

The Pearl

By John Steinbeck



Adapted Text

Chapter 1

It was the dawn of the new day, the stars still shone and the sun was just beginning to rise in the lower eastern sky. The roosters were crowing and the birds were chirping while they fluttered around a tuna clump.

Kino and his wife, Juana woke up. Kino walked outside and watched the ocean. Kino heard the little splashing of the morning waves on the beach. It was very good- Kino closed his eyes to listen to his music. He heard an old song that came from his culture- the Song of the Family. Long ago, Kino's people had been great makers of song. Everything that they saw or thought or did became a song. The Song of Family is a song that Kino hears when his family is together. The song makes him feel happy. Kino remembers all of the songs. He hears the songs in his head. He hears different songs based on his feelings.

Juana prepared the fire to make a simple breakfast of corncakes and syrup. Then, still in her bare feet, she went to the hanging box where Coyotito slept to check on the baby.

Juana leaned over her baby, smiled at him and said a little reassuring word. The baby looked up for a moment and then closed his eyes and went back to sleep.

Kino and Juana love their family.

Kino was a young fisherman. He had a strong physique and black hair that hung over his brown forehead. His eyes were warm and fierce and bright. He, Juana, and Coyotito lived in a brush house, a simple house made of bundles of straw fastened together to form walls and a roof. They were poor and did not have money but they are happy.

There were other brush houses too and Kino could see the smoke from their fires and hear the sound of breakfast cooking.

Juana took Coyotito from his hanging box. She nursed him and dressed him. She sang an ancient song softly to her baby. This song was also part of the Song of Family.

Juana's voice was reassuring to Coyotito. Juana put Coyotito back into his hanging box so that she could comb and braid her long black hair. Juana and Kino ate their breakfast together.

They did not need to speak to each other; they were happy in silence.

Kino and Juana love their family.

The sun was shining through the cracks in the brush house. When the light shined on Coyotito's hanging box, Kino and Juana saw a scorpion crawling down the rope to the hanging box. A scorpion is an animal with eight legs, claws and a tail with a stinger on the end. Kino and Juana froze where they stood. The scorpion was very dangerous. A sting from a scorpion could kill Coyotito! Now, Kino was frightened and he heard the Song of Evil in his head, the music of the enemy. Very carefully, Kino moved quietly across the room. He was careful not to make any noise. The scorpion moved delicately down the rope towards the hanging box. Just when Kino was about to grab it Coyotito laughed and shook the rope. The scorpion fell on the baby's shoulder, its thorned tail jerked upright and in an instance, the scorpion stung Coyotito! Kino quickly grabbed the scorpion and pulverized it.

Coyotito screamed in pain and Juana hurried to comfort him, taking him into her arms. Juana tried to suck the poison from the puncture wound where Coyotito was stung. She did not want the poison to spread into his body.

The screams of the baby alerted the neighbors and they came to see what was wrong. Juana said they must get the doctor who lived in the town. But the doctor was rich and did not help poor people like Kino and Juana. The doctor did not come to the brush houses. Everyone agreed, the doctor would not come.

Kino and Juana love their family.

Juana loved her baby Coyotito. She looked at Kino; her eyes were cold with determination. Kino heard the Song of the Family in his head. Now Kino was also filled with determination. Juana said "Then we will take Coyotito to him." and she arranged her blue shawl into a sling and put the moaning Coyotito into it. Kino, Juana and all of the neighbors began a procession into town. As they walked into town, passing the church and the plaza, more people joined the procession. They all knew the doctor was a cruel man; they did not think he would help the baby.

Kino and Juana love their family.

They marched into town, passing the harsh outer walls, and the inner cool gardens. The procession crossed the plaza and the church with hurrying newcomers joining in. Some of the newcomers appraised Juana's old blue skirt and Kino's tattered blanket and they knew they were indigent. Finally, they arrived at a large gate. The doctor lived in a big house. They could hear water splashing and caged birds singing. They could smell good bacon frying for the doctor's breakfast. Kino felt afraid and angry at the same time. He did not think that a rich doctor would help a poor baby whose parents had no money to pay. Coyotito moaned, his shoulder was swollen from the scorpion sting. Juana spoke softly to him.

