

## ANSWERS

### WHAT IS A BACKSTORY ? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT ?

Backstory is what happens before the story you are being told begins



"Dishes smashed on my counter  
from our last encounter.  
Pictures snatched out the frame  
Bitch, I scratched out  
your name and face."

BEYONCE As StoryTeller  
from the song 'Sandcastles', LEMONADE Album

**BACKSTORY** is the history or background of how the character became the person we first meet. Or Backstory can describe how the circumstances or relationships in the story came about. A committed StoryTeller builds a detailed backstory in their own head so that they can explain to themselves / justify -- why the characters they create do what they do. Actors do the same when preparing for a role. They will create their own Backstory that goes beyond (but doesn't conflict with) what is said in the script. As a writer if you don't build a believable Backstory your characters will not seem real. In life you have never met another human being who doesn't have a lifetime / generations of Backstory you know nothing about -- which might be affecting how they behave and the choices they make. The writer feeds the audience Backstory bit by bit. The audience gets hooked when they are surprised by the Backstory that inspired the character's extreme or hurtful actions.

### WHY ARE STORY OPENINGS IMPORTANT ?

"Six inch heels,  
she walked in the club  
like nobody's business  
Goddamn,  
she murdered everybody  
and I was her witness"

BEYONCE As StoryTeller  
Opening lines from '6 Inch', LEMONADE Album



**THE OPENING** You try to quickly hook your audience ! The Opening sets the mood for the kind of story it's going to be. It can give clues to what's going to happen later. It can be surprising / inspiring / mysterious / funny / scary ! In film Openings it's often music and images that pull the audience in. If there's dialogue it's usually surrounded by strong images. If a script's Opening pages contain written descriptions of lots of visuals --- don't skim past it! To imagine it's power on the screen, stop and visualize what is being explained -- just like the craftspeople who are going to turn the script into a film will have to do.