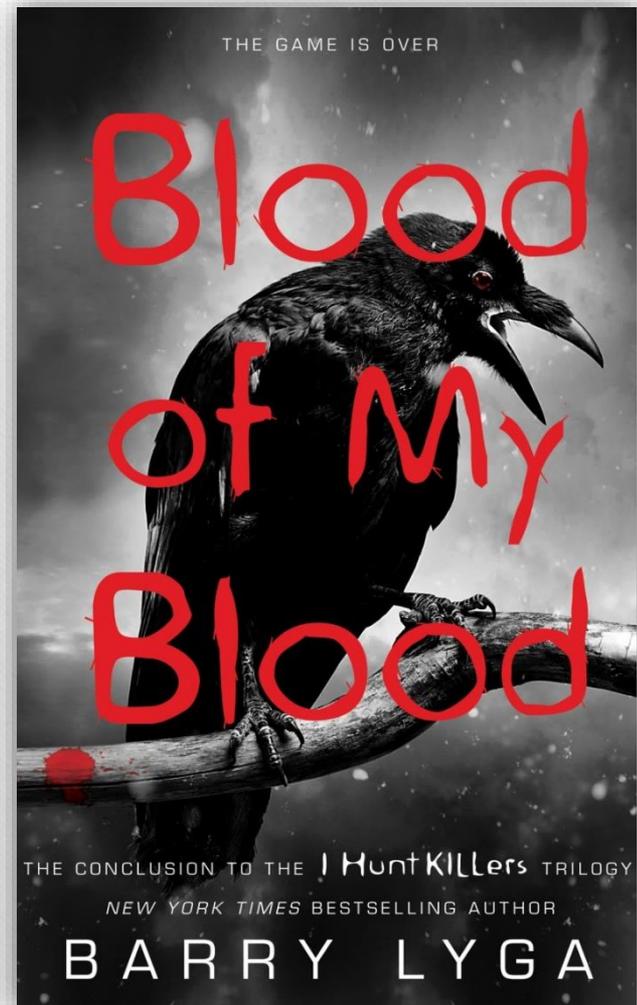
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Connie opened her eyes.

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Howie opened his eyes.

- Barry Lyga



Your Assignment:

Be on the lookout for favourite first lines.

First lines do not necessarily have to be the first words of a book – they can be the first words of a chapter, the first words of a newspaper or magazine article, the first words of a poem, etc.

Take notice of what “hooks” you!

Your Assignment:

- Read through the 6 Great Ways to Start a Piece of Writing.
- Start brainstorming different ways you could start your memoir. Remember, you want to “hook” people from the beginning so they want to keep reading about your memorable moment.