Kino and Juana love their family.

The doctor was still in bed. His servant told him about Coyotito being stung by the scorpion. He became angry because he did not want to be bothered. The doctor was rich and did not help indigent babies like Coyotito. He asked if Kino had money to pay. Kino only had eight tiny pearls. They were ugly and gray. They were not worth much money. The doctor said he would not help Coyotito.

Kino and Juana stood at the gate for a long time. They did not know how to help their baby. Kino became angry and punched the gate with his fist. His hand began to bleed.

Kino and Juana love their family.

Chapter 2

The morning was young and the air was hazy. The air made some things look larger than they were. Other things could barely be seen. Part of the far shore disappeared into a shimmer that looked like water. You could not trust your eyes, you could not be sure that what you saw was there or was not there. A copper haze hung over the water and the hot morning sun made the water look like it was moving.

Kino and Juana came slowly down to the beach and to Kino's canoe. The canoe was the one thing of value he owned in the world. It was very old. Every year Kino refinished his canoe with a hard shell-like plaster. He came to the canoe, laid his diving rock, his basket and the two ropes in the sand by the canoe. Kino was a pearler. Pearls are formed inside oysters at the bottom of the ocean. Pearls are put into jewelry. Gathering pearls to sell is how Kino makes money to support his family.

Kino hoped to find a great pearl!

Juana laid Coyotito on the blanket, and she placed her shawl over him to shade him from the hot sun. He was quiet now, but the swelling on his shoulder had continued up his neck. His face was swollen and feverish. Juana gathered some brown seaweed and put it on the baby's swollen shoulder. Coyotito had not gotten any sicker. Maybe Juana had sucked out the poison in time, but she was still worried about her first-born son. She hoped that they might find a pearl so that they could pay the doctor to cure the baby.

Kino and Juana paddled out into the ocean. Kino dived in with his rock and basket. He began to collect oysters and put them in his basket.

Kino hoped to find a great pearl!

Kino's people had sung of everything that happened or existed. As he filled his basket a song was in Kino, the beat of the song was his pounding heart. But in the song there was a secret little inner song, this was the Song of the Pearl That Might Be. The chances were not good but Kino hoped he would find a large pearl. And in the canoe above him Kino knew that Juana was hoping for the same thing.

Because Kino was young he could remain underwater for over two minutes. He worked deliberately, selecting the largest shells. Kino moved to the next hummock, and then, beside it, under a little overhang, he saw a very large oyster lying by itself, not covered with other oysters. A hummock is a low mound or ridge of earth. The shell was partly open and Kino thought he saw the gleam of a pearl inside but then the shell closed down tightly.

His heart beat out a heavy rhythm and the melody of the maybe pearl played in his head. He forced the oyster loose and held it tightly. He swam to the surface, reached over the side of the canoe and laid the oyster in the bottom.

Kino hoped to find a great pearl!

Then Juana steadied the boat while he climbed in. His eyes were shining with excitement. Juana sensed his excitement but looked away because it is not good to want something too much; it may drive the luck away. Very deliberately Kino opened his knife. Perhaps it would be better to open the great oyster last. He did not want to be disappointed. He took a small oyster from the basket. He opened it but there was no pearl inside. He threw it back into the water. Now he looked at the large oyster. Kino was reluctant to open it. But Juana looked at him and she could not wait. She put her hand on Coyotito's head. "Open it," she said softly.

Kino deftly slipped his knife into the opening of the shell. The muscles in the oyster tightened. Finally, the muscle parted and the shell fell apart.

Kino looked inside, and there it laid, the great pearl, perfect as the moon. It was bright and glowed with a silver incandescence. It was as large as a sea-gull's egg. It was the greatest pearl in the world. Kino heard the Secret Melody of the Maybe Pearl clearly in his head. It was beautiful and triumphant. He thought about what this pearl would mean for him and his family.

Kino hoped to find a great pearl!

