



## GREAT BEGINNINGS

The last camel collapsed at noon.

It was a bright cold day in April and the clocks were striking thirteen.

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

They threw me off the hay truck about noon.

I have often recalled the morning when the first of the anonymous letters came.

What doesn't work?

What must they do?

## **THOSE WHO WISH ME DEAD**

by Michael Koryta

On the last day of Jace Wilson's life, the fourteen-year-old stood on a quarry ledge staring at cool still water and finally understood something his mother had told him years before: Trouble might come for you when you showed fear, but trouble doubled-down when you lied about being afraid. At the time, Jace hadn't known exactly what she was talking about. Today he did.

It was a sixty-five foot drop from Rooftop to the water, and Jace had a hundred dollars riding on it – a hundred dollars that he didn't have, of course – all because he'd shown a trace of fear. It was a stupid bet, sure, and he wouldn't have made it if the girls hadn't been there, listening to the whole thing and laughing. But they had been, and so now it wasn't just a hundred bucks, it was a hell of a lot more than that, and he had two days to figure out how to pull it off.

Not everyone who tried Rooftop succeeded. They'd pulled bodies out of the quarry before, and those were older kids, college kids, maybe even divers, he didn't know.

**All on this first page:**

Hook?

Name

Age

Sex

Family

Tone/word choice

Action/Conflict

Setting

The stakes/Consequences

Socioeconomic

Personal attributes

Emotion

Suspense

Instant backstory

\*\*Do we like him?

\*\*Does he really die?

\*\*\*Are you going to turn the page

>>Subtext –what else is going on?

**Remember what Stephen King says: The hardest part\_\_\_\_\_.\***

**USA Today bestselling author HANK PHILLIPPI RYAN** is the on-air investigative reporter for Boston's WHDH-TV, winning 37 EMMYs and dozens more journalism honors. Bestselling author of twelve mysteries, Ryan's also an award-winner in her second profession—with five Agathas, two Anthonys, two Macavitys, the Daphne, and the coveted Mary Higgins Clark Award. Critics call her “a superb and gifted storyteller.” Her novels are included in *Library Journal's* Best of 2014, 2015 and 2016. Hank’s a founder of MWA University and past president of National Sisters in Crime.

Her 2019 thriller is THE MURDER LIST, with won the Anthony Award for Best Novel of the Year, and is also an Agatha, Macavity and Mary Higgins Clark Award nominee. Her newest book, THE FIRST TO LIE, was published August 4. The *Publishers Weekly* starred review says: “Stellar. Ryan could win a sixth Agatha with this one.” It is now a nominee for the Mary Higgins Clark award. Watch for HER PERFECT LIFE in September.

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GREAT BEGINNINGS Hank Phillippi Ryan

\*is just *before* you start.