Story Elements: Plot

Think about the story elements of character, setting and plot as you read the following story.

The Golden Fish Acts Wisely

Upon a certain island in the middle of the sea lived a fisherman and his wife. They were so **poor** they often went without bread when the fishing did not go well. One day the man caught a small golden fish who begged to be let go. Because the man did let him go, the little fish promised that he would come back if the fisherman ever needed help. The man said that he and his wife had no food, and when the man **returned** home there was a nice meal on the table. But the fisherman's wife was greedy.

After she ate the nice meal, she went to bed planning what they should **demand** from the golden fish next. She woke up early the next morning and shook her husband awake. "Wake up, you lazy man! Go and tell your fish that I need a new washtub!" So he went and called to the golden fish again, and when he returned home there was a beautiful new washtub in the yard. Each day the fisherman's wife had a new demand. And each one was **granted**. The fisherman's wife got a big new house, beautiful new clothes, servants to do her work, and a horse-drawn carriage to ride in. But the fisherman did not enjoy the new things, and he was ashamed of his greedy wife. She was rude to the servants, and she was too busy thinking up new demands to speak to her husband.

Once again, she demanded that he call the golden fish. She wanted to be Queen of the Waters. "Make your wife Queen of the Waters?" exclaimed the golden fish. That is the last thing I should do. She is unfit to rule. She cannot even rule herself. I shall make her a poor woman again. Goodbye! You will see me no more." With great sorrow and dread, the fisherman went home to tell his wife the news. To his surprise, the big house had been transformed into their little old cabin, and his wife

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was clothed in rags. Life was much easier for the fisherman after that. His wife had learned the results of greed. She planted a little garden, to provide food when the fishing did not go well. Sometimes when the fisherman drew in his line, the sun glinted on the scales of his catch, and he had a moment's hope of seeing his little friend again. But that was never to come to pass.

Now let's think about the story elements.

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1. **Characters**: Who is this story mostly about?
   - A. a fisherman and a golden fish
   - B. a fisherman's wife, her servants, and the Queen of the Waters
   - C. a fisherman, his wife, and a golden fish

2. **Setting**: Where does this story mostly take place?
   - A. in a fishing boat
   - B. on an island
   - C. in a big house

3. **Problem**: What problem does one or more of the story characters have?
   - A. The fisherman is ashamed that his wife is so greedy.
   - B. The fisherman's wife wants to keep the golden fish for herself.
   - C. The golden fish wants the fisherman's wife to be Queen of the Waters.

4. **Event 1**: Which event happens first in this story?
   - A. The golden fish makes food appear in the fisherman's home.
   - B. The fisherman's wife wants to be Queen of the Waters.
   - C. The fisherman's wife demands more and more things.

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5. **Event 2**: Which event happens second in this story?
   A. The golden fish makes food appear in the fisherman's home.
   B. The fisherman's wife wants to be Queen of the Waters.
   C. The fisherman's wife demands more and more things.

6. **Event 3**: Which event happens third in this story?
   A. The golden fish makes food appear in the fisherman's home.
   B. The fisherman's wife wants to be Queen of the Waters.
   C. The fisherman's wife demands more and more things.

7. **Problem Solution**: How is one of the characters' problem solved?
   A. The golden fish never returns.
   B. The golden fish makes all the new things disappear.
   C. The golden fish makes the wife the Queen of the Waters.

8. How does thinking about story elements help you to understand the story better? _____
   _____

9. They were so **poor** they often went without bread when the fishing did not go well. What does the word poor mean? _____

10. Each day the fisherman's wife had a new demand. And each one was **granted**. What does granted mean? _____

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