

THE BLACK PEARL

LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

SCOTT O'DELL

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

GUIDE WRITTEN BY KATHY S. SMITH

SYNOPSIS

Ramon Salazar, age sixteen, lives in the town of El Paz, Mexico, on the Baja California peninsula with his father, mother, and two sisters. Ramon's father, Blas, owns a pearling fleet and also deals in pearls. On his sixteenth birthday, Ramon becomes his father's partner; Ramon's pride in this event is tempered by having to stay in the office rather than learn to dive for the pearls themselves. When Ramon is finally permitted to go out with the fleet, he is allowed only to pull up the baskets and sink stones.

One of the Salazar divers, a young man named Gaspar Ruiz, claims to come from Seville in Spain, so is called the Sevillano. This Ruiz is the finest diver on the Vermilion Sea but is also a braggart about his many daring exploits around the world. Ruiz taunts Ramon about being the son of a rich man, a boy who will never do much in life, suited only for child's work. Blas Salazar warns his son to beware the Sevillano, for he is a liar—his travels are all fiction—and he is dangerous—he has been in many fights, one fatal. Goaded by Ruiz but forced to remain silent, Ramon develops a dream: he will bravely, tirelessly dive in a secret lagoon and find a monstrous pearl that will astonish and outdo the Sevillano. Amazingly, admittedly improbably, this is exactly what happens.

Ramon persuades an old Indian, Soto Luzon, to teach him to dive for pearls in the old man's lagoon. Luzon warns Ramon as they paddle in that the legendary Manta Diablo lives in the lagoon, in a big cave. This enormous devilfish is known to all in La Paz, half legend and half real, a bogeyman called upon by mother's disciplining unruly children, an incarnation of evil. Luzon explains to Ramon that the Manta is told of all that happens in the lagoon by his friends the other fishes; El Diablo, some say, seeks out and destroys those who have done him wrong. Luzon, like his father and grandfather before him, keeps a pact with the Manta Diablo: the old man treats the fish with respect, and the fish allows Luzon to dive for the black pearls in the lagoon.

For several days, Luzon teaches Ramon to dive. On the fourth day, Ramon goes out alone, dives into El Diablo's cave itself, and removes an enormous oyster. Ramon discovers within the shell a gigantic black gem, the Pearl of Heaven. Together Ramon and Luzon paddle toward La Paz. A giant ray follows and overturns the canoe, but the two men make it to shore with the pearl. Luzon now warns Ramon that the Manta Diablo will not rest until it gets the pearl back; Luzon will have nothing further to do with the gem.

In La Paz, Ramon shows the pearl to his father, who is astounded and who then exhibits the gem to the equally enthralled townspeople. When La Paz's other pearl dealers refuse to meet Salazar's price, Blas summons the village priest, Father Gallardo, and grandly presents the great pearl to him for the Madonna of the Sea, patron of the local church. Ramon's mother bewails the loss of the pearl, but Blas Salazar declares that because of the gift, "the House of Salazar shall be favored in Heaven, now and forever."

Five days later, a multitude fills La Paz to celebrate the gift, which now resides in the outstretched hand of the statue of the Madonna, and to witness the blessing of the Salazar boats. The next morning, the fleet headed by Blas Salazar leaves for the pearling grounds. A violent storm, the chubasco, comes up that night; the entire fleet is lost, save a single survivor—Gaspar Ruiz, the Sevillano.

Ramon, recalling and half-believing the warnings of Luzon, takes the pearl from the Madonna's hand and sets out for the lagoon to return the treasure to the Manta Diablo. The Sevillano sees and follows Ramon; he seizes the pearl from the boy and forces Ramon to sail with him toward Guaymas to sell the pearl. But the Manta Diablo follows them for two nights and two days. Ramon reveals to the Sevillano his belief that El Diablo is waiting for them to return the pearl. Scoffing, Ruiz declares that the fleet was lost not because of the Manta's anger but because of Blas Salazar's overweening pride about the gift of the pearl to the Madonna; overconfident of God's protection, Ramon's father refused to take shelter when the storm came up.

The Manta Diablo continues doggedly shadowing the boat. Angered, the Sevillano harpoons the creature, then—after being towed for hours—leaps on the manta's back and delivers a fatal knife thrust. The tow rope snaps and binds the Sevillano to the Manta Diablo's back. Together they disappear beneath the sea.

