Contents

1. Introduction 1
2. Openings 7
   Ways of Starting the Story
3. Dialogue 23
   The Reader as Eavesdropper
4. Characters 47
   The Need for Flawed Heroes and Sympathetic Villains
5. High Events 67
   The Treatment of Dramatic Moments in Serious Fiction
6. Sentiment versus Sentimentality 89
   The First, Always; the Second, Never
7. Closings 111
   Ways of Ending the Story
8. Conclusion 127
Works Cited or Discussed 133