Story Beginnings Worksheet

For your story to connect to your readers, the first chapter is vital. How do you know *where* your story starts? Use this worksheet to find the best way to use action, emotion, and motive to pinpoint your story beginning.

1. Identify your Earth Shaking Event. This is the scene where everything changes for your protagonist. This scene should fall after the first chapter, but before a quarter of the way through the story. The reader needs to see and connect with the main character in their normal world before everything gets shaken up. _____

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2. In this Earth Shaking Event, your protagonist makes a choice. *Why* did they choose the way they did? What need do they *think* they have that will be aided by their choice? _____

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3. This 'Think Need' is the motivation that drives your protagonist's choices in the first part of the book. Even if they've never fully acted on it before the Earth Shaking Event, it's there from the beginning. Now look further back. Is there a scene towards the beginning of your story that gives a glimpse of this 'Think Need'? _____

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4. The glimpse of the Think Need is where you story should start. What action takes place that provides for this glimpse? _____

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5. When the Think Need is first glimpsed, emotions are introduced, but any decisions or action based from the need are unrealized. There is no desperate push to choose to meet this need, just a recognition that it exists. This glimpse comes in the first few pages of your book. What emotions are triggered when this need is unrealized? _____

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6. Your first chapter should be a mix of action and emotion surrounding the reveal of the Think Need, and its unrealized resolution. This is your protagonist's normal world - having this need, but not being forced into uncomfortable territory required to meet that need. Yet. Once the Earth Shaking event hits, then they're forced to act toward that need. At the very beginning, the reader just gets a glimpse. How can you use action and emotion to introduce the Think Need in the first chapter? _____

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