Ramon returns to La Paz just before daybreak and secretly places the Pearl of Heaven in the Madonna's hand. This time it is "a gift of adoration, a gift of love." Today, Ramon reflects, is the true beginning of his manhood.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Scott O'Dell (1903-), a professional writer since 1934, was born and raised in Los Angeles, when it was still, in the author's words, a sort of "frontier town." During part of his childhood O'Dell lived on the Pacific Coast—in San Pedro and on Rattlesnake Island—where he and his friends paddled out to Dead Man's Island, searching for abalones and devilfish.

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Memories of those times went into *The Black Pearl* (1967) as well as the Newbery Award-winning *Island of the Blue Dolphins* (1960) and other novels for young readers.

After a stint as a movie cameraman and a Los Angeles newspaper book editor, O'Dell began writing for adults and switched to juvenile literature ten years later. His other juvenile fiction includes *The King's Fifth* (1966) and *Sing Down the Moon* (1970), both Newbery Honor Books, and *Alexandra, 290*, and *Zia*. In 1972 O'Dell won the Hans Christian Andersen award for his contribution to children's literature.

CRITICS' CORNER

The Black Pearl was named an ALA Notable Book, a Newbery Honor Book, and a *School Library Journal* Best Book of the Year. Critics praised O'Dell's writing style—simple, rhythmic, powerful—as well as the narrative's suspense, drama, atmosphere, and tempo. Representative critics' comments include these:

"An absorbing story . . . The . . . characters . . . all have the air of authenticity evoked by the story-teller's suspenseful, cadenced prose . . . The text [has the] dignity and power to hold readers of all ages." (*The New York Times Book Review*, 11/5/67)

"A hauntingly memorable [tale] told in an effectively spare and dramatic style." (*The Booklist*, 12/1/67)

"A rousing adventure tale with supernatural overtones and beautifully maintained tempo and suspense." (*Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, 12/67)

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the themes of pride, humility, and greed through the reactions of Blas Salazar, Ramon, and the Sevillano toward the pearl.
2. To examine the nature of both superstition and religious belief, the ways in which they are similar and different, and the ways in which they may support or conflict with reason.
3. To analyze Ramon's development from boy to young man through the effects of the pearl's discovery.
4. To study the concepts of good and evil and the ways in which the conflict between them can be used to create effective fiction.
5. To discuss the nature of dreams and the personal qualities and commitments required to fulfill them.
6. To analyze the dramatic and stylistic elements that cause this novel to be called "legendlike."

MEANING STUDY

Below are words or phrases that have a particular meaning in the novel. Explain each as it relates to the book. Use the page numbers given in parentheses to reread the term in context if you wish.

1. carat (pp. 13, 43), flaw (p. 48)
(A carat is the unit of weight used to measure gemstones, equivalent to 200 milligrams, or about 3 grains

of troy or avoirdupois weight [a system of weights and measures based on one lb. containing 16 ozs. or 7000 grains and equal to 453.59 grams]. Ramon assesses pearls partly on the basis of their weight in carats—one that Luzon brings in is 2½ carats, for example, while the Great Pearl is 62.3 carats. Pearls are also judged on the basis of shape, color, luster, and the presence or absence of flaws—imperfections that may run deep into the pearl, rendering it worthless, or may be on or near the surface and can be peeled away, like the flaw on the Pearl of Heaven.)

