

THE PEARL

(JOHN STEINBECK)

LEARNERS STUDY GUIDE

MAURICE MWALE & WANANGWA TEMBO

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES

LUWINGA SECONDARY SCHOOL

Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
THE PEARL	5
GIST OF THE STORY.....	5
MAIN CAHRACTERS IN THE PEARL.....	5
THE STORY SO FAR.....	6
SETTING	7
PERSPECTIVE (POINT OF VIEW)	7
CHAPTER ONE.....	7
CHARACTERS	7
CHARACTER ANALYSIS	9
THEMES	10
CHAPTER TWO	10
CHARACTERS	10
PLOT	10
CHARACTER ANALYSIS	11
THEMES	12
CHAPTER THREE.....	12
CHARACTERS	12
PLOT	12
CHARACTER ANALYSIS	15
THEMES	16
CHAPTER FOUR.....	17
CHARACTERS	17
PLOT	17
CHARACTER ANALYSIS	19
THEMES	20
CHAPTER 5	21
CHARACTERS	21
PLOT	21
CHARACTER ANALYSIS	22
THEMES	23

CHAPTER 6.....	24
CHARACTERS	24
PLOT	24
CHARACTER ANALYSIS	26
THEMES	27
MAJOR THEMES IN THE PEARL.....	28
SYMBOLISM IN THE NOVEL	30
REVISION QUESTIONS.....	31
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	32
IMPORTANT	33
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	Error! Bookmark not defined.

INTRODUCTION

It is a requirement at MSCE English that students learn how to analyze a novel. During examinations, the learners are required to write an essay based on their analysis and understanding of a novel. The prescribed novel at MSCE is *The Pearl*. This Learners Study Guide, therefore, has been developed to help students to have a deep understanding of the story (*The Pearl*) so that they provide well-thought answers during examinations.

This is an easy to read book with simple English. The author has tried his best to provide plots that have enough meat to help the student understand the story better.

Students are encouraged to read the novel and make their own analyses to supplement on what has been provided in this guide. Despite that this guide was developed for learners, teachers too will find it a useful tool in preparation of their literature lessons.

Enjoy.

THE PEARL

GIST OF THE STORY

The novel "The Pearl" centres on greed, corruption and obsession of various people, who would like to possess Kino's pearl or its proceeds for their own selfishness. Kino, too, is obsessed with the pearl. He guards it with his life. He is determined to protect it at all cost so that he sells it at a fair price. However, he struggles to sell it. Equally, he struggles with various forces to defend and keep it. In the process, he kills people in his determination to keep the pearl. In the end Kino loses his canoe, house and son. He then throws the pearl back into the sea. Largely, it is a story of a struggle between good and evil.

MAIN CAHRACTERS IN THE PEARL

1. **Kino**

He is the protagonist (main actor). He is a poor villager and lives in a brush house with his wife, Juana and their son, Coyotito. He is a young Mexican-Indian. His life takes a dramatic change when he finds a valuable pearl. He loses his canoe, house and son.

2. **Juana**

She is Kino's wife. She is a loving woman who always shows submission to her husband. She is always available to her husband. She thinks the pearl is evil and advises Kino to throw it away. Her words come to pass.

3. **Coyotito**

This is Kino and Juana's only son. He is stung by a scorpion and his parents fail to meet treatment bills. The parents hope the pearl they have found will help them raise money for his treatment and education.

4. **Juan Tomas**

Tomas is Kino's elder brother. He is available when Kino faces trouble. Like Juana, he thinks the pearl is evil.

5. **Apolonia**

She is Juan Tomas' wife. She is supportive to Kino's family when trouble strikes.

6. The Doctor

This is a racist hypocrite who is corrupt and greedy. He only treats the rich and thus refuses to treat Kino's child. He represents hate and greed.

7. THE PRIEST

He is another hypocrite who only shows interest in benefiting from Kino's pearl. He thinks now is the time to officially marry Kino and Juana in church. He also hopes part of the proceeds of Kino's pearl will help repair his church.

8. THE TRACKERS

This is a group of violent men that follows Kino and Juana when they leave the village. The trackers want to steal Kino's pearl.

9. THE PEARL BUYERS/THE BUYERS

These are the corrupt merchants of La Paz who buy and sell pearls. They collude to offer low prices for the pearls.

THE STORY SO FAR...

Principally, The Pearl is a story about Kino, his wife Juana and son, Coyotito. The son, Coyotito, is stung by a scorpion. The family is poor hence has no money to pay for the child's treatment. Kino and wife go pearl hunting and luckily Kino finds a large pearl which he hopes will change his life's fortunes. To the contrary, the pearl has become the source of trouble. Many people are jealous and some want to steal it. For instance, people come and attack him at night as they try to steal the pearl. His house is set ablaze and his canoe is smashed. Kino fails to sell the pearl in La Paz because the merchants are offering low prices. He decides to go and sell the pearl at the capital. But he is being followed by trackers who want to steal the pearl from him. He fights and kills them all. His boy Coyotito is also killed in the process. The family returns to La Paz and throws the pearl back into the deep sea.

SETTING

The story is set in La Paz, Mexico. On one side of La Paz is a rural fishing village. On the other side, there is the larger more developed town of La Paz.

PERSPECTIVE (POINT OF VIEW)

The story is told from the third person point of view.

CHAPTER ONE

CHARACTERS

Kino, Juana, Coyotito, the doctor, neighbours (Juan Thomas, Apolonia and others), doctor's servant, the beggars

"Kino and his wife Juana live with their baby Coyotito in a brushwood hut on the shores of the Gulf of California. They are native Mexicans, and their village is on the edge of a Spanish Mexican town. In the morning, they rise and eat a simple breakfast and tend the baby. There is a feeling of contentment (satisfaction) until they see a scorpion crawling towards the baby. Kino tries to kill the scorpion but it falls on the baby and stings it. Juana insists that they visit a doctor in town."

