

The Pearl Reading Guide

Chapter One

1. What can you **infer** about the **character** of the people living in the **town and villiage** based upon your observations?
2. How are the **villagers** treated when they enter the town?
3. Why do you think the doctor turns them away and lies to the villagers about having an important case?
4. How does the incident with the doctor help us to answer the questions of: How do the people of the town keep the people of the village poor?
5. Based upon your observations so far, what do you think could be a possible theme that will be present throughout this book?
6. What is a traditionalist society like the one in which Kino lives? Do you believe that only Kino's village follows this traditionalist society? Which societies today still live in a traditional way?

7. Please complete the chart below:

Possible Symbol	Meaning of the Symbol
Songs	
Scorpion	
Daybreak/ Morning	
Doctor	

8. Explain the “**songs**” that people made up.

9. Why does the **doctor** have no name?

10. What are some of the **doctor’s** “fat” things? How does the description of the doctor help us to understand what he represents as a **symbol**?

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Chapter 2

1. Explain the following passage:

“ Juana went to the water and waded in. She gathered some brown seaweed and made a flat damp poultice of it, and this she applied to the baby’s swollen shoulder, which was as good a remedy as any and probably better than the doctor could have done. But the remedy lacked his authority because it was simple and didn’t cost anything.”

What do you think it means that the poultice ‘lacked [the **doctor’s**] authority’? If the **poultice** is better than anything the doctor could have done, why do Juana and Kino want to waste their money on the doctor?

2. Rich (townspeople) vs. Poor (Indian Villagers) can be considered a theme for this book. How does Chapter 2 support this theme?

Symbol	What it means
Canoe	
Pearl	

3. How did Kino regard his **canoe**? What does it mean to Kino and his family?

4. What does Juana notice about the same time as Kino discovers the **pearl**? How does this scenario help to explain the **pearl's symbolism** at this point in the story?

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Chapter 3

1. How does Kino's discovery affect the town? List each group's reaction in the chart below:

Person/Group	Reaction

2. What dreams did Kino have? What did he want to do with the money from the **pearl**? How do these wishes tell us about the opportunities that Kino has had throughout his life as a poor Indian man?

3. What are the doctor's motives for "helping" Kino and Juana? How does this situation help us to understand the doctor as a **symbol** for **greed, corruption, and prejudice**?

4. What does Juana want Kino to do with the pearl after he has his dream? What do you think this means for the

pearl's **symbolic** significance in the story?

5. How does this chapter end? Which **symbol** is being used here?

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Chapter 4

1. If the pearl buyers are at their "happiest to buy a pearl at the lowest price," what kind of men are likely to be pearl buyers?

2. How has the villagers' religion held them back?

3. What is the buyer's reaction when he first sees the pearl? Did you expect this reaction?

4. Did the neighbors agree with Kino's refusal of any of these terms? What does this say about the villagers' acceptance of their lot in life? What has happened to them that has made them so willing to accept this lot?

5. Does it appear that the Indians have been cheated all their lives? How have they been cheated?

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Chapter 5

Symbol: The Pearl

1. What did Juana do that night? Why would she do this? What are her motives for doing such a thing?

2. Compare and contrast Kino from the beginning of the book to now in the chart below.

Kino at the beginning	Kino Now

4. What happens as Kino turns away from Juana that Steinbeck later describes as an “evil beyond thinking”? How has the symbolic significance of the canoe changed now that this has happened?

6. What has the pearl come to mean to Kino? What is his response to Juan Tomas’s advice? Do you consider Kino to be a greedy man considering the circumstances? Support your response with evidence from the text.

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Chapter 6

1. What does Kino see in the afternoon that causes him fear?
2. How do Kino and Juana decide to get rid of the trackers?
4. What does Kino decide is his only chance of survival when they are overrun by the trackers? How does he do this?
5. How do the songs reach the height of symbolic significance in this chapter?
6. Explain the fight with the trackers. Who was injured?
7. What has Kino gained from this episode with the pearl? What do you think the pearl now means to Kino?
8. How did Kino and Juana walk into town the next day? How has this changed the relationship between Kino and Juana? How have they changed by this experience?

9. Where did they go and what did they do? What has Kino lost in this experience? How has the pearl's physical appearance changed to help us understand the symbolic meaning of the pearl?

10. How is this story a parable? Consider the lesson(s) that the story teaches.