Instinctively Juana went to Coyotito where he lay on the blanket. She lifted the seaweed and looked at his shoulder.

"Kino," she cried shrilly.

He looked at Coyotito, and he saw that the abscess was getting better; the poison was receding from Coyotito's body. He was getting better!

Kino hoped to find a great pearl!

Chapter 3

The news that Kino had found the great pearl had reached the towns people before Kino and the other fishermen arrived back at the brush houses. Everyone in the town wondered how they might benefit from the pearl. The priest thought about repairs that were needed in the church. The doctor heard the news. He was treating a woman at the time and pretended that Coyotito was his patient. "He is a client of mine. "I treated his child for a scorpion sting." The doctor thought about the things he could do if he had the pearl. Even the beggars in front of the church giggled with pleasure. They knew that there is no better almsgiver than a poor man who is suddenly lucky. A poor man knows what it is like to have nothing so he gives money and food to the poor.

But Kino and Juana were happy and the thought everyone shared their joy. The brush house was crowded with neighbors and the music of the pearl had merged with the music of the family so that one beautified the other.

Kino thinks the pearl will bring good but Juana thinks the pearl will bring bad.

"What will you do now that you have become a rich man, a man with lots of money?" Kino looked into his pearl, and spoke softly, "Juana and I will be married-in the church." "My son will go to school," he said, and the neighbors were hushed, they did not know what to say.

"The Father is coming-the priest is coming." The men uncovered their heads and stepped away from the door. The women gathered their shawls around their faces and cast down their eyes.

"Kino," he said softly, "It has come to me that though hast found a great fortune, a great pearl."

Juana spoke. "We have, Father. And we will be married now. " She looked at the neighbors for confirmations, and they nodded their heads solemnly. The priest said, "I am happy to see that your first thoughts are good thoughts." He turned and left quietly.

Kino thinks the pearl will bring good but Juana thinks the pearl will bring bad.

Kino stepped to the doorway and looked out. He carried the pearl in his hand, tightly closed in his palm, and it was warm and smooth against his skin. He saw two men approach; Kino saw that one was the doctor and the other servant who had opened the gate in the morning.

Kino stood in the door, filling it, and hatred raged and flamed in back of his eyes, and fear too.

The doctor said, "Sometimes, my friend, the scorpion sting can be tricky. There will be deceptive improvement, and then without warning-pouf!"

Kino felt the rage and hatred changing to fear. He did not know what might happen to Coyotito, and perhaps this doctor did. And he could not take the chance of putting his lack of knowledge against this man's expertise. Not with the life of Coyotito.

"Yes, just as I thought," the doctor said. "The poison has gone inward and it will attack the baby soon. Come look!"

"I will give him something to try to and make him better," he said. And he handed the baby to Kino. "Maybe I am in time to save him, I cannot be sure." He took a deep breath and went out of the hut, his servant followed behind him.

Kino thinks the pearl will bring good but Juana thinks the pearl will bring bad.

Kino saw, then, that the pearl was still in his hand. He wrapped the pearl in the rag, then went to the corner of the brush house and dug a little hole in the dirt with his fingers. Kino hid the pearl in the hole and covered it up.

Then, Juana called to him. Juana rocked Coyotito from side to side while softly singing the little Song of the Family as though it could ward off the danger. Coyotito vomited and squirmed in her arms. Now Kino was uncertain, the music of evil throbbed in his head and nearly drove out Juana's song.

Kino thinks the pearl will bring good but Juana thinks the pearl will bring bad.

The doctor came back into the hut with medicine for Coyotito. "I think I can defeat the poison. I will try my best." He pried open the baby's mouth and poured the medicine down. The baby choked and cried out under the doctor's treatment, and Juana watched him with haunted eyes. Gradually the baby relaxed under the doctor's hands and Coyotito sighed deeply and went to sleep.

The doctor was closing his bag and said, "When do you think you can pay me for treating the baby?"

"I will pay you when I have sold my pearl," Kino said.

"You have a pearl?" the doctor asked. He was interested in this pearl.