2. the Sevillano (p. 19)
(Nickname for Gaspar Ruiz, the best pearl diver in the fleet. Ruiz claims to come from Seville in Spain; hence the nickname. Ruiz also brags of his many exploits in Spain and other far-flung corners of the world. In fact, Ramon's father reveals, Ruiz is no Sevillano—he is a native of a nearby town, Culliacán, and has never been away from the Baja area.)
3. Madonna, Virgin (p. 16), Madre de Dios (p. 40)
(All refer to the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ ("Mother of God"). Mary is revered by Roman Catholics; Catholicism teaches that, upon her death, Mary ascended body and soul into heaven. Prayers are frequently directed to Mary as a powerful interceder, and many Catholic churches are dedicated to Mary, as the local church in La Paz is. The statue of the Madonna is a representation of that dedication and the people's devotion to Mary and their belief in her powers.)
4. blessing of the fleet (p. 58)
(An old fishing custom in which the local priest (or minister, or other holy person) bestows a blessing in the name of the deity on the boats and men about to depart, as protection and for a bountiful catch. Mr. Salazar arranges for the statue of the Madonna to be carried from the church to the beach and for Father Gallardo to stand beside her and bless the Salazar fleet just before they set off for the pearling grounds. The blessing becomes a supreme irony, as the entire fleet is lost in the subsequent chubasco.)
5. burro clam (pp. 22, 35)
(Both the Sevillano and Soto Luzon caution Ramon to beware of the giant burro clam when diving for pearls. A clam has two shells that open and close by means of powerful muscles. The opened shells of a burro clam may resemble a crevice, the experienced divers warn; a pearl diver who reaches inside may find his arm tightly clamped by a burro. Unable to free himself, the diver will drown.)
6. lagoon (p. 28)
(A lagoon is a body of relatively shallow, quiet water separated from the sea by sandbars, barrier islands, or coral reefs. One or more narrow openings connect the lagoon to the sea; the water level in the lagoon rises and falls with the tides. Currents may be strong near the inlets. Coastal lagoons like the one on which

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Soto Luzon lives make up about 13 percent of the world's coastline.)

7. peso (pp. 28, 52)
(A silver and copper coin, and a monetary unit, of Mexico, equal to 100 centavos. At the time the novel was written, the peso was worth about 8¢ in U.S. money. Blas Salazar demanded 20,000 pesos from the dealers for the Pearl of Heaven, or about \$1600.)
8. sink stone (p. 21)
(Pearl divers use a heavy "sink" stone to counteract the body's natural buoyancy; carrying the stone when they slip overboard, divers descend rapidly to the bottom. The energy and oxygen they would otherwise have expended in propelling themselves to the bottom can be employed instead in the search for oysters. Ramon's job when he goes out with the fleet is to draw up the baskets full of shells and the sink stones as each man completes his dive.)
9. fathom (p. 34), league (p. 31), furlong (p. 24)
(All are measures of distance: a fathom is a unit of length equal to six feet (the span of a man's outstretched arms), commonly used in nautical measurements; a league is a unit of distance that varies from country to country, about 3 miles; a furlong is another unit of distance, equal to 220 yards or $\frac{1}{8}$ mile. Ramon uses these terms rather than the U.S. measures that are more common to us.)
10. chubasco (p. 63), coromuel (p. 62)
(The coromuel is a land breeze that blows from the south in the Baja area in winter and early spring. It starts, as in the novel, in the evening, usually dying away by midmorning. The chubasco, in contrast, is a violent squall that comes up over the sea. It is common on the Pacific Coast of Central America during the rainy season.)

COMPREHENSION STUDY

1. Why does Ramon dive for the pearl?
(Ramon has eagerly anticipated his sixteenth birthday, when his father has promised to teach him how to dive. But when he reaches sixteen, Ramon is thwarted: his father makes him a partner and teaches him the business of pearl dealing instead. When Ramon finally is allowed to go out with the fleet, he must stay aboard and haul up the baskets and sink stones rather than dive. Ramon is taunted by Gaspar Ruiz, the Sevillano, for all this. Ruiz pointedly boasts of his many daring exploits in contrast.
Ramon suffers the insults silently and counters them with a childish dream: He will boldly, tirelessly dive and come up with a gigantic pearl that will astonish the Sevillano and far outshine any of that man's supposed accomplishments. When Ramon finds the opportunity to dive for such a pearl in Soto Luzon's lagoon, he seizes it.)
2. Give a brief character description of [a] Ramon; [b] Blas Salazar; [c] Gaspar Ruiz, the Sevillano; [d] Soto Luzon.
([a] Ramon is honest and sincere; still young, he matures to adulthood through the events of the novel. Ramon demonstrates courage in his confrontations with the Manta Diablo and the Sevillano. He develops a quiet pride and a sincere religious reverence.
[b] Blas Salazar, Ramon's father, is stern and self-reliant, accustomed to being in charge, being obeyed, and being treated with respect. His pride in his strength and size and in his success in life is untempered by honest humility; coupled with stubbornness, his pride proves to be his downfall.
[c] Gaspar Ruiz is an unscrupulous braggart; the pride he takes in his genuine skill as a diver is tarnished by his false boasting. Quick to take offense, Ruiz is a brawler willing to kill. The Sevillano is greedy and cynical and does not hesitate to steal the pearl. He is also brave (or cockily overconfident of his prowess) as he fights the Manta Diablo to the death.
[d] Soto Luzon is a skilled Indian diver, strong, with great endurance. He works hard to support his family and lives simply and peacefully in his remote lagoon. He is also profoundly superstitious (in Ramon's view) or spiritually respectful (in his own eyes) toward the Manta Diablo.)
3. What superstitions do the people of La Paz hold about the Manta Diablo?
(The people believe the Manta used to be an evil, destructive dragonlike creature that was banished from the land to the sea more than a century ago by Father Linares. They call upon the Manta Diablo to punish evildoers and disobedient children alike. Some say the creature seeks out its enemies and assumes different forms to revenge itself on them. The Indians, like Luzon, believe the Manta is accompanied by a red mist, lives in Luzon's lagoon, and has many fish friends who tell him all that happens in the sea. Luzon believes that the Manta allows him to dive in the lagoon, but that because the Pearl of Heaven is from the Manta's own cave, El Diablo will not rest until it gets the pearl back.)
4. Why did Blas Salazar's gift of the pearl to the Madonna fail to protect the Salazar fleet?
(One argument is that you cannot affect natural events such as the coming of a storm by gifts to a church or deity. In the novel's context, the reason the gift did not secure heavenly protection lies in Blas Salazar's pride, his hubris. Salazar gives the pearl to the Madonna to spite the dealers; he offers not with humility but with swollen pride. He even has the temerity to speak boastfully for God Himself: "The House of Salazar shall be favored in Heaven, now and forever." This overweening pride leads Salazar to decide the fleet can make it to port ahead of the storm; he assumes he has God's protection. Such

