The Power of Greed

Imagine having everything in your life be perfect and then everything be ripped out of your hands. This is exactly what happens in In john Steinbeck’s The Pearl. Greed can overpower one’s ability to make good decisions. A man named Kino and his wife Juana live in a little brush house with their son Coyotito on the gulf of California in Mexico. One morning Coyotito is stung by a scorpion and Kino and Juana seek help from a doctor, but he refuses to help them because they don’t have any money, so Kino and Juana go out to the peal diving waters, and they find the miracle that they need, a pearl of great size and beauty. Soon the news that Kino has found the “pearl of the world” has spread and Kino decides to sell the pearl. When he approaches the buyers, they try to cheat him and he does not sell it. The next few nights Kino gets attacked and Juana warns him that the pearl will destroy them, but he does not listen. Greed closes his mind shut and he does not listen to others.

The first time in the story that Kino’s ego is blocked by greed is when he becomes abusive to Juana. “Her arm was up to throw when he leaped at her and caught her arm and wrenched the pearl from her. He struck her in the face with his clenched fist and she fell among the boulders, and he kicked her in the side”(Steinbeck, 58). In this case greed comes between Kino and the way he treats his wife. In this example it becomes clear that John Steinbeck’s theme for this book is, greed can overpower one’s ability to make good decisions.

““No,” he said. “I will fight this thing. I will win over it” (Steinbeck,57), just before he said this he was brutally attacked, but he still thinks he can win over the pearl when in reality the pearl has a better chance of destroying him. When he says this, he is only thinking of himself.. When Kino does not get rid of the pearl it is a bad decision that was influenced by greed.

After Kino refuses to give up his pearl he makes a horrible decision to go over the mountains to find another place to sell his pearl. This ends up being a mistake because it results in him losing something even more valuable than a pearl, a family member, Coyotitio. After this, he and Juana return, and plunge the pearl into the sea. His actions, influenced by greed, result in the death of his son.

Greed can overpower one’s ability to make good decisions. Even when Kino is warned by his wife, brutally attacked, and hunted down he is still so greedy that he won’t give up his pearl. Kino thought the pearl was the most important thing to him, but in actuality, it destroyed the thing that was truly the most important thing to him, his family.