Chapter 1 (pg. 3-13)

1. What is a parable and why do you suppose Steinbeck calls our attention to this in his preface?

2. What do the names of the characters suggest about the setting for this story?

3. Who appears to be the protagonist in this story?

4. Who would you guess the antagonists will be?

5. On pages 3-4 Kino has arisen and the day has begun. What is this song he hears and what does it suggest about how he is feeling this morning?

6. On page 5 (1st full paragraph) the song Juana sings is part of the family song and all of it, Kino perceives, is part of the Whole. What Whole?

7. While Kino’s environment is safe and pleasant, how does the picture of the ants and the roosters underscore the struggle for the survival in nature?

8. On page 6, what new song comes to Kino? Why?

9. How does Juana’s reaction to the scorpion show two sides of the Indian culture?

10. When the narrator says, “Kino had wondered often at the iron in his patient, fragile wife”(8) what does he mean?

11. How are the homes of the poor distinguished from the homes of the rich?

12. How is the doctor described?

13. What race do you suppose the doctor is of?

14. What does the doctor’s comment on page 13 reveal about his attitude toward Indians?

15. Contrast Kino’s life, which is a life close to nature, to the doctor’s life, which is a life amidst civilization.