PLOT

It is in the wee hours (generally between 3am and 5am). The roosters (cocks) are crowing, the pigs are out, birds are singing. Kino wakes up. The light tells him it is dawn. Juana, his wife, lays on the mat beside him and his son, Coyotito (a baby), is sleeping in a hanging box. Juana is awake. She never sleeps. Kino's attention is outside. He closes his eyes and listens to the splashing waves on the beach outside their brush house. He closes his eyes and listens to the song of the family. (Note: these are not real songs. Kino's deep thoughts are portrayed as songs). He covers his nose with a blanket to guard against dank air (unpleasantly damp air).

Juana gets up, checks on Coyotito, makes fire and bakes corn cakes. Kino gets up and goes outside watching the dawn. A goat comes and sniffs at him. The ants are busy on the ground. Kino sees one ant trapped and killed by an anti-lion. A black dog comes close to him and runs away. Juana takes Coyotito, cleans him and wraps him in her shawl (cloth). Juana sings a family song that is warm, safe and whole.

Outside their brush house life is busy as well; but is not Kino's business. Kino sees two cocks fighting; he also sees wild doves flying. Juana puts Coyotito back into the box. Kino and his wife take breakfast together without talking. There is no enmity but usually they do not need speech to communicate. After breakfast, Kino and his wife see a scorpion moving towards Coyotito down the rope supporting the hanging box. Kino hears the song of the evil believing something bad has happened, but Juan prays silently. Kino moves silently towards scorpion in an attempt to kill it. The scorpion releases its poisonous tail in reaction. Jovial Coyotito shakes and the scorpion falls on him and strikes (stings him). Kino quickly grabs the scorpion and smashes it with anger. Juan quickly carries the screaming baby and tries to suck out the poison; Kino is helpless.

The screaming of the baby has made the neighbours come. These neighbours are Juan Tomas, his fat wife Apolonia and their four children and other people. These people think the baby may die. Juana hopes her son will get fine. She asks her husband to get a doctor. The neighbours say the doctor cannot come to poor people like Kino and his wife. The doctor likes attending to rich people in town and not to poor people like Kino. The family decides to just go to the doctor instead of calling him. The people follow them.

As they are going to the doctor, the beggars watch them. They know how cruel the doctor is and they know that they will not be assisted because by looking at Kino and Juana's dressing, they know they are a poor family. These beggars have information about almost everyone in town.

The white doctor is a racist. He does not assist Mexicans except the rich. Upon arrival at the doctor's house, Kino knocks the door. The servant comes and opens the gate. Kino informs him about their visit. The servant refuses to answer in the same old language Kino uses. The servant informs the doctor. The doctor is sitting in his bed dressed in his gown of "Red Watered Silt that had come from Paris". The doctor is drinking from a cup of egg shell china in a slivery tray. His room has religious paintings.

When the doctor is informed of the news, he declares that the servant should tell Kino that he is not a veterinary and does not deal with poor Indians. Later, the doctor asks if they had money. The servant comes back to Kino. Kino gives him eight small pearls that are valueless. The servant takes the pearls to the doctor who refuses them. They are brought back and his servant lies that the doctor has gone out. Kino feels ashamed and is both angry and desperate. He stands at the gate for a long time. He strikes the gate in anger with his fist and wounding himself in the process (his knuckles split open) The family goes back in frustration.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

1. KINO

- a. **Violent tempered:** he reacts violently to the scorpion which bites the son. When the doctor refuses to treat Coyotito he gets angry and punches the gates.
- b. **Loving and protective:** He loves his wife and child (what does he do to show this?)
- c. **Superstitious:** Believes in the songs of the family and evil
- d. **Protective:** he moves fast to kill the scorpion. Nevertheless, he is late.
- e. **Desperate:** the banging of the gates shows he is frustrated as he is not assisted.

2. JUANA

- a. **Caring:** she works up in the morning and takes care of Kino and the child.
- b. **Dutiful:** as the mother of the house, she takes charge of the home – caring for both the husband and Coyotito.
- c. **Religious:** when Coyotito is attacked by the scorpion she says prayers for protection before calling for the doctor.
- d. **Hopeful:** while the neighbours think the child will die after being stung by a scorpion, Juana is hopeful that the boy will be fine

3. DOCTOR

- a. **Discriminatory:** he does not want to treat poor people. this is why he refuses to treat Coyotito despite that Kino has promised to pay the bill later.

- b. **Selfish and harsh:** he does not come out to hear Kino's problem but dismisses him outright without attending to him.
- c. **Greedy and unkind:** his refusal to accept Kino's eight pearls shows he values money more than the lives of clients.

THEMES

- 1. **Discrimination/racism:** this is shown by the doctor who does not want to assist the Indians.
- 2. **Superstition:** Kino believes in family and evil song. He believes the scorpion as the symbol of evil.
- 3. **Selfishness:** this is shown by the doctor who does not want to assist Indians.
- 4. **Frustration and anger:** This is shown by Kino who is frustrated and angry because of the actions of the doctor who refuses to treat his child. He bangs the gate to show his frustration.
- 5. **Hope:** Juana expresses hope that her child will be fine.

CHAPTER TWO

CHARACTERS

Kino, Juana

"After their rejection by the doctor, Kino and Juana go searching for pearls. On his first dive, Kino finds a massive oyster. He returns with it to the canoe. He opens the giant oyster and finds a huge pearl inside. Meanwhile, Coyotito's scorpion sting has receded (reduced/faded)"

PLOT

Kino and his family go to their canoe, a very valuable thing that Kino owns. A canoe is a guarantee that one can support a wife/family. This canoe has been passed on from Kino's grandfather to his father and now to him. It means it is an old thing. He plasters it yearly as a way of preserving it. This time Coyotito's condition is getting worse. The swelling from the scorpion's sting has improved up from his shoulder towards his face. Juana puts some poultice of sea weed on the wound. This seems to be better treatment than the

doctor could have done. Kino's wife prays silently that Kino should find a valuable pearl in the water. The family paddles out to the sea. They pass through the oyster bed that is littered, cracked and opened. These pearls once made the King of Spain rich.

