



PENGUIN ACTIVE READING

LEVEL 3

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The Pearl

John Steinbeck





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Level 3

Retold by Gregory McElwain

Series Editors: Andy Hopkins and Jocelyn Potter

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1.1 What's the book about?

1 Look at the cover of the book and talk about the picture. What do you think?

- a Where does this family live?
- b How do they earn money to live?
- c Will the pearl be important to them?

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

3 Discuss these questions.

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

1.2 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.

- 1 The scorpion will fall
 - a onto the floor.
 - b onto the baby.
- 2 The parents will kill the scorpion
 - a before it bites the baby.
 - b after it bites the baby.
- 3 A doctor from the rich part of town
 - a will help the baby.
 - b 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 /'fɪʃə-mən/ (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

Kino 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.



Its tail stood suddenly straight up. Then the laughing Coyotito shook the rope, and the scorpion fell.

Kino tried to catch it, but it fell past his fingers, fell on the baby's shoulder, landed, and bit. Then Kino had it in his fingers, threw it down, and killed it with his foot. The Song of the Enemy was in his ears, and Coyotito screamed with pain.

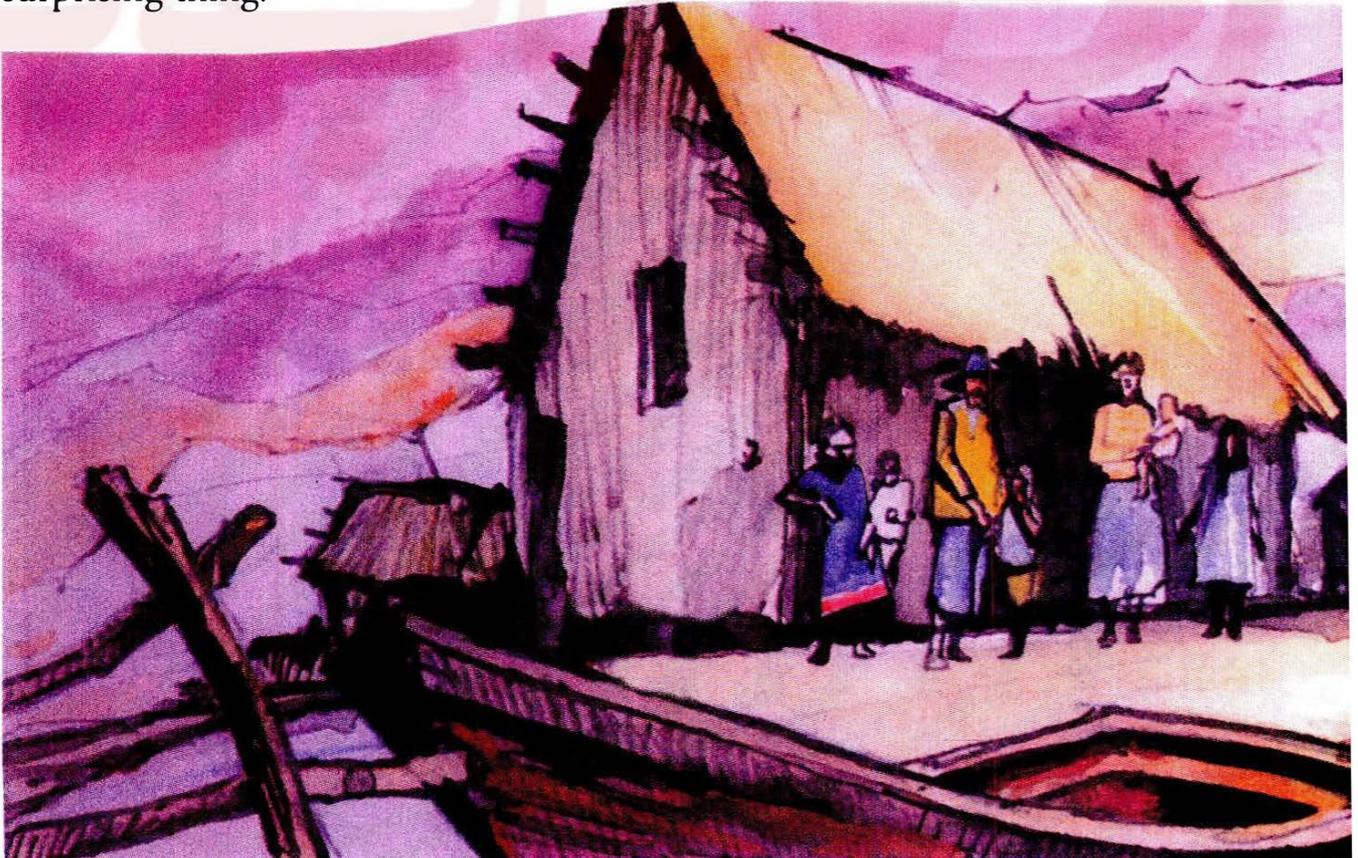
But Juana had the baby in her arms now. She found the bite—it was already red—and she put her mouth down to it. She tried to get the **poison** out, as Coyotito screamed.

