

Fiction

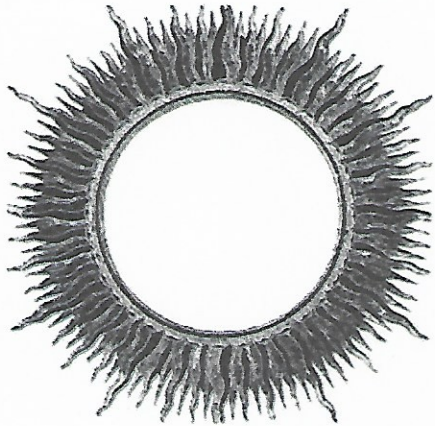
Directions: Read the passage “How Saynday Got the Sun.” Then answer the questions that follow.

How Saynday Got the Sun

adapted from a Kiowa legend

by Tracey Vasil Biscontini

When the world was first created, Saynday and his people lived in complete darkness. There was no sunshine on their side of the world. The sun belonged to the people on the other side of the earth. These people kept a close watch on the sun and kept it near them, so no one could steal it.

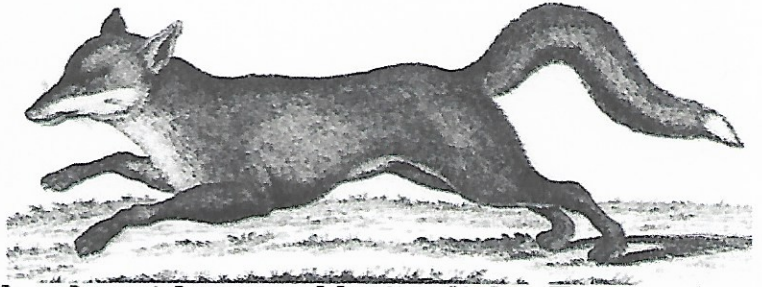


One day, as Saynday roamed about on his side of the earth, he stumbled upon some animal friends, Fox, Deer, and Magpie, who were sitting together by a prairie hole and discussing the darkness in which they lived. They were complaining about life without the sun. “Nothing will grow on our side of the earth,” explained Fox. Magpie added that they had trouble seeing in all this darkness and she was tired of flying into things. The animals concluded that they would never be happy until they had some sun in their world.

Saynday suggested that they do something about this and he sat beside his friends near the prairie-dog hole. They all thought and thought and thought. They were so quiet and deep in thought that the prairie dog stuck his head up out of the hole and inquired as to the reason for their silence. When they told him that they were trying to think of a way to make the sun shine on their side of the earth, he thought about joining them; then, deciding that he didn’t care that much about the sun, he ducked back into his hole to nap. Finally, Saynday came up with a great idea. “We know that the people on the other side of the world are very selfish and will not share the sun. I think that we may be able to take it from them if one of us earns their trust.”

Saynday asked Fox, Deer, and Magpie how far they each could travel. Fox said that he was able to run a long, long way, Deer said that he was able to run only short way, and Magpie said that she was able to fly only a short way. Saynday confessed that he, himself, was not able to run very far, so he decided that Fox should be the one to travel all the way to the village on the other side of the earth. Saynday warned Fox that it would not be easy to make friends with the people in the village. Saynday knew that they were suspicious of strangers and he had even heard that they were mean.

Fox was determined, however, and he traveled a long, long way, feeling his way along in the dark. Finally, he saw a tiny rim of light on the edge of the world and traveled toward it. It must be the sun! Sure enough, the tiny rim of light grew



brighter and brighter until it filled the sky with warm blazing light. Fox stood on top of a hill and looked around him. He was in awe of the green grass and beautiful trees—and he thought about how nice it was to be able to see them! Fox saw a village below and knew that it must belong to the people with the sun. Fox was a very cunning creature and he sat quietly on the hilltop watching the people below, so that he could figure out what to do.

He noticed that the people were playing a game with the sun. Two teams stood in two lines holding spears. Team members from both teams took turns trying to spear the sun, as someone rolled it between them. The game startled Fox. He could not believe that people would spear something as wonderful as the sun! Fox saw that one team was far ahead of the other team, which was losing badly.