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mortal assumption of invincibility—sinful pride—is often punished in legend and story.)

5. Explain Ramon's statement after returning the pearl to the Madonna: "This day was the beginning day of manhood . . . not the day I became a partner in the House of Salazar nor the day I found the Pearl of Heaven."

(Although becoming a partner in the family business is a sign of manhood, Ramon is simultaneously made to feel like a boy when his father tells him to put down his cuffs so no one will see his boyishly thin wrists. Also, Ramon is not yet allowed to dive with the men. Finding the Pearl of Heaven takes some manly diving but is also a matter of luck and inspired by a foolish, childish dream. The life-and-death struggle with the Sevillano and the Manta Diablo, however, is a profound, maturing experience. Surviving this symbolic confrontation with the evil of life—its power and its beauty—and this real confrontation with death, Ramon emerges a man. It is with pure, mature understanding that Ramon bestows the pearl on the Madonna, untainted by his earlier childish desire to impress the Sevillano or his father's equally childish pride: "This is now a gift of adoration, a gift of love.")

6. What is the meaning and significance of the name Manta Diablo?

(Not only is the creature a devilfish [also called a manta ray], it is specifically the Devil Manta—twice a devil, terrifying in its immense size and power. Being a devil, it embodies evil. Once, like various shapes of the Devil of Christianity, it had a forked tongue and claws, roamed the land, and turned the air foul. Now it lives beneath the sea, like the evil side of human nature, submerged but regularly surfacing, revealing power and beauty along with destruction, revenge, and death. Like the Devil, the Manta seeks out those who anger or thwart it; it destroys those of sinful nature and impure motives, like Ruiz and Salazar.)

7. What technique does the author use to establish and maintain suspense from the very beginning of the narrative?

(The author teases us by immediately referring to the two dramatic highlights of the tale. In the opening paragraph, the narrator Ramon reveals that the only person other than himself who has seen the legendary Manta Diablo is now dead. We immediately wonder what the creature is, how Ramon survived, why and how the other person died. In the last paragraph of the opening chapter, the author teases us again by referring to the event we now want to know more about—"the three of us there on the quiet sea in a struggle of death"—but adding that we must wait and first find out about the Pearl of Heaven. Again our interest is sparked: What is this Pearl of Heaven? How was it found? Who found it? How is it related to the "struggle of death?" After

these three short pages, we're hooked; we must read on.)