"Kino will be a rich man," the neighbors said. "It is a pearl like no one has never seen." The doctor looked surprised. "I hope you keep this pearl in a safe place? Would you like me to put it in my safe?"

"I have it in a safe place," Kino said. "Tomorrow I will sell it and then I will pay you for treating Coyotito."

The doctor left and returned to his house. Kino went to where the pearl was buried, and he dug it up. Under his sleeping mat he dug another little hole in the dirt floor and buried his pearl again.

Kino thinks the pearl will bring good but Juana thinks the pearl will bring bad.

Then from the corner of the house came a sound; someone was outside.

Kino's hand crept into his breast where knife was, and then leaped in the dark. He struck and felt his knife go through cloth. There was a noise by the doorway, and running steps for a moment, and then there was silence.

The rage within Kino passed and he now felt cold and emotionless. He said to Juana, "I'm all right. The thing has gone."

"This thing is evil," Juana cried harshly while holding up the great pearl. "This pearl is like a sin! It will ruin us," and her voice rose shrilly. "We must throw it away, Kino. Break it between stones. We must bury it and forget about it. We must throw it back into the sea because it has brought evil and I feel it will destroy us."

But Kino's face was filled with determination; his mind could not be changed. "No." Kino said firmly. "This is our one chance to give Coyotito a better life, he must go to school. He must break out of the pot that holds us in, he must have a better life than us."

"If we keep this pearl, it will destroy us all," Juana cried. "Even our son."

“Hush now,” said Kino. “Do not speak any more about the evil the pearl has brought us. Tomorrow morning we will sell the pearl, and the evil will be gone.”

Kino thinks the pearl will bring good but Juana thinks the pearl will bring bad.

Chapter 4

The morning came to go into town to sell the great pearl. For Kino and Juana this was the most important day of their lives, second only to the day Coyotito was born.

Kino placed the great pearl in a little leather bag, and then put the bag in his shirt pocket. He stepped out of the house with dignity, Juana followed him, carrying Coyotito. And the neighbors joined them.

Kino's brother, Juan Tomas said "We do not know what prices are paid for pearls in other places,"

"How can we know what is a fair price for a pearl such as this?"

"That is true," said Kino, "but how can we know?"

Kino would have to make a choice.

The procession entered the stone and plaster city where the streets were a little wider. The news of the approach of the procession ran ahead of it, and the pearl buyers stiffened and grew alert. They had a strategy.

A stout slow man sat in the office. His face was fatherly and benign and he seemed friendly. "Good morning, my friend," said the man. "What can I do for you?" "I have brought a pearl," said Kino.

"Oh, you have a pearl," the dealer said. "Let us see your pearl. We will examine it and give you the best price."

Kino would have to make a choice.

Slowly he brought out the leather bag, and then he let the great pearl roll into the tray, and instantly his eyes went to the buyer's face. Kino held his breath, and the whispering went back through the crowd. "He is inspecting it- They have not mentioned a price yet."

The stout man looked at Kino with a contemptuous smile. "I am sorry to tell you this, my friend," he said, and he shrugged his shoulders a little to indicate that the misfortune was not his fault. "A pearl this large is like fool's gold. It is too large. Who would buy it? There is no market for a pearl like this, I am sorry. You thought it was a thing of value, and it is only a curious novelty."

Kino did not understand. He looked puzzled and worried. "It is the Pearl of the World," he cried. "No one has ever seen such a pearl."

Kino would have to make a choice.

"On the contrary," said the buyer, "it is large and clumsy. As a curiosity it may have some value; some museum might purchase it to place in a collection of seashells. I can give you, say, a thousand pesos."

Kino's face grew sinister and dangerous. "You know the pearl is worth fifty thousand," he said. "You want to cheat me and my family."

"Do not blame me," he said quickly. "I am only an appraiser; I am just estimating the value of the pearl. Ask the others what they think."

The crowd in the doorway wavered and broke and let the three pearl buyers come into the office.