Cautiously, Fox crept down to the village below and sat quietly in the grass. He saw that the captain of the losing team was very frustrated. "I'm sorry for your loss," Fox said. "I know that you will win the next round." And the captain's team did win the next round. Fox talked to the captain again. "I know you will win this round, too." And the captain did! This continued until the losing team became the winning team. The captain was so happy that he invited Fox to play—and Fox played, until he got close enough to the sun to grab it.

Once Fox had the sun, he ran away very fast. The people chased him and were close behind, but Fox kept on running until he saw Deer. He handed the sun to Deer, who kept on running until he saw Magpie. Magpie took the sun in her beak and flew as fast as she could. By the time she reached Saynday, the people were no longer behind her and she simply handed the sun to Saynday.

The people and animals on their side of the earth were very happy to see the sun—but just for a while. The sun never stopped shining and no one could sleep. And it was so hot that no one could stand it. Some of the animals wanted the sun to go away for good. Then Saynday had an idea. He hung the sun high up in the sky, where it had plenty of room to move around. For part of the day, the sun made one half of the earth bright, and then for the second part of the day it made the other half of the earth bright. People on both sides of the earth were happy about this.

~And that's the reason the sun shines the way that it does.

- 1 The **main** conflict in this story is resolved when
- A Fox steals the sun
 - B Fox plays a game
 - C Fox runs to the other side of the earth
 - D Fox gives the sun to Deer

- 2 According to the events in the story, Fox can **best** be described as
- F fearful
 - G sluggish
 - H dependable
 - J mean

- 3 Why don't Saynday and his people like the sun once they have it?
- A It only shines for part of the day.
 - B It moves around too much in the sky.
 - C It shines too brightly and is too hot.
 - D It is only for playing games.

- 4 What do Deer and Magpie have in **common**?
- F They each live in a hole.
 - G Both are able to fly.
 - H They both go to the faraway village.
 - J Neither one can travel far.

- 5 Which of the following of actions **best** shows how the people in the village on the other side of the earth were foolish?
- A spearing the sun
 - B rolling the sun
 - C playing a game
 - D letting Fox play

- 6 Read this sentence from the story.

Fox was very a very cunning creature and he sat quietly on the hilltop watching the people below, so that he could figure out what to do.

Which word means about the same as "cunning"?

- F tricky
 - G friendly
 - H scary
 - J nervous
- 7 According to the events in the story, the prairie dog can **best** be described as
- A smart
 - B lazy
 - C afraid
 - D helpful



PEARLS

Pearls are popular gems used in all types of jewelry. They are one of the gems used to represent June birthdays. Unlike diamonds or other gemstones, no polishing or cutting is needed to bring out a pearl's beauty. They are the only gems that are made by living sea creatures and not dug up out of the ground. So, how do sea creatures make pearls?

Most natural pearls are made by oysters. Other mollusks, like clams and mussels, can produce pearls. Those types of pearls are very rare. Both freshwater and saltwater oysters can make pearls.

Oysters are bivalve mollusks because they have two shells. When the oyster grows, the shells must grow along with it. A soft organ called a mantle is responsible for making the shell grow. The mantle uses minerals from the oyster's food to make nacre. Nacre is the lining on the inside of the shell. Sometimes, nacre is called mother of pearl.

When something gets between the mantle and the shell, like a bit of shell or sand, the mantle gets irritated. The oyster covers up the thing to protect itself. The mantle uses nacre to make layers around the object. A pearl is formed! Sometimes the pearls are nice and round, and sometimes they are uneven. The most valuable pearls are perfectly round and smooth. Pearls can also come in a variety of colors, like white, gray, red, blue, green, and black.

When pearls are made in the wild, they are called natural pearls. This is a rare event, and these types of pearls can be very valuable. In fact, the word "pearl" is a metaphor for something very rare and valuable. Because of this rare event, pearls can also be made with a little help from humans.