Kino stood near his wife and son. He could do nothing, he was in the way.

The screams of the baby brought the neighbors. Kino's brother Juan Tomás and his fat wife Apolonia and their four children crowded in the door, while others behind them tried to look in. And the people in front passed the news back to the people behind: "Scorpion. The baby was bitten by a scorpion."

Juana lifted her mouth from the bite. The little hole was larger now, and the place around it was red and hard. And all of these people knew about scorpions. Their bites made adults very sick, but babies died from their poison.

Juana was a quiet, patient woman who did not cry with the pain of childbirth. When she was tired and hungry, she said nothing. But now she did a surprising thing.



poison /'pɔɪzən/ (n) something dangerous that can kill people; there are *poisons*, for example, in some plants and in the bites of some animals

Kino found the pearl. This was like winning a large amount of money.

1 Work in a small group. You are all in the same family. You need a small piece of paper for each person in the group. Draw a cross on one piece. Each person then takes a piece without looking at it. The person with the cross has won \$10,000,000. How will their life change? How will all your lives change? Discuss this with the winner.

2 Read this information about people who have won a lot of money. Then discuss these questions:

- a What will be your biggest fear if you win a lot of money?
- b What five things will you buy?
- c Who will you give money to?

Winner Is Robbed at Home

A 27-year-old man won \$15,000,000 only two weeks ago. Yesterday four men with guns broke into his house in Chicago, took him into the kitchen, and asked for money.

His wife was upstairs and called the police. But she escaped before the police came. They took pearls, paintings, and money. The man's three small children were all upstairs asleep at the time.

"I have never been so afraid," the man said. "My win has changed our lives."



Top Three Things Bought by Winners in the United States

- 1 a house
- 2 a car
- 3 a holiday

FACT

1 in 7 winners of \$10,000,000 or more gives \$1,000,000 or more to people in their family or to friends.

- 3 Use the Internet. Find out about someone who has won a lot of money in your country. Write the information in this table.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Name: | |
| Age: | |
| Amount won: | |
| Good news: | |
| Bad news: | |

- 4 With your group, write five questions for people who have won a lot of money. Write three or four possible answers, like this:

What will you do with the money?

a spend some, save some, give some away

b spend it all

c save it all

d give it all away

- 5 Everyone in the class should imagine that they are winners. Ask at least ten people your questions and note their answers.

Notes:

Project *Too Much Money?*

- 6 What did you find out? Look at the answers that your group was given. What does the information tell you? Write a report and then read it to the class.

Example:

We interviewed fifteen people. Eight people think that a lot of money will make their lives better. Six people think that it will destroy their lives. One wasn't sure.

Report

The Pearl

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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1200 headwords
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