Character Questionnaire

Part I. Tell me about yourself. (Remember, you are assuming the role of a fictional character you are building through these questions!):

- What's your name?
    - Molly Hurst
- How old are you?
    - 33
- What are your **two** most physically defining features that cause people to recognize you?
    - dark, sunken eyes that bug out and thin frame
- How do you typically dress? What do your particular clothing choices / accessories say about you?
    - old clothes that need washing, loose clothing, ill-fitting — clothes that used to fit but I have lost weight, a fast food uniform; My clothes say that I don't care about my health or appearance, I look sloppy and unwell.
- Empty your pockets. What's there?: a cracked phone, house keys, wallet with barely any cash, a button, a couple coins
- Where were you born / where have you grown up?
    - a small, rural town with a close community — grandma's house
    - suburban city, people are very wealthy, I lived in a gated community and was friends with the other kids there — we drove down to grandma's every weekend (20 mins away)
- Where do you live now? (give a location and type of living space, for ex: renting a room in a mansion in Los Altos Hills):
    - renting a studio apartment in a city a couple hours away from where I grew up
- Where are your favorite places in the world and why?
    - The living room with a fireplace in grandma's house. It feels like I'm with her when I'm there, like I can smell her, hear her, and I remember the times we spent together there.
- What's your primary mode of transportation?
    - walking and the bus – I can't afford a car
- How do you make a living (what's your source of income?)
    - I work at a fast-food joint a few streets down
- Who are your parents?
    - My parents are very successful. They both graduated from grad-school. My mom's a lawyer and my dad does something in biotech, I don't really know. They always wanted me to be like them.
- Do you have any siblings?
    - I have an older brother, 6 years older than me – he's exactly the kind of child my parents always wanted
- Are there any other family members/relatives that are of special significance to you?

    - My grandma — she passed away 10-odd years ago. She was the most important person to me in my life. Unlike my parents, she never had any expectations for me, only her unconditional love. I still miss her every day.
- Did you have a happy childhood? Explain:
    - I had a happy childhood. My grandma was the most responsible for that. She made me feel loved and accepted, especially when my parents make me feel the opposite. I was never good at school and my parents pressured me a lot to be better. But other than that, my parents loved me. I know they just wanted the best for me. And they did their best to check up on me and make sure I was happy.
- Where have you attended school? (And are you in school now? If so, how's it going?)
    - I only barely graduated from high school and I skipped my graduation. My grandma passed while I was in high school and after that, I started struggling a lot in school. My parents were really disappointed in me, and even more so when I told them I wasn't going to college, not even community college.
- Are you religious? Why/why not?
    - My family is Christian, so I practice, too. I stopped going to church a couple years after grandma passed, but after the fire, I started going every Sunday.
- What do you like to read? Watch on TV? Favorite movies? Music? Other art/entertainment?
    - I love [insert movie where character has a close relationship with their grandparent] because I relate to the main character.
- How do you best express yourself?
    - I'm not very good at expressing myself, but I find it easier when I can write out my thoughts.
- Do you have art/music talent?
    - My grandma taught me how to carve and paint dolls when I was little. I've been doing that ever since full-time, at least until the fire…
- What is your taste in art/music?
    -
- What is your most prized possession?
    - The first doll my grandma ever made for me. It's still in my childhood bedroom.
- What is your greatest achievement?
    - I wouldn't say I've made any great achievements. I feel like a failure a lot of the time. Like, when I think about who my parents expected me to be, I just feel disappointed in myself. My greatest achievement *would* be that massive doll of my grandma I was making, …

Part II. Tell me about your relationships. (Remember, you are assuming the role of a fictional character you are building through these questions!)

- Are you in a romantic relationship? With whom? Describe them by choosing several of the details listed above.
- Are you satisfied with the relationship? Why/not?
- Do you want to be in a relationship? With whom, and why? If not, why not?

