

The Pearl

Chapters One and Two

Comprehension and Analysis

Directions: To give you a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the novella, answer the following questions using complete sentences on a separate sheet of paper. Be sure to use your Note-Taking chart to keep important notes for each chapter and to help you answer the Comprehension and Analysis questions.

Chapter One

1. Who are the members of Kino's family?
2. Make an inference about why Kino's wife always wakes before him.
3. What is the first song that Kino hears? How does the author's use of this metaphor affect the text, in general?
4. What is the first thing Kino does when he awakes? What is the first thing Juana does? Why does the author feel that it is important to include these details in the story?
5. What types of wildlife does Kino encounter in this chapter?
6. Describe Kino's physical appearance.
7. Explain Kino's morning routine. How might the author already be indicating the emergence of a theme in the novella by including the description of his daily life?
8. When the scorpion appears on the hanging box, what song does Kino hear? How does the author use this song figuratively?
9. What causes the scorpion to sting Coyotito? Where does it sting him?
10. What is Kino's first reaction? What is Juana's first reaction? Which seems more logical?
11. Considering the danger her child is in, what request does Juana make? Why do Kino and the others suggest that this is not a good idea?
12. Evaluate Juana's decision to go to the doctor. Was it a good decision?
13. Who is looking down upon Kino, Juana, and the other natives as they enter the city? Why is this ironic?
14. Explain how Kino feels about the doctor. Why?
15. The doctor's servant refuses to speak to Kino in the old language. Why would this upset Kino?
16. Describe the doctor's lifestyle.
17. The doctor's statement, "I am a doctor, not a veterinary" on page 11 suggests what about his character?
18. Make an inference about why the servant speaks in the old language to Kino only after he goes to see the doctor.
19. After Kino shows the servant the eight ugly pearls he has as payment to the doctor, the servant leaves and returns right away. Infer why the servant returned so soon.
20. What emotions is Kino experiencing at the end of Chapter One?

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Chapter Two

1. You may have noticed that Steinbeck gives great detail about the setting at the beginning of Chapter Two. Why do you think Steinbeck put so much attention into describing the details of the setting?
2. Choose five adjectives of your own to summarize the setting described in the opening of Chapter Two.
3. Why is it said that the natives living on the shore don't trust their eyes?
4. Why is Kino's canoe so important to him?
5. Do you think that Juana always accompanies Kino with the baby out to dive for pearls? Speculate why she may be going today.
6. In Chapter Two, Juana puts a poultice on Coyotito's wound. Why do you think she has waited so long?
7. Interpret the author's meaning in the following quote: "She had not prayed directly for the recovery of the baby—she had prayed that they might find a pearl with which to hire the doctor to cure the baby, for the minds of people are as unsubstantial as the mirage of the Gulf."
8. What does Kino hope to find out in the ocean?
9. What tools does Kino use when diving?
10. What songs does Kino hear as he's gathering oysters on the ocean floor? Why do you think the author uses the concept of "songs" in this chapter?
11. Once Kino comes back up to the surface, he waits until he has opened all the other pearls to open the oyster he thinks may contain a great pearl. Why?
12. Identify the irony at the end of Chapter Two.

