

The Pearl Study Guide

Chapter 1

1. Describe some of the sounds Kino heard when he first woke up.
2. What sounds make up the Song of the Family?
3. Find the phrase that tells what the Song of the Family means to Kino.
4. What terrible thing happened to Coyotito? What did Kino and Juana do?
5. Why was it such a remarkable thing that Juana wanted the doctor for the baby?
6. What did the beggars know about the doctor and about Juana and Kino?
7. How had those of the doctor's race treated the Indians for four hundred years?
8. What does "this time he spoke in the old language" mean?
9. What did the doctor tell his servant to say?
10. Did Kino believe the servant? How did Kino feel? How did he react?

Chapter 2

1. What creatures and plants live in the sea and on the shore?
2. What is the “hazy mirage”?
3. Why is Kino’s canoe so important to him?
4. What did the sea provide as medicine for the baby? Why didn’t Juana have as much faith in it as she would a doctor’s remedy?
5. What did Juana pray for?
6. How do pearls form in oysters?
7. How was the King of Spain involved in oyster beds in Mexico?
8. What secret little inner song did Kino always hear when he was diving for pearls?
9. Why did Steinbeck write “...and you must be very tactful with God or the gods’? What does this tell you about the Indians’ religion?
10. Why was Kino hesitant to open the huge oyster right away?

11. What did the pearl look like?

12. When Juana lifted the seaweed poultice from the baby's scorpion bite, what did she find? To what do you think she attributed it?

Chapter 3

1. Describe what the news of Kino's pearl made each of the following characters think about:
 - a. the priest

 - b. shopkeepers

 - c. the doctor

 - d. the beggars

 - e. the pearl buyers

2. Kino and Juana thought everyone shared their joy, but what was really happening?

3. To what evils does Steinbeck compare the evil growing in the town?

4. Find the metaphor that compares the town to a stake.

5. What things did Kino see in the future when he looked at the pearl?

6. According to Steinbeck, what makes man superior to animals? Do you agree?
7. What was so important about Coyotito going to school?
8. What music did Kino hear when the priest came? Who did Kino think brought it?
9. How is the pearl beginning to change Kino's personality?
10. How does the doctor trick Kino and Juana?
11. What kind of medicine do you think the doctor really gave the baby?
12. Why did the doctor want to know where the pearl was?
13. What happened in the middle of the night? How did Juana react?

Chapter 4

1. Who knew "most of all" that Kino was going to sell his pearl?
2. In what way did the pearl buyers mislead the people? What would this be called today?

3. Why do you think Kino's neighbors had such charitable thoughts about what they would do if the pearl was theirs?
4. How do you know that the selling of the pearl is an extremely important event?
5. What story does Juan Tomas tell Kino? What sermon did the priest offer about it?
6. What did the buyers tell Kino about the pearl?
7. How did Kino surprise the dealers?
8. How did Kino's friends and neighbors react?
9. What does "He had lost one world and not gained another" mean?
10. What does Juan Tomas tell Kino?
11. What happens that evening? What effect does it have on Juana? on Kino?

Chapter 5

1. What movement did Kino hear in the night?
2. How did Kino stop Juana?

3. What happened after Kino left Juana at the beach?
4. Why did Juana immediately forgive Kino?
5. How does Juana see the time before the pearl?
6. How does Juana show her strength in this chapter?
7. What has happened to Kino's canoe? How does Kino react?
8. What has happened to Kino's house?
9. Now light is danger to Kino. Why is this significant?
10. How does Juan Tomas help Kino and Juana?
11. Why does Kino compare himself to leprosy?
12. What does Juan Tomas urge Kino to do?

Chapter 6

1. Why was it a good thing that the wind was blowing?
2. What “ancient thing” stirred in Kino?
3. What did Kino see as proof that the pearl had great value?
4. What did Kino see now when he looked into the pearl and thought of all the things he wanted? How did the “music of the pearl” change?
5. Who was following Kino and Juana?
6. Why did Juana feel it would be a mistake for Kino to give himself up?
7. How did Juana’s usually subservient attitude change?
8. Where did the family hide from the trackers that evening?
9. Describe the confrontation by the stream.

10. Why did Kino and Juana walk back into La Paz in single file, but side by side?

11. What did Kino finally do with the pearl?