The stout man behind the desk said, "I have put a value on this pearl. The owner here does not think it is a fair price. I ask you to examine it and make an offer. Notice," he said to Kino, "I did not mention the value that I have offered."

The first dealer said, "Do not include me; I will make no offer. I do not want this pearl- it is a monstrosity." The second dealer said, "Better pearls are made of paste. I fear this pearl will lose its color and die in a few months. The third dealer took the pearl from Kino's hands and examined it. "I will make an offer of five hundred pesos."

Kino quickly snatched the pearl from his hand. The man behind the desk said, "What are you doing?" he asked, as Kino forced the pearl out of sight.

Kino would have to make a choice.

"I will not be cheated," Kino cried fiercely. "I will not sell my pearl here. I will go someplace else, perhaps even to the capital."

Now the dealers looked quickly at each other. They knew the pearl was worth much more money than what they offered Kino; they did not offer him a fair price. Their strategy had not worked. One buyer quickly offered Kino 1500 pesos but it was too late; Kino was leaving.

Kino would have to make a choice.

Later, back at the brush house, Kino sat brooding on his sleeping mat. Things seemed hopeless and he heard the dark music of the enemy in his head. Juana watched him with worry. She too heard the Song of Evil but she fought it by singing the song of family softly to Coyotito. Now that it was dark Kino and Juana felt like there were others outside the brush house. They were waiting to steal the great pearl. Kino's right hand went into his shirt and felt his knife; his eyes were wide; he stood up and stepped outside.

Juana heard the grunting and the struggle. Then she heard the blow and she froze with terror. She grabbed a stone from the fireplace and rushed outside, but it was over by then. Kino lay on the ground, struggling to get up.

Juana put her arms around Kino and helped him to his feet and into the house.

Blood oozed down from his scalp and there was a long deep cut in his cheek from his ear to his chin; it was a deep, bleeding slash. Kino was only half conscious. Juana sat him down on his sleeping mat and wiped the blood from his face with her skirt.

"Who was that?" Juana asked.

"I don't know," Kino said. "I couldn't see."

"Kino, my husband," she cried, and his eyes stared past her as he seemed to be losing consciousness. "Kino, can you hear me?"

"I hear you," he said.

"Kino, this pearl is evil. We must destroy it before it destroys us. Let us throw it back in the sea where it belongs. Kino, it is evil, it is evil!"

"No," he said. "I will fight this evil and I will win. We will have our chance at good fortune." His fist pounded the sleeping mat.

"No one shall take it from us," he said.

Kino would have to make a choice.

Chapter 5

It was not yet morning. Kino opened his eyes in the darkness because he sensed movement near him; he did not move. In the pale light of the moon he saw Juana arise silently. He saw her move toward the fireplace and move the stone where Kino had placed the great pearl. And then like a shadow she glided toward the door and was gone.

Kino got up and followed her as silently as she had gone. He could hear her quick footsteps going toward the shore. Quietly he followed her, and his brain was red with anger. Juana realized Kino was following her and she began to run. Her arm was up to throw when Kino grabbed the pearl from her. Kino was furious! He hit Juana with his clenched fist and she fell among the boulders. Juana looked up at Kino and for a moment she thought he might kill her.

Finally, the rage left Kino and he was disgusted with what he had done. He turned away and headed up through the path.

Kino will not give up the great pearl.

Kino heard someone rushing towards him. Greedy fingers went through his clothes, frantic fingers searched him. The pearl was knocked from his hand and landed behind a little stone in the pathway. It shimmered in the soft moonlight. The men continued to struggle until Kino stabbed the stranger with his knife.

Juana was slowly making her way up the path. In the moonlight she saw a glimmer of the great pearl. She thought about going back to the sea and finishing the job but then she saw two dark figures lying ahead on the path. One was Kino and the other a stranger with dark shiny fluid leaking from his throat. Instantly, Juana knew that the old life was gone forever. A dead man in the path and Kino's bloodied knife, beside him, convinced her.

By throwing the great pearl back into the ocean Juana had been trying to rescue something of the old peace, of the time before the pearl. But now it was gone, and there was no retrieving it. There was nothing to do but to try and save themselves.

