

Excerpts from Books I'll be Discussing

FIRST PERSON

From **The Mortification of Fovea Munson**, by Mary Winn Heider

One: Hippocrates Never Had to Call Family Meetings

Dead bodies are the worst.

I've been trying to explain that to my parents for years. Mostly, I don't come right out and say it, but sometimes I can't help myself.

The main problem is that. They just don't seem to get it.

I'll say: "Dead bodies are the worst."

They'll say: "Fovea! They're so helpful! There's nothing better than a good, helpful dead body!"

"Especially," my dad might say.

"When you need a hand," my mom will finish.

From **St Iggy**, by K L Going

So I got kicked out of school today, which is not so great but also not entirely unexpected, and I went back to Public Housing where I live to tell my parents all about it but my mom went visiting someone or other and probably isn't coming back and my dad is stoned off his ass on the couch like he always is, so somehow I'm not getting the vibe that he'd really, you know, care, so I think, *Here's what I'm going to do: First I've got to make a plan. And this is part of the plan—making a plan—so really I'm doing good already.*

THIRD PERSON LIMITED

From: **Hurricane Season**, by Nicole Melleby

It all started the day Fig noticed the SOLD addition to the sign on her neighbor's lawn as she left for school.

She sat at her desk in art class with her chin resting on her hands as her art teacher asked Danny Carterto pass out large, clean white sheets of paper. It was a warm day for September, and Fig kept her eyes focused out the classroom window at the bright blue sky as the class ticked by. Haley Flores was handing out paper plates, and Miss Williams was walking around the room, asking everyone to pick the three colors of paint they wanted to start with.

Compare openings in first and third limited.

What can we say about voice?

About psychic distance?

SECOND PERSON

Damage, by A M Jenkins

It's all yours. Your hands rise, fingers spread, ready to feel the firm scrape of the football, ready to pull it to you, ready to tuck it safely in.

But the ball bumbles against your fingertips. It lurches away, and that beautiful spiraling pass ends its life in a series of ugly bounces across the field.

Then there's just a football lying untended on the grass, just that—and your empty hands.

When you open your eyes, the joyless feeling has already crawled onto your chest. The ceiling of your room presses you down into the mattress. The air settles in your lungs so heavy that it's almost too much trouble to breathe.

What can we say about Jenkins' use of the second person? What are you inferring?

From The Rules of Survival, Nancy Werlin

The human instinct for self-preservation is strong. I know because mine pulls at me, too, like the needle on a compass. And everybody—I've been reading some philosophy—everybody seems to agree that the instinct and responsibility of all humans is to take care of themselves first. You have the right to survive, if you can.

But how come there don't seem to be any rules about when you ought to help others survive? Rules telling you when you ought to help others survive? Rules telling you when that's worth some risk to yourself? Callie and I were working so hard for you, Emmy, but as far as I could see, nobody else cared at all. For any of us.

Omniscient/Mult Narrative
From Thirteen Doorways, by Laura Ruby

Listen.

The first time they took Frankie to the orphanage, she couldn't speak English. Only Italian. "Voglio mio padre! Voglio mio padre! That's what she said, over and over and over.

At least, that's what the nuns told her she said. She couldn't remember any of it.

The second time they took her to the orphanage, the last time, she didn't say anything at all. Not one word. For months.

She didn't remember that either.

What she did remember: her father's shoe shop on Irving Avenue. The scent of calfskin and polish. The cramped apartment behind the shop. The metal tub sitting in the middle of the kitchen. Cold bathwater wrinkling her little toes. The rough scrape of Aunt Marion's brush on her back.

NOTE: (I'm jumping to the end of the opening):

Of course, it wasn't her mother's voice she heard. It was mine. Because the dead never sleep, you see.

We have so many other things to do.

(Think about the master effect of a narrator who knows more than the MC. Do you trust this voice? Why?)

MULTIPLE POINTS OF VIEW

From Orange for the Sunsets, by Tina Athaide

YESOFU

Yesofu glanced at this watch. Nine o'clock. He'd promised Mamma he'd be back no later than nine thirty. "Yanguwa!" she'd called to him as he ran out the door. Of course. She wanted him to hurry up. It was mostly dark now except for the light spilling out the windows of the Entebbe Institute. From what Yesofu could tell, only a couple of people were still inside. He stepped back into the shadows of the banyan tree and waited. The band announced it was their last song for the night and started howling like McCartney and Lennon.

ASHA

After morning mass. Asha raced home ahead of Mama and Papa. She normally liked attending church with the other Catholic Indians from South India, but today she couldn't stop thinking about Yesofu.