



The Big Wave Study Guide

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*For the novel by
Pearl S. Buck*



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Synopsis

Kino is a young Japanese boy who lives on a farm high on a mountainside. His best friend, Jiya, lives below in the fishing village at the seashore. Life is filled with hard work and fun moments with his friend. Then the unthinkable happens, and a great tsunami wave changes their lives forever. Jiya's family and village are destroyed, and it takes Jiya many years to overcome his loss and learn that life is stronger than death, we are brave because we must be, and there is much in this life that is wonderful.

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8. Occasionally, Kino got to go fishing with Jiya and Jiya's father. How does Kino describe the experience?

A *simile* is a figure of speech used to describe something through comparison. A simile uses words such as *like* or *as* to indicate that a comparison is taking place. (For example: The carpet was green *like* moss.) Which part of Kino's description is a simile?

Thinking About the Story:

9. Kino would like to stay overnight on the island, but Jiya is never willing. Why?
10. *Personification* is a figure of speech in which an author attributes human qualities to an object, an animal, or an idea; in other words, the author makes something act like a person. Examine Jiya's description of the "old ocean god" and Jiya's idea of why the sea moves and storms. How does Jiya personify the ocean?
11. When they swim back from the island, Jiya's father is waiting. What about this makes Kino wonder?

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15. Read Psalm 23, John 14:1–6, and Romans 8:38–39. What do these verses tell us? Why, then, as Christians, should we not fear death?

16. Both Jiya and his father watch the sea anxiously. What does it mean to be anxious? Read Matthew 6:25–34. What do these verses teach us? How would these verses help you or someone else to enjoy life?

Optional Activities:

1. Weave, sew, knit, or crochet a small bag to carry pebbles and special things in like Jiya and Kino did.

2. Keep a goldfish or a beta fish as a pet. Your local pet store will have many small bowls and rocks and fish to choose from. Remember to have your parents' permission and to care for your pet daily.

3. As a science project, figure out why the fish in the cave glittered. To start, look up and research phosphorescence, luminescence, and bioluminescence.

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Section Three

Vocabulary:

1. tenderly: considerately, protectively, gently, lovingly; 2. sturdily: resolutely, firmly, vigorously or robustly; 3. persuade: convincing someone to do something or think a certain way by arguing or reasoning with them; 4. stern: hard or severe in manner or character; appearing grim, gloomy, or forbidding; firm or unyielding; 5. delicate: very fine or dainty, frail, easily broken or damaged; 6. scholar: a learned person, a specialist in knowledge

Questions:

1. His father tells him that life is stronger than death.
2. The Old Gentleman comes to visit. Uchiyama is Kino's father.
3. Old Gentleman wants to make Jiya his own son, to adopt him.
4. His father tells him to not be so selfish and to allow Jiya to make his own choice about where to live.
5. Kino believes that Jiya will choose to go away.
6. Kino's father tells Jiya that he did not cry before now because he was not fully alive, but today he is beginning to live again. It is now good to let the tears flow.
7. He tells Jiya to see the inside of the castle and all Old Gentleman has to offer before Jiya decides.
8. Setsu comforts him by hugging him and he gets comfort from seeing her happy face.

Think About the Story:

9. Answers will vary.
10. Answers will vary, but should mention the money and opportunities that Jiya would have. He could attend a fine school and have fine clothes. It would be for his "own good." Personal answers will vary.
11. Answers may vary, but should mention some of the following: love, family, the friendship of Kino and Setsu, a brother, sister, and mother.
12. Answers may vary, but may mention that Setsu is joyful, fun, loving, and always sees the good in things. She is full of energy.

Dig Deeper:

13. Answers will vary.
14. The Bible teaches us that we should enjoy our food, drink, and work; we must love God with our whole being and others just as much as we love ourselves; and we should think about what is beautiful, lovely, excellent, pure, and noble. See also the answer to question 16 below.
15. He is humble.
16. We become children of God if we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior and believe in him. We, as children of God are to be pure, blameless, and good examples.