"They have taken the pearl. Now, it is over," he said.

"Hush," she said. "Here is your pearl. I found it in the path behind a rock. Kino, you have killed a man. The sun will rise soon and we must be gone before the day breaks."

"I was attacked by the man," Kino said uneasily. "I only struck to save my life."

"It will not matter; they will not believe your explanation." Juana said.

Kino will not give up the great pearl.

Kino agreed and told Juana to go and get Coyotito and meet him at their canoe. But when Kino arrived at the canoe he saw that a hole had been knocked into the bottom. Once again, rage arose in Kino. This was an evil beyond thinking; Kino could not conceive of such a thing. Kino felt great sorrow; the killing of a man was not so evil as the killing of a boat. For the fisherman of the brush houses, there was no life without a boat.

Now Kino knew there was only one thing to do. Kino's hand went first to the great pearl in his shirt and then to his knife hidden in his shirt. He must protect his family.

Kino will not give up the great pearl.

He looked up and saw a fierce light burning. It was his brush house. He saw Juana hurry towards him with Coyotito in her arms. "Who?" he demanded, but Juana did not know. Neighbors were peering from their houses, day was breaking and suddenly Kino remembered the dead man lying in the path. Kino drew Juana and Coyotito into the shadows and they worked their way to Kino's brother, Juan Tomas's house.

Kino told Juan Tomas about being attacked and killing a man. "I attribute your bad fortune to the pearl," said Juan Tomas. "There is a devil in this pearl. You should have sold it."

Kino said, "Oh, my brother, this is a catastrophe! My canoe is broken, my house is burned, and there is a dead man in the bush. There is no way to escape. You must hide us, my brother."

"Of course, I will hide you," said Juan Tomas. "The neighbors do not know what has happened to you and your family. I will go divert any suspicions by giving them theories about what has happened to you. I do not want them to think you are still here so I will tell them I think you have gone south along the shore."

Kino will not give up the great pearl.

Kino and his family waited in Juan Tomas's house until nightfall. Juan Tomas and Kino talked about where they would go. Juan Tomas told Kino to avoid the shore. The dead man had been found and the townspeople were forming a search party to look for Kino and his family. Kino said he thought he would go north to a city.

Before the moon rose in the sky Kino, Juana, and Coyotito left quietly in the dark. Kino and Juan Tomas embraced; Juan Tomas wished him well. He asked him one more time if he would give up the pearl but Kino refused.

Kino will not give up the great pearl.

Chapter 6

Juana and Kino gathered their clothing tighter around them and went out into the world. The sky was clear and the stars were cold in a black sky. The two walked carefully, and they avoided the center of the town where someone might see them pass. Kino could feel sand blowing against his ankles and he was glad because he knew there would be no tracks. He went quickly and quietly, and Juana, while carrying Coyotito, trotted behind him to keep up.

The family walked for hours without seeing anyone. They heard coyotes howl and owls screech. Once a large animal lumbered somewhere in the darkness and Kino gripped the handle of his knife and took a sense of protection from it.

When the first signs of dawn came Kino found a clearing to lie in during the day. Juana fed Coyotito while Kino kept watch. They were not near the ocean anymore and the air was hot and dry. Kino and Juana ate corncakes that they had packed. "Will they follow us?" Juana asked. "Do you think they will try to find us?" "They will try," said Kino. "Whoever finds us will try to take the pearl."

The pearl has brought bad things to Kino and Juana.

Kino stared at the great pearl. He thought about the good that the pearl could bring. He and Juana could be married in the church, Coyotito could learn to read. The music of the pearl played in his head. Now Kino also thought of the man lying dead on the path and of Juana with her beaten face and the song of the pearl turned sinister and interwoven with the music of evil.

In the distance he could see three figures. He knew what they were, and a chill of fear came over him. They were the trackers. Kino asked Juana to go and hide, but she would not have it. "No," she said. "We will go with you." "I can go faster alone," he said harshly. They disagreed, but in the end Kino shrugged his shoulders helplessly and they moved on.