Pearls are made when an irritant, usually a parasite (and not the proverbial grain of sand) works its way into the oyster. As defense mechanism, a fluid is used to coat the irritant. Layer upon layer of this coating called nacre, is deposited until glistening pearl is formed. Kino dives to the bottom with the help of heavy rock. He manages to fill his basket with unopened oysters while he hears "the song of the Pearl that might be. Kino is a well-known diver. He manages to stay under water for two full minutes looking for the best oysters. He gets a very big oyster slightly opened which contains something in it. He comes to the surface with it. Juana notices Kino's excitement and deliberately looks away. She believes expecting too much drives lucky way. She advises him to open the big oyster and a valuable pearl is found. Juana notices that Coyotito's swelling has gone down. The poison is leaving his body. Kino shouts in excitement that he has found the pearl of the world. The shouting makes other canoes paddler to come toward him.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

1. KINO:

- a) **Responsible:** He tries to source a pearl that can be sold for his son's treatment
- b) **Courageous and strong:** He is able to gather oysters under water for a full two minutes.
- c) **Excited:** He shows his excitement upon discovering the valuable pearl. This has attracted other paddlers to his boat.
- d) **Skillful:** He is a well known diver. He stays minutes under deep water looking for oysters.

2. JUANA

- a) **Creative:** she puts poultice of seaweed over the wound and the swelling has receded.
- b) **Religious:** she prays silently for Kino's success in the ocean.
- c) **Calm and superstitious:** when Kino gets the valuable pearl, she deliberately looks away because she holds the belief that much expectation drives luck away.

THEMES

1. **Responsibility:** Kino tries to source a pearl that can be sold for his son's treatment
2. **Skill and courage:** Kino is able to gather oysters under water for two full minutes
3. **Excitement:** Kino is excited upon finding the pearl of the world.
4. **Belief in prayers:** Juana prays that her husband should find a valuable pearl.
5. **Superstition:** Juana believes that too much expectation drives luck away.

CHAPTER THREE

CHARACTERS

Kino, Juana, the Priest, the Doctor, Juan Tomas, Apolonia, the general public

"News of Kino's pearl spreads, evoking different responses. Kino visits his brother and wife to seek advice and makes plans for the future. The priest arrives, followed by the doctor who had earlier refused to treat Coyotito. Kino hides the pearl, but in the night, a thief tries to steal it and Kino is hurt while defending it."

PLOT

The news about Kino's pearl is all over the town. It has reached the mothers before their children tell them. It has reached a priest walking in a garden. Upon hearing this news, the priest remembers that the church needs repairs. He remembers that Coyotito has not been baptized and wonders whether he has wedded Kino and Juana. (He is thinking about possible ways through which he or the church could benefit from Kino's proceeds from the pearl)

The news spreads fast to reach the shopkeepers who hope they would sell their clothes; it reaches the doctor who suddenly gets judicious and says Kino is his client. He says, "I'm treating his child for a scorpion bite." The doctor

remembers his days in Paris. The news reaches the beggars at the front of the church and hope they will also have a share of Kino's fortune in form of alms. The news also reaches the pearl buyers. In fact the pearl buyers are not many. There is one buyer but with many agents. The many agents are meant to create an artificial competition so that the pearls are sold at a lower price.

A story is told of a certain person who just donated his pearl to the church in protest of the low prices that the buyers offered him. The news of Kino's pearl reaches all the corners of the town and everyone gets interested. (Every man suddenly became related to Kino's pearl and Kino's pearl went into the dreams, the wishes, the needs, the lusts, the hungers, of everyone). Kino curiously becomes everyone's enemy. Some people start thinking of plotting evil. Kino and Juana do not know. Tomas does.

In the afternoon, Kino's compound is crowded with people. Tomas is the first to ask what Kino would do now as he has become a rich person. Kino plans to do things he failed to do because he had no money: marrying in church; buying good clothes for his family members; buying good shoes; a good hat to replace his straw hat; good education for Coyotito; buy a rifle; replace his harpoon. This time, the music of the pearl is shrilling with triumph in Kino (meaning Kino is deeply thinking about his achievement/success)

It is now getting dark and the neighbours are reluctant to leave Kino's compound. Kino's sees his child sitting on a desk in school. He is definite his child will get educated. He hopes that through a literate Coyotito, he will be able to know many things hidden in books. He suddenly becomes afraid of his talking about Coyotito's education. Maybe he thinks he is talking much. How if the plans fail? Juana makes a fire that lights the faces of the neighbours who are reluctant to go as it is dark now.

The priest arrives. He takes everyone as his child. He says Kino is named after a great man, a great Father of the Church. He says this name sweetened the mind of the people. He says these stories are in the books. The mention of books makes Kino think even more about his child's education. He hopes he will know all that through his child.

The music of evil plays in Kino's ears. The priest says he has heard Kino has found a great pearl and Kino shows it. The priest says Kino should remember to give thanks God and pray for guidance in the future. Juana tells the priest

that they will marry in church. The priest is amused. He leaves. The neighbours also leave and the music of evil continues to play.

A thin dog comes to Kino and leaves. To Kino, the sounds of crickets and frogs in the far distance seem to be carrying the song of evil. He feels alone and unprotected. Juana is in the kitchen making cakes. The doctor comes with his servant. He says he wasn't there in the morning when Kino had gone to him. "I have come to see the baby." Anger rages in Kino. He says the baby is ok. The doctor disagrees and convinces the two to work on the baby. He says the baby can die. He administers some medicine and warns the poison will strike within an hour. Kino is suspicious. The doctor goes promising to come back in an hour's time. Kino hides the pearl, burying it on the ground.

Out in the estuary, a school of big fish is busy eating small ones and the people in the brush houses hear the splashes of those fish. At night, the mice that creep about in the ground are killed by the hunting hawks. A skinny black puppy comes and watches Kino eat beans and cakes. Kino is now rolling a cigarette and Juana sharply calls him. Coyotito's condition is worsening: his face is flushed; thick saliva issued from his lips, the spasm (contraction) of the stomach muscles begins; he is very sick. Juana sings the Song of the Family but that of evil lingers in Kino's mind.

The news of Coyotito's illness reaches the neighbourhood. The neighbours come and wonder why such a sad development can occur when the family is supposed to be happy. The doctor comes again. He works on the baby. Kino is suspicious. He does not take his eyes from the doctor as he is working on the baby. The spasms lessen and Coyotito sleeps because he is tired of vomiting.