8. Explain the ways in which this is a tale of good vs. evil. *(On the human level, Ramon—honest and sincere—clashes with Gaspar Ruiz, the Sevillano—greedy, unscrupulous, untruthful. Ramon secures the pearl through honest effort and does not brag of his prowess in doing so; he makes a sincere effort to do what he thinks is right with the pearl. Ruiz boasts of invented exploits and then steals the pearl for his own selfish gain. In the final confrontation, the evil Ruiz dies and Ramon emerges unscathed.*

On the religious/supernatural level, possession of the pearl balances between the Madonna—pure, a representation of love and humility—and the Manta Diablo—evil embodied, the symbolic and literal Devil. When Blas Salazar gives the pearl to the Madonna through selfish rather than altruistic motives, the fleet is lost and Ramon takes the pearl away from the Madonna to return to the Devil Manta. Ironically, El Diablo's human counterpart, the Sevillano, thwarts Ramon's effort. But fish and man kill each other—evil destroying itself—and goodness triumphs: Ramon once again has the pearl and presents it in pure love to the Madonna.)

9. Imitating the author's narrative style, write a first-person account of the storm and the destruction of the fleet.

(Accounts will vary, but should incorporate some of the hallmarks of the author's style: simple, cadenced narrative; suspenseful, dramatic mood with legendlike and supernatural overtones.)

10. What is your interpretation of the Manta Diablo and the finding of the Great Pearl? Did the Manta cause the sinking of the fleet? Was the Manta really determined to get back the pearl?

(Answers will vary.)

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Create a poster or illustrated booklet telling about the various kinds of devilfish, or manta rays. Include information on size, range, habitat, food, physical characteristics, and so on.
2. Using a Spanish dictionary and/or encyclopedia, explain the meaning of at least fifteen of the Spanish words and names used in the novel.
3. Be ready to participate in a class discussion of the similarities between this book and *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck, *Moby Dick* by Herman Melville, and *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway.
4. Trace or draw a map of Baja California and the surrounding areas of Mexico and locate on it the places mentioned in the novel; put real places in their actual

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locations, and put fictional places where you think they best belong.

5. Prepare a written or oral report on pearls and the pearling industry. Include information on types of pearls and pearling grounds, methods of gathering pearls, and standards used to establish a pearl's value.
6. Describe some of the appearances and manifestations of the Virgin Mary reported by believers throughout the centuries since her death.
7. As a class project, collect as many superstitions and beliefs connected with fishing, including pearl diving, as you can find. Share all findings with the entire class.

TEACHING NOTES

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VOCABULARY TEST

Match each underlined word with its meaning listed below. Write the number of the appropriate meaning in the space next to the sentence number.

- _____ 1. My grandfather was the most learned man in our town.
- _____ 2. They even came by canoe from the bare islands of the Vermillion Sea.
- _____ 3. Being so big himself, he did not like to think that his son was puny.
- _____ 4. While he held his arms outstretched in benediction we knelt and bowed our heads.
- _____ 5. She stood calmly in her niche fashioned of seashells.
- _____ 6. "Besides, there will be tears and lamentations, which are poor heralds for a voyage."
- _____ 7. "It is from the infidel blood of Moors and Berbers."
- _____ 8. Yet I had not forgotten the encounter nor, I am sure, had he.
- _____ 9. I felt that he was trying to goad me into saying something.
- _____ 10. Then he took the knife from his belt and thrust it into the crevice.
- _____ 11. "Today I would be a rich man if it had not founded in a bad storm."
- _____ 12. Furiously he paddled and the canoe leaped forward.
- _____ 13. News of the monstrous pearl had spread through the town.
- _____ 14. "The Paragon of Pearls. The great Pearl of Heaven."
- _____ 15. His eyes were the color of amber and flecked with black spots.
- _____ 16. "Still, with a mere flip of a fin they can send you into eternity."
- _____ 17. "You had best not molest him."
- _____ 18. Again I heard the old man's voice, speaking his solemn admonition.
- _____ 19. Los Muertos is barren like all the islands of our Vermillion Sea.
- _____ 20. Majestically he swam on ahead of us.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|----------|------------------|
| a. wall indentation | f. forever | k. sank | p. lifeless |
| b. unequalled thing | g. unbeliever | l. weak | q. confrontation |
| c. narrow opening | h. blessing | m. wise | r. frantically |
| d. orange yellow | i. warning | n. huge | s. wailing |
| e. bright red | j. grandly | o. annoy | t. provoke |

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COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

Match each statement with the appropriate character in the list below. Write the letter of your answer in the space provided next to the statement number.