The pearl has brought bad things to Kino and Juana.

They moved in zig zags through the country to try and lose the trackers. The sun had passed over the stone mountains when Kino and Juana struggled up the steep broken slope and came to the water. They came wearily to the pool, and Juana sank to her knees and first she washed Coyotito's face and then she filled her bottle and gave the baby a drink. The baby was weary and petulant, and he wept softly. Kino drank long and thirstily at the pool. Far down the slope he could see the two trackers.

"How far away are the trackers?" Juana asked quietly. "I expect that they will be here by evening. We must go west," Kino said. Then he saw a series of little erosion caves. He slipped off his sandals and climbed up to them and he looked into the shallow caves.

They were only a few feet deep, but the sloped slightly downward and back, so Kino knew they could not be seen from the outside and that maybe they would be safe there. Juana sat in the cave entrance and watched Kino. He did not try to erase their tracks in the sand. He made a fake path to try and distract the trackers. "When they go up, we will slip away, down to the lowlands again."

The pearl has brought bad things to Kino and Juana.

The trackers were taking a long time. The two trackers scurried about on the little beach. The man with the rifle sat down and rested himself, and the trackers squatted near him. Kino moved silently back into the cave. "There is a way," he said. "Two of the men are sleeping. If I can get to the one with the rifle, then I will be all right." "It is the only way. They will find us in the morning." Against the sky in the cave entrance Juana could see that Kino was taking off his white clothes. For a moment his body was invisible in the cave entrance. One second, he was crouched and silent, and then he was gone. Juana moved to the entrance of the cave and looked out.

Kino was very careful. For any sound, a rolling pebble or a sigh, or the sound of flesh on rock, might alarm the trackers.

They would notice any sound that was not germane, or out of place, to the night. But the night was not silent, the sound of frogs and the ringing of cicadas filled the air. Kino crept as silently as a shadow down the smooth mountain face. He knew that he was not invisible. If the tracker with the rifle looked at the dark place against the stone which was his body, he could see him. It took him a long time to reach the bottom where he crouched behind a little dwarf palm. Only twenty feet separated him from the enemy now. The moon would rise in a few moments now. There could be no waiting now; when the tracker turned his head, Kino must attack.

Suddenly, the tracker heard a little cry. It was Coyotito but the tracker couldn't tell for sure if it was a human baby or a coyote. The tracker was about to fire his rifle to scare any coyotes away when Kino leapt at him. The gun went off and the barrel-flash made a picture on Kino's eyes. Kino swung his knife and it bit through neck and deep into chest of the tracker. Kino grabbed the rifle as he wrenched his knife free.

He whirled and struck the head of the seated man. The third man scrambled away. But Kino aimed deliberately and fired. He saw his enemy tumble backward.

The pearl has brought bad things to Kino and Juana.

Then Kino stood. Something was wrong. He knew the sound- the rising hysterical cry from the little cave where he had left Juana and Coyotito. It was the cry of death.

The pearl has brought bad things to Kino and Juana.

Everyone remembers the return of the family. It was late in the golden afternoon when Kino and Juana walked side by side into town. Kino had a rifle across his arm. Juana, with a faraway look on her face, carried a small limp bundle in her shawl like a sack over her shoulder. Juana fought hard to hold back the sadness over the loss of Coyotito. The things that had happened to Kino and Juana did not seem real; the two had gone through pain and had come out on the other side. The people that had rushed to see them stepped back and did not speak to them. Kino and Juana walked through the city as though it were not there, staring straight ahead.

When they came to the water, Kino held the great pearl in his hand. He saw the evil that the pearl had brought.

He saw the face of the dead man in the path and he saw his son, Coyotito, who had been shot and killed by the trackers. The pearl was ugly and gray. Kino's hand shook a little, and he turned slowly to Juana and held the pearl out to her. Juana looked into Kino's eyes and said softly, "No, you." And Kino drew back his arm and flung the pearl back into the ocean with all his strength. Kino and Juana watched it go, glimmering under the setting sun.