Now the doctor wants to know when Kino would pay the bill. Kino says the following day after selling his pearl. The doctor is startled that Kino has a pearl. The neighbours tell him Kino has found a great pearl. Looking surprised, the doctor asks if he can keep it safely in his safe but Kino says he will keep it himself. The doctor leaves but gets a clue through Kino's eyes that the pearl is hidden somewhere within the compound. Kino removes the pearl from the ground and buries it under the mat. Juana asks who Kino is afraid of to which he answers "everyone". They sleep; Coyotito is not sleeping in his box today. Kino dreams: ***Coyotito is reading from a book as large as a house, with letters as big as dogs. The words gallop (run) and play on the book. And then darkness spreads over the page and with the darkness came***

the music of evil again. He wakes up with the music of evil pulsing in him and he lies in the darkness with his ears alert.

A thief comes and Kino manages to stab the thief though the thief manages to run away. Kino is wounded on his forehead. Juana nurses Kino's injury.

Now Juana is thinking something about the pearl and manages to speak out. She declares: the pearl is evil; the pearl is like a sin; the pearl will destroy us; throw it away; break it with stones; bury it and forget the place; throw it back into the sea. Kino says: "This is our only chance: Coyotito should go to school and free us." Juan insists the pearl will destroy them, including their son. Kino is now angered: "don't speak any more!"

It is almost dawn. The roosters are crowing. It's another day. The family begins the day with hope.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

1. PRIEST

- a) ***Unreasonable:*** he is making plans out of Kino's pearl as if it is his.
- b) ***Hypocritical:*** he is now interested to see Kino and Juana wed in church because they have found the pearl. He failed to wed them when they had nothing.

2. SHOPKEEPERS

- a) ***Expectant:*** they hope to sell more clothes when Kino sells his pearl.

3. DOCTOR

- a) ***Wicked:*** gives the baby a poison capsule.
- b) ***Pretentious:*** pretends that he has been away when Kino came to his house. He also pretends not to know that Kino has a pearl.
- c) ***Greedy:*** He wants to assist Kino after hearing that Kino will be rich because of his pearl.
- d) ***Cunning and curious:*** he wants to know where Kino has hid the pearl. He might be thinking of stealing it later in the night.

4. PEARL BUYERS

- a) **Selfish:** they want to buy the pearl at the lowest price at the expense of the poor Kino.
- b) **Crooked:** they collude and buy pearls at low prices.

5. JUANA

- a) **Caring:** nurses Kino's injury.
- b) **Cautious, analytical and foresighted:** she has already seen early warning signs about the effects of keeping the pearl. She warns Kino about this, asking him to throw the pearl away.

6. KINO

- a) **Cautious and shrewd :** he senses evil in the curious doctor thus he hides the pearl
- b) **Suspicious:** sees everyone as his enemy. He is suspicious about what the doctor is doing to Coyotito
- c) **Optimistic:** he hope the pearl shall make the family rich
- d) **Open:** he tells people what he will do if he gets rich
- e) **Brave, revengeful and alert:** he manages to stab the thief that comes at night to steal his pearl.

THEMES

- 1. **Hypocrisy and selfishness:** this is shown by the priest who is up asking Kino to remember giving to the church yet the man of God failed to wed Kino and Juana when they had no money. This is also portrayed by the doctor who only comes to assist when he hears about Kino's pearl.
- 2. **Collusion and crookedness:** the buyers collude and offer low prices to pearl divers like Kino.
- 3. **Suspicion:** Kino sees that everyone is his enemy because of his pearl. he is also suspicious of the doctors actions.
- 4. **Bravery:** alone, Kino manages to shrug off the danger posed by the thief that came at night. He stabs the thief.
- 5. **Optimism:** with the pearl, Kino is hopeful that his life will change as he will be able to buy and pay for things he had failed to do in the past.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHARACTERS

Kino, Juan, Juan Tomas, Pearl Buyers, Neighbours, the General Public, The attacker(s)

“The following morning, Kino, Juana and Coyotito, followed by a great crowd, walk into the town to sell the pearl. To his fury (anger), buyers will only offer a small amount, claiming that the pearl has little value. Kino returns to his hut and hides the pearl. As dusk (nightfall) falls, he senses evil around him. When he steps outside, he is attacked and searched. He and Juana decide to travel to the capital to sell the pearl.”

PLOT

Early in the morning in La Paz, the news is all over Kino will sell his pearl today. The news is making rounds among the neighbours, the pearl fishermen, Chinese grocery-shop owners, the altar boys and nuns at church, the beggars, little boys, pearl buyers – everyone. There is generally one buyer but with various agents who used to compete among themselves hence pushing the prices up. Now they have stopped. They connive and agree to offer low prices.

The sun is hot-yellow in the morning. The entire town is at standstill because everyone wants to witness the sale of Kino’s pearl: the fishermen have not gone to their usual errands of diving for pearls; the neighbours have already taken breakfast and are discussing what they would do if they experienced the same luck as Kino’s. One says he would give it as a present to the Holy Father in Rome; another one says he would buy Masses for the soul of his family for a thousand years; another says he would distribute the money amongst the poor. The fourth one says he would do all kinds of charity. They all hope that the riches will spoil Kino. They say Kino is a good man and cannot change because of the riches.

This is a morning of all mornings for Kino and his family members. They put on their best clothes and are ready for the show. The neighbours have lined up watching the event as it unfolds. They join Kino and Juana with Coyotito on her back as they go to sell the pearl. It is a long

procession with many people. Tomas cautions Kino to be careful with buyers that can cheat him. Kino agrees and they continue walking while a large crowd is following. Tomas tells Kino that long ago, the villagers could gather all the pearls together and send one person to sell directly in the city. But at one point, this man did not come back to give back the money. This is the reason they now sell the pearls to agents in La Paz. Kino says he knows the story because it was told in church by the Father, saying what had happened was a punishment from God because the system/arrangement of sending one person was evil.