- _____ 1. A very dangerous man.
- _____ 2. The new partner in Salazar and Son.
- _____ 3. Teaches Ramon to dive for pearls.
- _____ 4. Has the face of a child, with broad Indian cheeks and almond-shaped eyes.
- _____ 5. Always visits the Madonna before the fleet sails and after it returns safely.
- _____ 6. Laments the gift of the pearl to the church.
- _____ 7. Handsome, golden-haired, and the best pearl diver in the fleet.
- _____ 8. Warns Ramon that the Manta Diablo will not rest until the pearl is returned.
- _____ 9. Blesses the fleet and asks that the House of Salazar be blessed also.
- _____ 10. Lives in a cave in the lagoon.
- _____ 11. A fat, bald pearl dealer.
- _____ 12. Small for his age and thin.
- _____ 13. Holds the pearl in her outstretched hand.
- _____ 14. Removes the flaw from the Great Pearl.
- _____ 15. Follows Ramon to the lagoon.

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Mrs. Salazar | d. Señor Palomares | g. the Madonna |
| b. Blas Salazar | e. Soto Luzon | h. the Manta Diablo |
| c. Ramon Salazar | f. Father Gallardo | i. Gaspar Ruiz, the Sevillano |

Part II: Matching Quotations (20 points)

Match parts of quotations. Write the letter of the quotation's ending in the space provided next to the quotation's beginning.

- _____ 1. "Every week a great pearl is found,
- _____ 2. "Ramon, if you do this thing again
- _____ 3. "You are the son of a rich man and you live in a big house and you eat good food
- _____ 4. "Also, that he has had many fights in Culiacán,
- _____ 5. "When the mist goes,
- _____ 6. "It is also said that he takes the shape of a human
- _____ 7. "If you cut the pearl,
- _____ 8. "You gave the great pearl
- _____ 9. "The pearl belongs to the Manta Diablo
- _____ 10. "We can wait for an hour or for a day,

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COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Quotation Identification (20 points)

Which characters make the following statements? Write the letter of your answer in the space provided next to the statement number.

- _____ 1. "Ramon, put down your cuffs."
- _____ 2. "I cannot go because I fear the Manta Diablo."
- _____ 3. "You will teach me to dive and I will look for the big one and when I find it I will pay you what it is worth."
- _____ 4. "I have killed nine mantas."
- _____ 5. "The House of Salazar shall be favored in Heaven, now and forever."
- _____ 6. "It is as I feared, more like a grapefruit than a pearl!"
- _____ 7. "The pearl belongs to you. I did not find it and it is not mine."
- _____ 8. "The Madonna has many pearls. You could have given her a smaller one."
- _____ 9. "The Madonna has watched over the fleet, and it is safe."
- _____ 10. "Lost. The fleet is lost."

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| a. Mrs. Salazar | c. Ramon Salazar | e. Gaspar Ruiz, the Sevillano | g. Señor Palomares |
| b. Blas Salazar | d. Manta Diablo | f. Soto Luzon | h. Father Gallardo |

Part II: Fill-In (30 points)

Write a word in each blank to make each statement true.

1. Ramon and his father call the boy's find the Pearl of _____.
2. Gaspar Ruiz claims to come from _____ in Spain.
3. Ramon lives in the town of _____.
4. Luzon knows El Diablo has left the lagoon when the _____ is also gone.
5. Both Gaspar Ruiz and Soto Luzon warn Ramon to beware of the _____ clam while diving.
6. Ramon finds the pearl inside an enormous _____ from the Manta's cave.
7. The peninsula of land where Ramon lives is called _____ California.
8. The Great Pearl weighs 62.3 _____.
9. Blas Salazar demands _____ pesos for the pearl from the dealers.
10. The fleet is lost during a violent storm called a _____.
11. Across his shoulders, the Sevillano has a tattoo showing him fighting an _____ with twelve tentacles.
12. The Manta Diablo tows the boat directly toward the island of Los _____.
13. Ramon gives the pearl to the Madonna as an act of _____.
14. Ramon's town lies on the _____ Sea.
15. The Sevillano, standing in the boat, strikes the Manta Diablo with a _____.

