

“the pearl” by john
steinbeck essay
sample



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The book should be read over the summer. A student reading this book will be sent to the library to work on the following study guide questions. In sentence format answer the following questions. All answers should be typed. KEY: STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS - The Pearl Chapter 1

1. What, in general, happens in the first chapter? Kino and Juana wake up, and prepare for the day. The scorpion strikes Coyotito. They call for the doctor, but the doctor refuses to come. They go to the doctor, but he refuses to treat Coyotito.
2. Notice that the townspeople follow Kino. What does that tell you? It tells us two things: the people were curious and the people liked Kino and his family.
3. Why did the doctor refuse to treat Coyotito? To the doctor, Coyotito was an Indian " animal." Also, Kino could not pay the doctor well for his services.
4. What does that tell you about the doctor's personality? The doctor is not a caring individual. He is materialistic and cold-hearted. He is a doctor for the title, social position and money, not at heart.

5. What are the conflicts in the story so far? The conflicts are man vs. man, man vs. society, and man vs. nature.
6. What is the Song of the Family? The Song of the Family is a song of happiness, of being " whole." It is a song of peaceful existence, of being together in harmony with the family.
7. What is the Song of Evil? When does it first appear? The Song of Evil is a song of disruption, of evil, of the breaking of happiness. It first appears with the scorpion.

Chapter 2

1. Why did Steinbeck include the first section about the life in the Gulf waters? This section shows the natural world of which Kino is a part. It shows the old way of survival of the fittest.
2. The canoe is mentioned quite often. Is it a symbol for something? Yes. It symbolizes the old way of life, tradition. It was Kino's grandfather's canoe. It shows the continuance of

the primitive family. 3. What is the main event of this chapter? Kino and Juana find the pearl. 4. Do you think it is coincidence that everything goes well on the water, or is Steinbeck trying to show something? In the hands of Kino and Juana alone in nature, the pearl represents happiness and good. We will later see that when they bring it near civilization (the unnatural), it is very, very bad. 5. To what new Song are we introduced? We are introduced to the Song of the Pearl That Might Be.

Chapter 3 1. To what does Steinbeck compare the town? He compares it to a living being. 2. The news of Kino's pearl spread quickly across town. What did each person think of when he heard it? Each person thinks of how he personally could benefit from the riches of the pearl. 3. What would Kino do with his riches? Kino would marry Juana, buy new clothes, a harpoon and a rifle, and send Coyotito to school. 4. Why does the doctor come? What does he do? The doctor comes because he, too, has heard that Kino has a great pearl. He wants to get some money from Kino, and we are led to believe that he has ideas of stealing the pearl for himself. 5. What bad thing happened to make Juana want to throw away the pearl? Someone comes to steal the pearl. Kino knifed him, but he got knocked over the head with something.

Chapter 4 1. In the description of the pearl buyers, what do we find out about the market in Kino's village? The market is fixed. The buyers get together and set prices to cheat the village men.

2. What happened when Kino went to sell his pearl? The pearl buyer told him it was a curiosity, not a valuable pearl. He offered Kino 1, 000 pesos. When Kino disagreed, three other buyers were brought in; each one said it was of little value. It is made obvious to the reader that the buyers had arranged
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their prices earlier. Kino says he will go to the capitol instead of dealing with these buyers. 3. Juan Tomas says to Kino, " You have defied not the pearl buyers, but the whole structure, the whole way of life. I am afraid for you." What does he mean? No one of the village men had ever gone against the buyers. No one had " taken on city hall," so-to-speak. It was not Kino's place to try to do better. He was just a lowly village man; that was his station in life.

Now, he was trying to improve his station and would have to have a major conflict in order to do so. Juan Tomas thinks this goes against the laws of nature and that bad things happen when you go against the laws of nature. As I heard it put once, " Little fish don't eat big fish." 4. Again at the end of the chapter, Juana wants to throw away the pearl because it is evil. What evil thing happened? Kino is attacked again. This time he is hurt worse than the first time. Chapter 5 1. Where did Juana go early in the morning? Juana tried to sneak out with the pearl to throw it away. 2. What did Kino do when he figured out where she went? He went after her, took the pearl away, and (in the process) beat and kicked Juana. 3. What happened to Kino up the beach through the brushline on the path? He was attacked again. This time he was badly injured, and he killed a man. He thought he lost the pearl, but (ironically) Juana found it again in the path.

4. What happened to their hut while they were away? Someone had gone in searching for the pearl. It was a total wreck, then someone set fire to it. 5. Why did they leave the village? They left the village because Kino had killed a man. They did not think that, given Kino's recent upsetting of authority, anyone would believe the man was killed in self-defense. Chapter 6 1. What <https://assignbuster.com/the-pearl-by-john-steinbeck-essay-sample-essay-samples/>

"songs" does Kino hear on the first part of their journey? He hears the music of the pearl and the quiet melody of the family. 2. What made the music of the pearl become "sinister in his ears, . . . interwoven with the music of evil?" Kino looked at Coyotito's face.

We assume that means he thought of the evil of the scorpion and his distrust of the doctor. 3. What happens to Coyotito? Coyotito cries. The tracker shoots towards the sound, towards the cave where Juana and Coyotito are hiding, and the shot hits and kills Coyotito. 4. What happens to the trackers? Kino kills the trackers. 5. What happens to Kino and Juana? They return to the village with their dead baby. 6. What do they do with the pearl? They throw it away. 7. What does the return of Kino and Juana and their throwing away the pearl mean symbolically? It means that Kino has given up his dream, his hope for a better future for himself and his family. He has lost in his conflicts with man and nature. It appears as though Juan Tomas was right.