The walk continues. The beggars join them. Salons are deserted as customers are nowhere. The shops are closed. In their offices the pearl buyers are scheming (planning) means of buying the pearl on a low price. One buyer is a stout man; he is in his office tossing a coin. Kino arrives at his office. He unwraps the pearl and looks forward to the buyer's reaction. The buyer shows no reaction at all. He likens Kino's pearl to a fool's gold. He says the pearl is too large and nobody would buy it. He says it is clumsy and too big saying only a museum would be interested in it. He offers to buy it at 2 000 pesos. Kino declares that it is worth 50 000 pesos, insisting it is a pearl of great value.

The buyer insists that he cannot pay any more than 2 000. He asks his servant to go and call other buyers. The other dealers come. One of them says he cannot offer any amount. He says he cannot buy it. "This is not a pearl – it is a monstrosity (horror)," he says. The other dealer gets a magnifying glass and invites Kino to look at his pearl. With the glass, the pearl displays a strange colour that shocks Kino. Yet another dealer offers 500 pesos. Kino snatches his pearl back. He feels cheated. The first dealer says his first offer still stands. He says he is ready to pay 1 000 pesos. Kino refuses even when the dealer raises the price to 1 500. He gets his pearl and is already on his way out – going home.

In the evening, neighbours are discussing the day's events. They are also becoming suspicious of the pearl. Some say he could have sold it at the offered price; others say he made a good decision to refuse as he can now sell it himself in the capital. They say Kino is courageous, fierce and right. They are proud of him.

In his house, Kino is on a mat. He has buried the pearl under a stone in the fire hole inside the house. "He has lost one world and has not gained

another". As he is thinking of traveling to the capital to sell the pearl on his own, fear grips him. He is afraid of strangers and strange places. The capital is over a thousand miles away. He declares that he will go. Juan Tomas comes. He says he is afraid for Kino. He says there are no friends in the capital as is the case in La Paz. But Kino is determined to go. Tomas wishes him well.

The song of evil plays. Kino does not ask for his supper. He senses the evil (thief) that is walking outside the house. He gets his knife and goes out to see. Juana hears the little rush, the grunting struggle and the blow. She takes a stone and goes outside too. She finds Kino lying down, struggling to rise. There is nobody except Kino. The thief is gone behind the house. Juana helps Kino rise. Kino is wounded: blood oozes down from his scalp; has a deep cut on his cheek from ear to chin, bleeding. He is half conscious; his shirt torn open.

Juana nurses his wounds and asks who the attacker(s) was/were. Kino says he doesn't know because he didn't see. She tells the husband to throw away the pearl claiming it is evil. Kino doesn't agree. "I will fight this thing. I will win over it. We will have our chance. No one shall take our good fortune from us. Believe me, I am a man," he says. He says in the morning they will take a canoe and paddle to the capital to sell the pearl. Juana still begs the husband to throw the pearl away. But Kino orders her to keep quiet asking her to go with him to the capital. Juana says she is not afraid to go with him.

They sleep.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

1. PEARL BUYERS

- a) **Crooked:** they collude to offer low price for Kino's.
- b) **United:** they work together in buying pearls at low prices.
- c) **Greedy:** they want to make more profits at the expense of the poor.

2. PEARL DIVERS

- a) **Shallow minded and foolish:** they leave their errands just to see Kino sell his pearl.

3. KINO

- a) **Optimistic:** he hopes to sell his pearl at a good price.
- b) **Superstitious:** Kino says selling the pearl alone at the capital is evil.
- c) **Resolute/decisive and consistent:** he does not allow selling his pearl at a low price. He sticks to his plan to go to the capital and sell the pearl at a fair price.
- d) **Courageous:** although he has been attacked, he continues with his plan of selling the pearl to the town.
- e) **Cunning:** he is pretty aware that the buyers have colluded to fool him. He opts not to sell the pearl at the offered price.

4. JUAN TOMAS

- a) **Cautious/alert:** he tells Kino not to be cheated by the pearl buyers.
- b) **Sensitive and foresighted:** he sees trouble on his brother Kino because of the pearl Kino is possessing.

5. JUANA

- a) **Loving/caring:** she cares about her family hence she warns Kino about the dangers of keeping the pearl. She also assists him when a thief knocks him down.
- b) **Superstitious:** She believes that the pearl is evil.
- c) **Supportive:** she accompanies her husband to town to sell the pearl.

THEMES

- 1. **Cheating/collusion:** pearl buyers meet (collude) and agree to offer low prices way before the sellers come.
- 2. **Stupid cooperation and unfair business practices:** pearl buyers collude to exploit the pearl sellers by offering low prices.
- 3. **Optimism:** Kino hopes to sell his pearl at a fair price.
- 4. **Superstition:** Juana believes that the pearl is evil. Kino believes that selling the pearl elsewhere is evil.
- 5. **Companionship:** a horde of fellow pearl divers escort Kino as he goes to sell his pearl.
- 6. **Determination:** Kino is determined to still sell the pearl at a good price. He does not fall prey to the crooked La Paz buyers.

7. **Brotherly love and advice:** Tomas cares for Kino. This is why he cautions his brother not to be cheated by pearl buyers and also to be safe in the capital.

CHAPTER 5

CHARACTERS

Kino, Juana, Apolonia, Juan

“When Kino and Coyotito are asleep, Juana takes the pearl and tries to throw it into the sea. Kino catches her and beats her. Later he is attacked but manages to stab his assailant (attacker) to death. Juana finds Kino in the pathway. He is semi-conscious (fainted). They decide to escape in their canoe but Kino notices that someone has knocked a hole in the canoe. The hut is set on fire; they escape and hide in Juan Tomas’ house.”

PLOT

Juana gets the pearl while Kino is asleep. She silently leaves the house. Kino opens his eyes and sees her like a shadow. He follows Juana to the beach while angry. Juana takes the pearl in order to throw it back into the ocean. As she is about to throw the pearl back in to water Kino stops her – holding her hand. Kino kicks Juan to the ground and strikes her in the face. He takes the pearl back. Juana is terrified and knows that Kino can kill a person. She lies along the beach in pain.

As Kino is walking back home, he is attacked by thugs but manages to kill one thug with his knife. But he is also swept to the ground and searched. But the pearl falls to ground and the thug does not see it. At the beach Juana is thinking about her husband. She knows her husband is a man. This means he is “half insane, half god”. She does not of think of separating with Kino. She understands and is aware of her role. She has to be a woman, to reason, caution and preserve her husband.

