

The Pearl by John Steinbeck

GT Novel Guide

Four Big Essential Questions:

(We'll always talk about these during class discussions! Come to class with ideas for answers!)

- Is the desire for wealth the root of all evil? Is greed only a destructive force?
- Is the natural (best) state of man a humble existence in nature?
- Which shapes a person's life more, human agency or forces beyond our control?
- Was colonialism only a force for oppression? Was it ever a force for good?

High-Level Vocabulary Challenges:

Colonialism
Divine providence
Collusion

Renunciation
American Dream
Disillusionment

Academic Vocabulary:

(be able to apply these vocabulary words to this novel)

Parable
Allusion
Loss-of-Innocence

Allegory
Moral
Theme

Quotes to apply to this story:

- "Money is the root of all evil." – Anonymous
- "Curst greed of gold, what crimes thy tyrant power has caused. – Virgil
- "What kind of society isn't structured on greed? The problem of social organization is how to set up an arrangement under which greed will do the least harm; capitalism is that kind of a system." —Milton Friedman
- "The history of an oppressed people is hidden in the lies and the agreed myth of its conquerors." – Meridel Le Seur
- "It has always seemed strange to me...The things we admire in men, kindness and generosity, openness, honesty, understanding and feeling, are the concomitants of failure in our system. And those traits we detest, sharpness, greed, acquisitiveness, meanness, egotism and self-interest, are the traits of success." – John Steinbeck

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Chapter Discussion Questions

For class, be prepared to discuss the following questions on the assigned discussion days. Writing out answers ahead of time is optional for all students—at first; students who come unprepared to discuss these questions as a class will be required to write out answers for the remaining chapters of the book.

Chapter 1

1. In a short paragraph, **summarize** what happens in the first chapter. Remember to give major events, characters, and details from the text.
2. Why do Kino and Juana take Coyotito to see the doctor?
3. Why do the townspeople follow them?
4. What are your impressions of the doctor? Why do you feel that way?
5. On your own paper, complete a T-chart (like the one below) that shows several important differences (contrast) between the doctor's lifestyle and Kino's lifestyle.

Doctor's Lifestyle	Kino's Lifestyle

Chapter 2

1. Why is Kino's canoe the one thing of value Kino owned?
2. What does the author mean when he states that the canoe was " "?
3. What do you think finding the pearl will mean for Kino and his family?

Chapter 3

1. To what does Steinbeck compare the town?
2. What does Juana do for Coyotito to try to cure him?
3. Why does the priest come to Kino's brush house?
4. When Kino looks at the pearl, he sees a number of things. Describe each one in detail and explain how each vision changes his family's future.
 - a. marrying Juana in the church
 - b. buying a rifle
 - c. sending Coyotito to school
4. How does Kino seem to change as he imagines these things?
5. How does the doctor react when he hears the news of Kino's pearl?
6. What are Juana's feelings about the pearl? Why does she feel this way?

Chapter 4

1. What happened when Kino went to sell his pearl?
2. What does Kino decide he will do?
3. What does Juan Tomas warn Kino about?
4. Again at the end of the chapter, Juana wants to throw the pearl away because it is evil. What evil thing happened?
5. On your own paper, create a T-chart (see top of next page) that compares and contrasts Kino's dreams and visions of the great things the pearl will bring him to what the villagers say they would do if they were so lucky.

Kino's vision and dreams	Villagers' visions and dreams

Chapter 5

1. Where does Juana go in the early morning? What was she about to do?
2. What did Kino do when he figured out where she had gone? How does this reaction demonstrate a change in Kino?
3. Why did Kino and Juana hide in Juan Tomas' hut?
4. What does Juan Tomas now say about the pearl?
5. Why is the killing of a boat more evil than the killing of a man?
6. Why did Kino and Juana leave the village?

Chapter 6

1. What made the music of the pearl become "sinister in his [Kino's] ears. . . interwoven with the music of evil"?
2. Why is it so important for Kino and Juana to avoid the center of town?
3. What does Kino do to avoid leaving tracks?
4. How are Kino and the trackers like animals?
5. Describe Kino's attack.
6. What happens to Coyotito?
7. What was unusual about the way Kino and Juana walked when they returned to La Paz and what do you think this indicates?
8. Why does Juana want Kino to throw the pearl in the water?
9. On your own piece of paper, recreate the graphic organizer below, focusing on how Kino and Juana have been changed by the final events of this story.

How Kino has changed?	How Juana has changed?	How their relationship has changed?