

The First Two Pages of Yeti

My novel, Yeti, is sort of a sci-fi action thriller set in the remote mountains of Mongolia. My protagonist is a paleoanthropologist searching for early human fossils.

This novel has some important scientific information especially in the first few chapters as the plot unfolds so the challenge was how to open the book in an interesting and gripping manner in order to hold the reader's interest and draw him/her into the story. Of course, this is every writer's challenge but for this novel it seemed particularly crucial.

Initially, I wanted to begin the story in the middle of the action in order to give the reader a sense of urgency. You know, the action is already happening to the protagonist. But I wanted an even more gripping lead-in to the story, one with remoteness, mystery, tragedy.

I decided on beginning Yeti with a prologue set fifty years earlier in Mongolia. And something bad was going to happen. Here then are the opening lines:

The dark Lisunov Li-2 sat perched like a giant insect on the short runway amidst the driving snow and freezing rain. Its somber hulk housed two Shvetsov-Ash engines and the aircraft was alone on the isolated field. Earlier, the day's gray light had faded into a grim darkness leaving the men in the small Flight Operations Office shivering in their Soviet great coats. An antique oil lamp filled the single room with a soft, yellow glow. The plane's pilot, bent over the counter, studying an aeronautical chart while his copilot, at the end of the counter, spoke softly into a telephone.

There you have it. Dark, foreboding, mysterious. In the middle of nowhere. I hope it conveys a sense that something is about to happen. The use of an unfamiliar aircraft I hope heightens this sense of mystery.

Later, two men arrive and one speaks to the pilot:

"Your cargo is in the jeep, Major. Are you about ready?"
"Just about, Sergeant. A few last minute details."
"What's this all about, sir?" the other enlisted man said.
The pilot shook his head. "Sorry, state secret."
"What is in the box?" the sergeant said.
"That I can answer. I have no earthly idea."
The two enlisted men turned and tramped toward the door.
"We'll get it loaded for you, Major, so you can be on your way."

There it is again. More mystery. I hope that by now the reader is asking, "What is this about? Where is it going? What is the cargo?"

Later in the prologue when the aircraft crashes and the Russians decide to not recover the cargo it leaves the reader wondering why. Which leads into the opening chapters. I agonized for weeks trying to find the right opening for *Yeti*. I tried out numerous scenarios but none seemed to convey the mood I was after. Did I succeed? I suppose my readers will decide but I am happy with the way it turned out.



Richard Edde was born and raised in Oklahoma. After graduating from Central State College, he attended the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, where he earned his medical degree in 1971. After spending a few years in family practice in two rural Oklahoma towns, he completed a residency in anesthesiology. Following a long career in academia and private practice, he retired to devote time to writing. His first novel, *The Photograph*, was released in 2014. His second novel, *Yeti*, was released in 2015. Dr. Edde resides in eastern Oklahoma with his wife.