Juana wakes up from the ground; she comes across the pearl as she walks back home from the beach. She picks it up and wonders whether she must

throw out back into ocean or not. She decides not to. As she walks, she sees two men in darkness. The second man is bleeding from the throat. One of the two is Kino. She helps her husband wake up. Kino tells her the pearl is stolen. But she assures him that it has not been stolen. She gives it to him. Juana advises Kino to rush to the town before Kino is arrested (convicted) of murder since he has killed a man that night. They start to go out and want to go by water using their canoe. He asks Juana to pack a few things and goes to check on his canoes, but he discovers that someone has knocked a hole in the bottom. This makes Kino angry.

As he is walking back home, he sees his house up in flames. Someone has set the house on fire! Kino takes his family and seeks refuge (hide) at his brother's house. When Kino arrives with his family at his brother's house they find Apolonia, Juan Tomas' wife grieving (crying). Apolonia stops crying upon seeing them. Kino asks his brother to keep his family for just a day and that he will leave when evening comes. Tomas assures him to hide in his house for a day. He also advises Kino that they should leave for the north the next evening. He also wants to know from Kino if he is willing to have the pearl destroyed. Kino replies that the pearl has become his soul, therefore he cannot destroy it.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

1. KINO

- a) **Short tempered:** he beats his wife when she is about to throw the pearl back into the ocean.
- b) **Strong:** he defeats two thugs who attack him. One is killed.
- c) **Stubborn:** he does not listen to his brother and wife to throw the pearl back into the ocean.
- d) **Decisive and determined:** the journey to the capital is on.

2. JUANA

- a) **Forgiving:** she does not divorce her husband Kino for beating her.
- b) **Cautious:** she tells her husband to escape to the capital before he is convicted of murder.
- c) **Thoughtful:** she does not throw the pearl when she finds it again. She knows the husband will be mad at her.
- d) **Caring:** despite being battered, she still attends to her husband who has been knocked by the two thugs.

3. APOLONIA

- a) **Sympathetic:** she sympathizes with Kino when Kino's house is set on fire. She offers them accommodation.

4. JUAN TOMAS

- a. **Cautious:** He cautions Kino to leave for the North the following evening for his family to be safe
- b. **Sympathetic:** he sympathizes with Kino and his family in every unfortunate situation.

THEMES

- 1. **Bravery:** Kino defends himself from the two thugs and kills one in the process.
- 2. **Sympathy and empathy:** Juan and his wife Apolonia sympathize with Kino in every unfortunate situation and give them shelter.
- 3. **Blood is thicker than water:** Juan Tomas sides and protects his brother Kino despite that Kino has killed a person. In a normal situation, Tomas was supposed to respect the law and handover Kino to authorities to face the law.
- 4. **Anger:** this is portrayed in the way Kino batters his wife when she is about to throw the Pearl back into the sea
- 5. **Brotherly love:** Juan Tomas and his wife assist Kino's family in this difficult situation.

CHAPTER 6

CHARACTERS

Kino, Juana, Trackers

“Kino and Juana set out to escape to the north. Kino tries to cover their tracks (footprints). As the day breaks, they hide in a thicket (bush) near the road. Kino awakes and sees three trackers pursuing them. He leads Juana further into the mountain until they come to a ravine (narrow valley) where they hide. Kino attacks his pursuers (trackers) and kills all the three. In the struggle, Coyotito is killed by a stray bullet. Kino and Juana return to the village and throw the pearl back into the sea”

PLOT

It is evening and it is blowing heavily. Kino and his family are on their way to the capital. They avoid passing through the town fearing someone might see them. He is happy with the wind because he knows it will erase their footprints in case someone follows them. He walks quickly while Juana trots behind. Being dark, Kino fears the devils that haunt the night. They walk for hours the whole night meeting no one along the way. Wild animals and birds such as coyotes and owls cry and screech the whole night. Kino hears the music of the pearl and that of the family playing together.

During dawn, the family goes into the bush to hide and rest. But Kino goes back to the road to erase the footprints so that they are not seen by anyone. An oxcart passes by. Kino sees it go. The family eats corn-cakes that Apolonia prepared for them.

While in the bush hiding, Kino tells Juana to avoid touching some trees saying some can make her blind. He also tells Juana what bad luck is. Juana knows all this but shows respect to the husband and listens attentively. She feels that the journey to the capital is an illusion and that the pearl dealers were right.

Kino disputes this. He says if the pearl were not valuable, no one would be interested to steal it. Kino looks at the pearl and imagines the wealth he is likely to acquire and things his wealth can buy. He thinks of a rifle but sees a nameless murdered man on the ground. Kino says he will marry his wife officially in church; this too brings a picture of Juana lying on the ground

beaten up. He also expresses hope that Coyotito will get educated. Kino puts the pearl back in his pocket when he hears the music of the pearl showing signs of danger.

The family gets to sleep under the scorching sun. Juana's mouth is still swollen (she was beaten by her husband the previous night). Suddenly, Kino wakes up from a horrible dream. He senses danger and tells his wife to keep the baby quiet. He sees a group of trackers pass by. The trackers are after him so that they snatch his pearl. Kino draws his knife and is ready to attack. The trackers are studying the prints on the ground at the place Kino had branched to the bush. They go but Kino knows they will be back.

This time he does not erase his footprints. He goes back to where his wife is and suggests he gives himself up to the trackers. He is helpless and hopeless. Juana advises against that idea saying the trackers may not only get the pearl but also kill them. Kino decides that they should hide in mountains. Kino hears the music of the evil. The family gets to the stone mountains where they hide to rest. Kino suggests that Juana and Coyotito hide there in the mountain while he goes to the North to sell the pearl. He says he can be faster alone than when they are together. The wife refuses. Kino marks the ground with fake footprints to mislead the trackers. The family gets to a water pool.