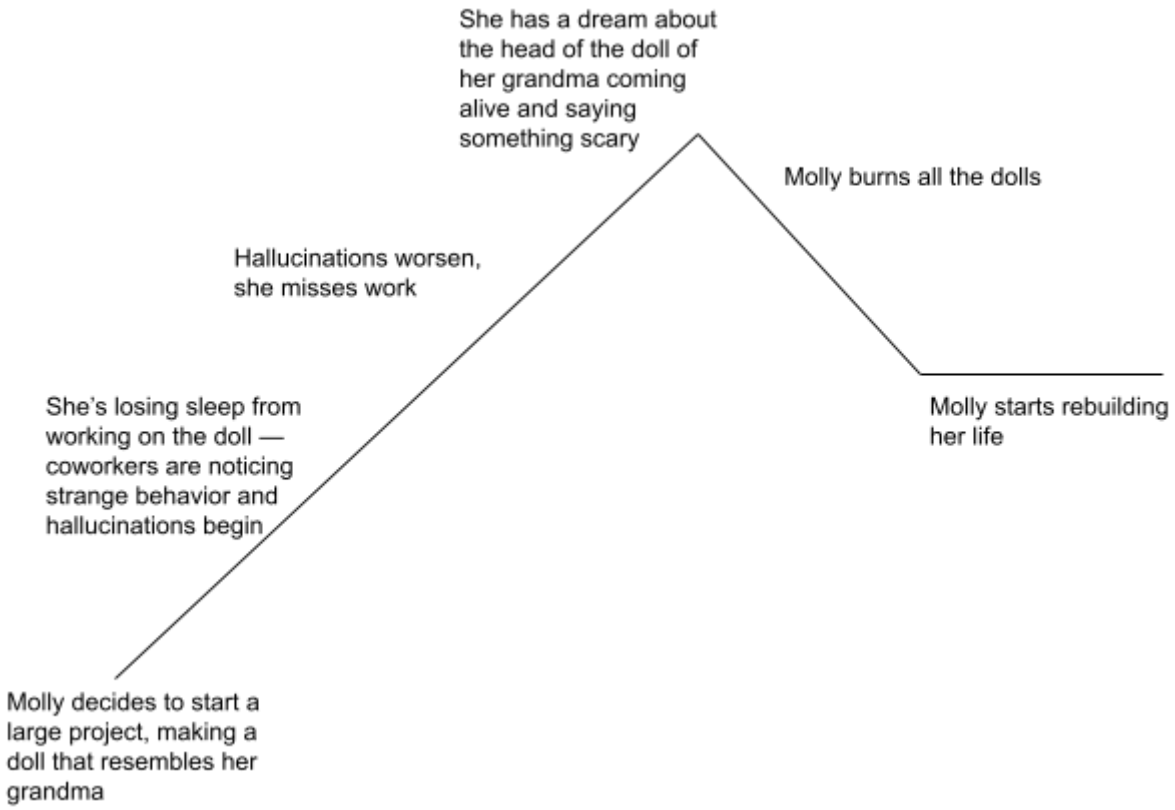
    - No, but I would like to be someday. There's not anyone in particular at the moment.
- How did your last relationship end?
    - Never had a relationship
- What kind of friends do you have?
    - I have friends from work. Some of them are similar to me in our situation, others are already married with families. There's a couple I see outside of work.
- Name your best friend. Why is he/she/them your best friend?
    - Jasmine – we're both getting a new start in life, we relate to each other, help each other out.
- Name the friend with who you are the least satisfied. What's the problem?
    - James, he causes a lot of problems at work and he can be annoying, but I'm still nice to him because he means well.
- Do you have enemies / rivals? Name them, and briefly indicate the conflict you have with them.
    - No, people at work aren't *that* bad.
- What conflicts among your friends or enemies concern you the most?
    - Two of my friends are in a really bad relationship – they really need to break up. They're making everyone uncomfortable.

Part III. Give me a deeper view into your inner world. (Remember, you are assuming the role of a fictional character you are building through these questions!)

- What's weird or quirky about you? Why do you think you have this weirdness / quirkiness? Is there a story behind it others don't know about?
    - I'm a bit awkward – it's been a while since I've had friends.
    - I purse my lips when I'm focusing on something.
- What do you wish others would understand about you?
    - I wish my parents would understand that I am trying, that I want to be successful. I don't think they get what I've been through.
- What don't you want others to know about you? (This could be a painful or embarrassing secret):
    - I don't want people to know about my doll hobby – it's embarrassing how obsessed I got with it.
- What do you worry about? Why?
    - I'm worried about making enough money/getting a 'real' job, if I'll ever buy a house, or even just find a partner. I've always wanted those things, but I feel like I'm behind in life and that I'll never be able to catch up.
- Do you think you are a leader or follower? Why?
    - follower, having to lead people makes me super anxious, I wouldn't know what to do, it's too much power
- Are you practical or a dreamer? Why?
    - dreamer, I gave up everything for dolls back then; now, I'm still not giving up hope on getting my life together
- What's your greatest fear – what's terrifying to you?

    - recently, dolls; but besides that, birds. They look at you so weirdly, it's like they know something you don't.
- What's your greatest regret in life?
    - Letting myself be taken over by grief and neglecting my life for dolls.
- Who has let you down? Have you told them? If you haven't, what would you say to them?
    - Maybe I could say my parents for not being able to get me out of my obsession, or grandma for dying — but it's not like they could have done anything better/different
- When have you let yourself down? Explain:
    - I wish I focused more on school and went to college. Then I wouldn't feel so behind right now.
- Who do you need to stand up to? Have you ever stood up to anyone, or have you tried to stand up to this person? How'd it go?
    - Don't know if it counts as standing up, but I gotta tell that coworker to break up with her boyfriend. I'm nervous though, never had to do anything like that, I don't know how to bring it up.
- What do you want most out of life? (By the end of your life, you want to have…?)
    - a more respectable job, a house, a family
- What do you want most this year?
    - I want to go back to school. I loved space as a kid, still do, but it seems impossible to go there now.
- What do you want most this week?
    - I want to go see Jasmine this weekend, see a movie together.
- What do you want most today?
    - I just want to go to sleep early – my sleep schedule has been terrible
- Choose at least 2 of the last 4 questions and explain: What's stopping you from getting what you want?
    - Going back to school means I need enough money to pay tuition– I'll work as hard as I can, though, try to get a promotion or a raise
    - Sleeping early will be hard tonight, I had to take a shift for someone else
- How do you think you need to change?
    - I think I need to work harder than I am right now, otherwise I'll never be able to fulfill my dreams
- How do others think you need to change?
    - Jasmine thinks I need to be less harsh on myself – I'm putting a lot of pressure on myself to be better
- How do you feel about at least one of those people who thinks you need to change?
    - I think she's probably right; she's always looking out for me

Subject: Grief
Theme: You need to let go of the past to move on to the future. / You need to let go of your memory of a loved one to move on with your life.

Step 3: Map Plot

Plot is the shape of the story. If you find it helpful, consider this common plot pattern: a central character wants something, goes after it despite opposition, and as a result of a struggle comes to a win or a loss. As a result, they are not the same as they were at the beginning. Your story's plot is the means through which you will bring about that change in your protagonist. You might consider practicing with **Freytag's Pyramid** or the **Hero's Journey (mini version)** to map out your protagonist's narrative arc for your current flash fiction story idea. However, you may create any plot map that is helpful for you to communicate your story: