

The Pearl

John Steinbeck



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What's the book about?

- Look at the cover of the book and talk about the picture. What do you think?
 - Where does this family live?
 - How do they earn money to live?
 - Will the pearl be important to them?
- The words in these sentences are used in Chapter 1. Check the meanings of new words at the bottom of pages 1–7. Then draw lines to complete the sentences.

<p>A scorpion A big pearl A fisherman A bite The baby's box</p>	<p>hangs from the roof of the house on a long from a scorpion is full of is a small and dangerous earns his money from the costs a lot of</p>	<p>ocean. money. poison. rope. animal.</p>
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3 Discuss these questions.

- You wake up in a beach house one morning. There is a scorpion on the bed. What will you do?
- What is the most dangerous wild animal where you live?
- Has an animal ever bitten you? Did it hurt?

12 What happens first?

Look at page 1 opposite. Read the words in *italics* and look at the picture. What will happen, do you think? Check (✓) the best answers.

- The scorpion will fall
 - onto the floor.
 - onto the baby.
- The parents will kill the scorpion
 - before it bites the baby.
 - after it bites the baby.
- A doctor from the rich part of town
 - will help the baby.
 - will refuse to help the baby.

The Scorpion Bite

*It was a small movement, but it caught their eyes.
A scorpion was moving slowly down the rope toward the baby's box.*

It was not yet light when Kino woke up. The stars still shone, though the eastern sky was pale with the promise of the day. Lying in his bed on the floor of his small wooden house, Kino listened to the singing of the birds and the sounds of the chickens and the early lambs outside.

Kino's eyes opened. He looked first at the empty square which was the door. Then he looked at the hanging box where Coyotito slept.

Kino heard the sound of the ocean. It was very good—Kino closed his eyes again and listened to his music. His people loved music and, in the past, everything in life became a song. This now was a song of **fishermen** and **pearlers**. Kino, like his neighbors, lived from the ocean.



fisherman /'fɪʃmən/ (n) a man who catches fish for money or food

pearl /pɜːl/ (n) a small, white, round thing from a sea animal; many women like to wear *pearls* around their necks

Juana stood up quietly and walked to Coyotito's hanging box. She spoke soft words of love to her baby boy and then went to build the fire. Now Kino got up and put on his shoes. He went outside to watch the morning come. It was cold, but he was young and strong. His black hair hung down over his brown face, almost to his warm bright eyes. His mustache was thin and rough. Behind him, Juana's fire was burning strongly and she was preparing food. There were no new songs in the town these days, but there were personal songs. In Kino's head now, the Song of the Family was playing.

The sun climbed quickly, painting the sky blue and gold above the ocean. Kino had to cover his eyes against the brightness of it. He could smell the **corn**-cakes cooking. It was a morning like other mornings, but it was the most perfect of them all.

Kino heard Juana take Coyotito out of his hanging box and clean him. She sang softly to her baby, and this was part of the family song. It was all part of it. He felt warm inside, and safe, and complete.

Smoke was coming from other houses too, and the sounds of breakfast. But those were other songs, their lambs were other lambs, their wives were not Juana. Kino watched two chickens fight. Then his eyes went up to a group of birds flying over the town. The world was awake now, and he went inside.

Juana stood up from the fire, put Coyotito back into his hanging box, and tied her long black hair. Kino sat by the fire and ate his corn-cake, and that was breakfast. When he finished, Juana sat down. She ate. They did not speak, because there was no need for speech.

The sun was warming their little home. Light shone in on Coyotito's box, and on the **ropes** that held it.

A rope moved suddenly. It was a small movement, but it caught their eyes. A **scorpion** was moving slowly down the rope toward the baby's box.

A new song came into Kino's mind—the Song of **Evil**, the music of the enemy. Juana was **praying** softly, hoping for protection from this evil. Kino stood up silently and walked without a sound toward the box. His hands were in front of him, and his eyes were on the scorpion. Below it, in the hanging box, Coyotito laughed and reached up his hand toward it. The scorpion stopped and lifted its tail over its back.

corn /kɔrn/ (n) long, yellow vegetables that come from a tall plant

rope /roup/ (n) a very strong, thick, long material, used for tying things

scorpion /'skɔrpiən/ (n) a small animal from a hot country with a long, pointed, dangerous tail

evil /'ivəl/ (n/adj) something very bad and dangerous

pray /preɪ/ (v) to speak to a god; for example, to say thank you

Alino stopped, too. He could not move until the scorpion moved. It had to know where death was coming from. His hand reached slowly toward the animal.



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John Steinbeck

American English

Classic

Kino finds a large pearl, which he thinks will save his family from poverty. But the pearl is what they think they want instead of what they need. The misfortune it brings changes the life of the family forever.

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