Good Beginnings

1. Go to <http://misssnarksfirstvictim.blogspot.com>
2. Scroll down until you find the archives on the right-hand side (about halfway down).
3. Choose a month and expand it. You are looking for a series of posts with “Secret Agent” in the title.
   1. Note: The quality of the entries get better as the months pass, so more recent rounds will have a higher percentage of good beginnings, but will consequently also be harder for you to discuss. Earlier rounds will have a smaller percentage of excerpts that work for you, but more that you’ll be able to easily discuss in terms of what works for you and what doesn’t. FOR BEST RESULTS, CHOOSE A MONTH FROM 2009 -2011.
4. Read through the Secret Agent entries. These are the first 250(ish) words from stories that have been submitted by writers wanting feedback on their work from an agent.
5. Using the sample chart below, record each beginning that you read. YOU DO NOT NEED TO READ THE ENTIRE BEGINNING. Read ONLY until you get bored or something annoys you. If you stop reading, record ‘No’ in the ‘Read?’ column, and in “Why?” write down why you stopped reading. Some examples might be: poor grammar/punctuation; topic didn’t interest me; character was annoying or inconsistent; etc.
6. If you DO read an entire beginning, record ‘Yes’ in the ‘Read?’ column, and under ‘Why?’ write down what you liked about the beginning that made you keep reading.
7. You must get through AT LEAST fifteen. Twenty is better. The whole fifty for one round of Secret Agent would give you the best understanding of what makes a good beginning for a story.

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| Date of entry | Title of entry | Read? | Why? |
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