Looking down the mountain, Kino sees the trackers pursuing his family. He says the trackers will have arrived at the mountain by evening. Kino asks the wife to go up the mountain and hide in a cave. He also creeps into the cave besides his wife. He hopes that if the trackers go up the mountain, the family will trek back to the lowlands. He advises his wife to keep Coyotito quiet. Lying at the entrance of the cave, Kino has a good view down the mountain. He sees the trackers getting confused with the marks he drew. At night, the trackers arrive at the water pool. They are walking on foot. They have left the horse because it cannot climb the mountain. Kino notices that two of the trackers are sleeping. He hatches a plan to go and target the one with the rifle and then deal with the others. So he takes off his white clothes in order not to be seen. He comes out the cave ready to execute his plan. He must be fast before the moon rises or else he will be seen. Juana prays seeking heavenly protection.

Under the cover of darkness, Kino crouches towards the trackers. He hears the song of the family and the music of the enemy. He aims to attack but is late as the moon is up and there is too much light. Kino retreats a bit. Coyotito cries. The trackers think it is a coyote. The trackers aim to shoot the

'coyote' not knowing it is baby Coyotito. The man (tracker) points his gun in the direction of Coyotito and Juana. Kino quickly stabs the man on the neck and in the process, the trigger is pulled and Coyotito is shot dead. But Kino does not know.

Like a killing robot, Kino goes wild and stabs two of the three trackers, grabs the rifle and aims at the third man shooting him between the eyes. The insects that were abuzz have now gone silent. Kino comes back to his senses and a cry from the cave tells him something has gone amiss. Coyotito is dead. The family decides to cancel the trip. Kino gets the rifle while Juana carries the dead baby. They start off returning home.

The couple trek back to La Paz. They pass through the town and go straight to the sea passing by the place where their house was. They reach the sea edge oblivious to their broken canoe. Kino gets hold of the pearl in his hand. He looks into its surface. It looks grey and ulcerous. He also sees a reflection of evil faces, a burning light, and the face of the dead man in the pool. And again in the surface of the pearl, Kino sees "Coyotito lying in cave with the top of his head shot away." The pearl now looks ugly.

Kino hears the music of the pearl. It sounds distorted and insane. Kino gives the pearl to his wife to throw it into the sea. Juana refuses. "No, you," she says. Kino gets the pearl. With all his energy, he flings the pearl into the sea. The pearl goes splashing the water before settling down on the seabed. And the music of the pearl gets low to a whisper before completely fading away.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

1. KINO

- a. **Desperate and frustrated:** Kino almost gives up and thinks of surrendering himself to the trackers. His wife warns against this.
- b. **Suspicious and cunning:** he brushes away (erases) their foot prints so he cannot be traced by people.
- c. **Creative:** he draws decoy prints to mislead the trackers.
- d. **Courageous and strong:** he manages to kill the trackers singlehandedly (all alone)
- e. **Optimistic:** he believes that he will do a lot when he sells his pearl

- f. **Determined:** he does everything to protect his family and the pearl when he is followed by the trackers.
- g. **Protective and determined:** he manages to defend his pearl. The trackers have failed to snatch it
- h. **Repentant:** he now realizes the need to throw the pearl back into the sea. He throws it with all his energy.

2. JUANA

- a. **Decisive:** she does not allow remaining behind as Kino goes alone to sell the pearl in the city.
- b. **Superstitious:** Juana refuses to handle a pearl when Kino gives her; she believes that it is evil.
- c. **Caring and loving:** she carries her dead baby back home.

3. TRACKERS

- a. **Greedy:** they attack Kino because of the pearl he wants to sell in town
- b. **Evil minded:** they want to eliminate Kino and his family because of the pearl that is not theirs.
- c. **Determined:** they follow Kino up the mountain in determination to steal the pearl from him.

THEMES

- 1. **Suspicion:** Kino does not believe anyone. He thinks everyone is his enemy, hence brushes away his footprints on the road so as not to be traced by anybody.
- 2. **Greed:** The trackers follow Kino all because of their greed. After all, the pearl is not theirs.
- 3. **Religion and faith:** Juana prays before hiding in the cave.
- 4. **Superstition:** Kino believes in the song of the family and the pearl. Juana maintains her belief that the pearl is evil. She refuses to touch it when Kino gives her throw away.
- 5. **Determination:** Kino fights with his life to protect the pearl from being stolen by the trackers.
- 6. **Despair:** Kino gives up on running. He thinks of surrendering himself to the trackers.
- 7. **Learning the hard way:** Kino is repentant. He has learnt his lessons the hard way. He should have listened to Juana in the first place that the pearl was evil and had to be thrown away.

8. **Motherly love:** Juana carries the remains (dead body) of Coyotito back to La Paz.
9. **Power of a woman:** when Kino was about to give up, Juana encourages him not to. In all the troubles they face in the mountain, Juana is by Kino's side and giving him moral support.

MAJOR THEMES IN THE PEARL

As a student, you are supposed to come up with as many themes as possible. The themes have to be properly explained (justifying how they are portrayed) by giving evidence from the novel. The following major themes have been listed as your starting point. You can add as many as you can.

1. DETERMINATION

Kino dives for pearls in attempt to find one with great value. He would like to pay the doctor for Coyotito's treatment. The boy is stung by a scorpion and the father is determined to do everything to save the child. Kino kills a man when he is attacked. He is determined to protect himself and most importantly, the pearl. Kino clings to the pearl. His house is burnt, the canoe is destroyed and Coyotito is shot in the battle to defend the pearl. Kino claims that the pearl has become his soul. On the way to the capital he kills the three trackers who are after him for the pearl. This is determination.

2. GREED

The news of Kino's pearl has generated evil intention amongst various people. The doctors, merchants, priest and beggars all want to benefit from Kino's pearl. Greed makes people in town conduct acts of violence against Kino in an attempt to steal the pearl. Blood is shed because of greed.

3. CORRUPTION

Corruption has fueled greed. It is seen in the lives of individuals and the society at large. The doctor is corrupted by his love for money. He sits in his beautiful house sipping chocolate and refuses to treat Coyotito, who has been stung by a scorpion. He does this

because the baby is an Indian and he says he is not a veterinary. He later offers to help because of Kino's pearl.

4. RELIGION

Throughout the story, Juana prays for protection. At the sea, she prays that her husband should find a good pearl. Kino says selling the pearl at the capital on his own is against religion. He nevertheless goes to do the same.

