

HOW TO START THE PLAY YOU'RE WRITING

The opening of your play needs to grab the audience; otherwise the battle is lost before it begins. Following are some of the elements of a strong start:

- **Start your play as far into the story as possible.** Pick a *point of attack* (opening scenario) that's well into the story, just before the inciting incident.
- **Upset the status quo.** Be sure that something happens early on (the *inciting incident*) to upset the world of your protagonist, launching her on a mission to set things right.
- **Give your protagonist a critical mission.** The audience will get behind your protagonist if what your protagonist is after — the goal— is urgent, important, and crystal clear to the audience.
- **Be sure that the antagonist provides strong obstacles.** The more even the battle, the greater the suspense.
- **Get the backstory in.** Throughout the play, when it's necessary to do so, gradually weave into the dialogue the *backstory*, relevant events that happened before the start of the play.