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Part III: True/False (20 points)

Mark each statement either **T** for true or **F** if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Father Linares banished the Manta Diablo from the land to the sea many years ago.
- _____ 2. Soto Luzon is an Indian.
- _____ 3. Ramon is an only child.
- _____ 4. The Sevillano believes Luzon's warnings about the Manta Diablo.
- _____ 5. Ramon began diving with his father when he was six years old.
- _____ 6. Ramon goes directly into the Manta Diablo's cave to find the pearl.
- _____ 7. Father Gallardo is confident the Madonna will protect the fleet.
- _____ 8. The Sevillano asks for the Madonna's blessing before diving for pearls.
- _____ 9. Although the dealers meet his price, Blas Salazar decides to give the pearl to the church anyway.
- _____ 10. Blas Salazar is able to peel away the pearl's flaw.

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

1. Describe the Madonna in La Paz's church.

2. What happens from the time Ramon removes the pearl from the church to when he returns it?

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VOCABULARY TEST ANSWER KEY

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. m | 6. s | 11. k | 16. f |
| 2. e | 7. g | 12. r | 17. o |
| 3. l | 8. q | 13. n | 18. i |
| 4. h | 9. t | 14. b | 19. p |
| 5. a | 10. c | 15. d | 20. j |

COMPREHENSION TEST A ANSWER KEY

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. i | 6. a | 11. d |
| 2. c | 7. i | 12. c |
| 3. e | 8. e | 13. g |
| 4. g | 9. f | 14. b |
| 5. b | 10. h | 15. i |

Part II: Matching Quotations (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. d | 6. e |
| 2. j | 7. a |
| 3. g | 8. h |
| 4. c | 9. b |
| 5. i | 10. f |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. T |
| 3. F | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

1. The Manta Diablo has amber eyes flecked with black spots that seem to fix on Ramon; it has no teeth above and one set of dull, very white teeth below. It has a white underside, a long tail that can flip a boat effortlessly, and huge black fins that measure ten paces across. It resembles a giant bat and probably weighs more than two tons.
2. Luzon teaches Ramon to dive: how to "take the wind;" how to use a sink stone and keep the stone's rope looped around one foot, how to step and reach carefully to avoid burro clams, how to walk on the bottom without stirring up mud, how to pry loose the oysters, and how to open them and search them for pearls. Ramon also learns from

Luzon to respect the power of the Manta Diablo and to consider the possibility of supernatural forces at work in nature.

COMPREHENSION TEST B ANSWER KEY

Part I: Quotation Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. g |
| 2. f | 7. f |
| 3. c | 8. a |
| 4. e | 9. h |
| 5. b | 10. e |

Part II: Fill-in (30 points)

- | | | |
|-------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 1. Heaven | 6. oyster | 11. octopus |
| 2. Seville | 7. Baja | 12. Muertos |
| 3. La Paz | 8. carats | 13. love, adoration |
| 4. red mist | 9. 20,000 | 14. Vermillion |
| 5. burro | 10. chubasco | 15. harpoon |

Part III: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. T |
| 3. F | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. F |
| 5. F | 10. T |

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

1. The statue of the Madonna stands in a niche made of seashells. She has the face of a child but is really a young woman with a combination of Indian and Spanish features. She has the broad golden cheeks of an Indian and the large almond-shaped eyes of a Castilian. Usually the Madonna is dressed in white velvet, but for the celebration she wears a white satin gown with garlands of daisies braided through her hair. The Madonna smiles sweetly, and in her outstretched hand holds the black pearl.
2. After he takes the pearl, Ramon goes home. That night, Ramon borrows a boat and goes to the lagoon. There, he finds the Sevillano waiting for him. When Ramon throws the pearl toward the Manta's cave, Ruiz retrieves it and then forces Ramon to row and sail with him toward the city of Guaymas, where they will sell the pearl. They travel all next day. That night, Ramon sees the Manta Diablo following them. In the morning, the

THE BLACK PEARL

Manta swamps the boat and Ruiz and Ramon are forced to land on the island of Los Muertos to empty the boat. Chased away by hostile Indians, they continue toward Guaymas. The following day, harassed by the Manta, the Sevillano harpoons the devilfish, which tows the boat back toward Los Muertos. Ruiz then leaps on the Manta's back and delivers a fatal knife thrust to the creature; however, the tow line snaps and wraps around the Sevillano, who is carried beneath the sea with the dying Manta. Ramon returns to La Paz and, just before daybreak, secretly replaces the pearl in the Madonna's outstretched hand.

TEACHING NOTES



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