5. PRICE OF REJECTING WISDOM

Juana understands the troubles of clinging to the pearl. She says "it will destroy us all and even our son". This has come to pass because their house is burnt, Kino's canoe is smashed and their son Coyotito is shot dead. Juana Tomas also advises Kino to throw the pearl back into the ocean but Kino refuses. Kino beats his wife for trying to throw the pearl back into the ocean. Kino loses his son, house and canoe. It is a price he pays for rejecting advice.

6. IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY

Juana is always present for her husband and nurses Kino's wounds when he gets attacked. Kino says when he gets rich he will marry his wife Juana in church. Kino is accompanied by his family to the market to sell the pearl. Juan Tomas, Kino's brother and his wife sympathize with Kino –looking at what he passes through. Tomas advises Kino that he should not be cheated by the pearl buyers. And when Kino's house is burnt, Tomas offers him accommodation. The family song Kino hears also symbolizes the significance of the family. Kino finds comfort in his family members.

7. THE TWO SIDES OF WEALTH

The story shows that wealth has both advantages and disadvantages. The goodness is that it brings joy and one is able to meet needs and fulfill family demands. Kino feels that once he gets rich will be able to marry his wife through church and send his son to school. On the other hand wealth has challenges. Kino has become the centre of attraction. Several people plot to attack him and his family and get away with the valuable pearl. Almost everybody wants to cheat Kino in order to get his pearl. In the end his house is burnt to ashes, his canoe is smashed and his son Coyotito is shot dead because of the pearl. Wealth brings both happiness and insecurity. Remember Kino's plan to buy a rifle.

8. **GOOD VERSUS BAD/EVIL**

The story revolves around a conflict between good and bad. The pearl that Kino finds is supposed to bring relief to his poor family. Kino promises to do a lot of things with the proceeds from the pearl. However, fate has its own plans. The pearl turns out to be a source of trouble.

9. **MALE CHAUVINISM**

By virtue of being a man, Kino is the family head and Juan respects all decisions made by Kino whether good or bad. Kino is the ultimate authority of the family and everyone should follow his orders.

10. **VIOLENCE**

The pearl has transformed Kino from being a civilized loving husband into a killing machine. He declares that everyone is his enemy and is afraid of everyone. When Kino's wife takes the pearl without his knowledge to throw it back into the sea, he savagely beats her up. Kino goes further by killing a man who wants to attack him for his pearl. He cuts him on the throat. In the end, he stabs two trackers to death before shooting the third.

11. **INESCAPABLE DESTINY**

According to this story, a person cannot escape or change their destiny. Despite the hope that the pearl brings, Kino is destined to be a poor person and that does not change.

SYMBOLISM IN THE NOVEL

There are several events and objects in the novel which can be understood symbolically. We look at a few:

1. **The ant and the anti-lion:** the ants represent the local people while the anti-lion represent the oppressive colonial rulers.
2. **The dog:** represents the locals who are being told what to do by the colonial masters even if it is against their will.
3. **The scorpion:** represents the arbitrary and unmotivated evil that is directed at innocent people.

4. **The fighting cocks:** represent the disunity of the indigenous (local) people who spend their time disagreeing with one another instead of concentrating on development.
5. **The religious paintings in the doctor's house:** an irony that mocks the doctor who pretends to be a good man while he is evil.
6. **Kino's eight pearls:** they underscore (emphasize) the poverty and dire situation in Kino's household.
7. **The songs:** these are strong feelings that one has towards something that is expected to happen.
8. **The canoe:** it symbolizes inheritance. Remember Kino's canoe was inherited from his grandparent.
9. **Coyotito:** represents innocent people that suffer the blunt of the corrupt and strong people in society.
10. **Kino:** represents the struggle of the poor minority at the hands of the oppressive rich.
11. **Juana:** represents the forces that give hope to those that suffer at the hands of an oppressive system.

REVISION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER ONE

1. How is Juana dutiful?
2. Why does the doctor refuse to treat Coyotito?
3. Do you think the scorpion has been used symbolically?
4. How does Kino's house differ from that of the doctor?
5. How does Kino react to the charging scorpion?

CHAPTER TWO

1. How are pearls made?
2. Why does Juana pretend to look away when Kino is opening the big oyster?
3. How does Juana try to help Coyotito?
4. What is Kino's occupation?
5. Money is important in a person's life. Agree to this statement while drawing examples from Kino's life.

CHAPTER THREE

1. In your own understanding and analysis of the events in chapter 3, do you think the doctor poisoned the baby?
2. How do the following people react to the news that Kino has found pearl of the world?
 - a. The Priest
 - b. Shopkeepers
 - c. Doctor
 - d. Beggars
 - e. Pearl buyers
3. Describe the foreshadowing presented in the chapter?

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Explain the theme of “collusion” in the chapter?

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Which two individuals think the pearl is evil?
2. In what sense Kino becomes every man’s enemy?
3. What does Kino mean when he says the pearl has become his soul?

CHAPTER SIX

1. What does Kino do so that he is not traced on his way to the capital?
2. Coyotito lives in a world of innocence. Agree to this statement.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Justify the following themes as portrayed in the novel
 - a. Poverty
 - b. Endurance
 - c. Bravery
 - d. Traditional knowledge
 - e. Hope
 - f. Cruelty
 - g. Crookedness
 - h. Strictness

- i. Bitterness
 - j. The power of a woman
 - k. Obsession
 - l. Hypocrisy
2. Do a character analysis of the following individuals:
- a. Kino
 - b. Juana
 - c. Juan Tomas
 - d. Doctor
 - e. Pearl buyers
 - f. Priest

IMPORTANT

- a. You must be able to justify a single major theme with at least **eight** points. These points should be well explained and illustrated with **clear examples** (evidence) from the novel. For example, explain how the theme of 'greed' is portrayed in *The Pearl*. A question like this demands that you should explain at least eight points.
- b. You must be able to describe a single character (person) with at least **eight** points. The descriptions should employ **adjectives** and illustrated with **clear examples** (evidence) from the novel. For example, *describe the character of Juana in The Pearl* or *Show that Kino a determined person*.
- c. You will be required to write an essay based on this story. Make sure you are conversant with what is required in essay writing.

© 2021