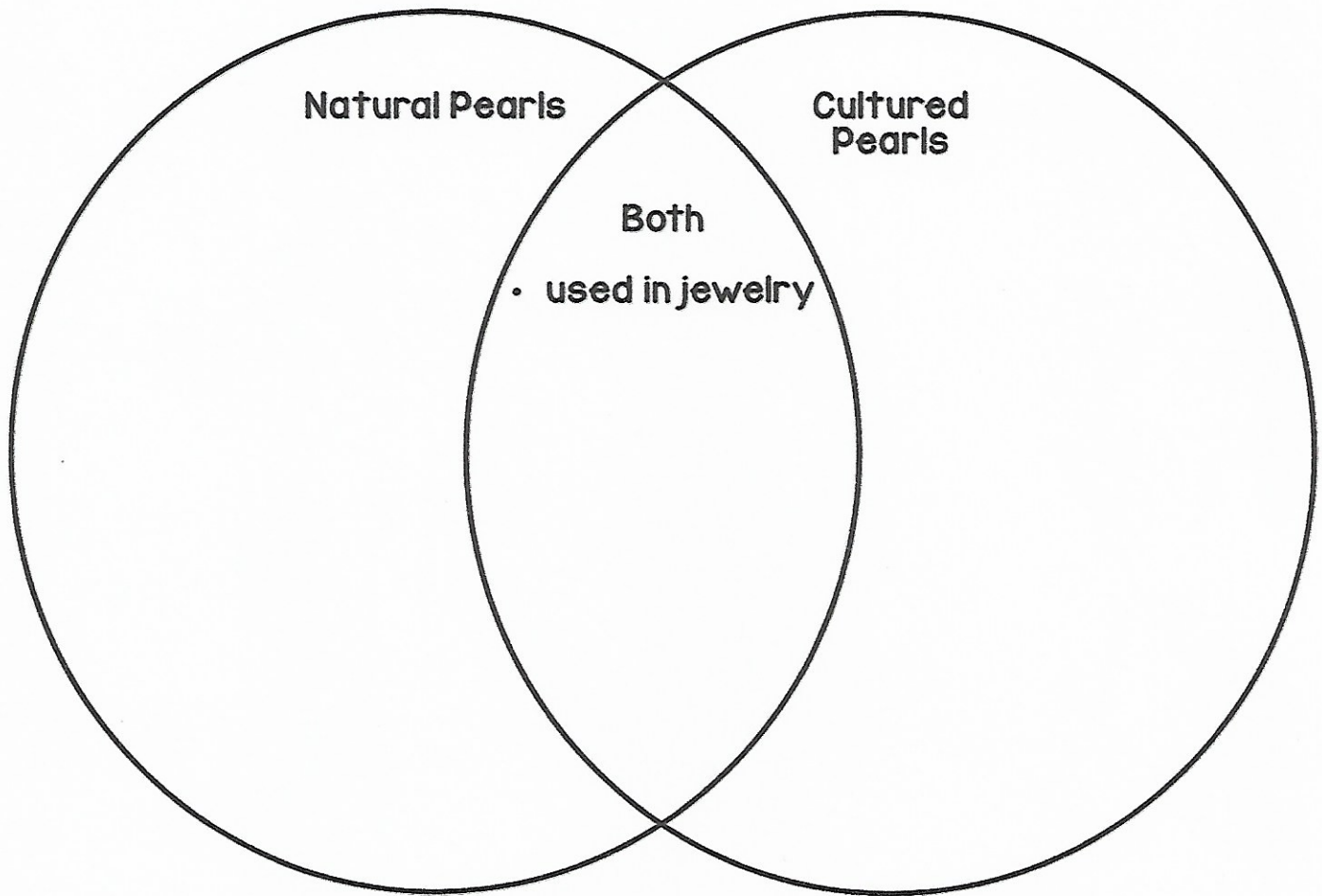
The process of making cultured pearls begins when a pearl harvester opens the oyster and makes a little slit in the mantle. Then, a bead is put between the mantle and the shell. The oyster then forms the pearl by layering nacre on the bead. This process takes about six months since it only needs a thin coating of nacre. Even though they still look beautiful, cultured pearls aren't as expensive as natural pearls because they are more common.

Whether they are natural or cultured, pearls continue to be one of nature's beautiful miracles!



PEARLS - SECOND READ

Go back through the text and highlight the characteristics of natural pearls with a yellow highlighter, marker, or colored pencil. Highlight the characteristics of cultured pearls in blue. Highlight what they have in common in green. Complete the Venn diagram using the information you highlighted. One has been done as an example.





PEARLS - THIRD READ

Go back through the text one last time to find causes and effects. Label the causes with a C and the effects with an E. Then, add them to the chart.

Cause	Effect



DIAMONDS

Cut diamonds are beautiful, making them a popular gem choice for jewelry. Most of the diamonds that are mined are not good enough to be cut into gems. Rough diamonds that are not colorless or perfectly clear may not be chosen for cutting into a gem. Diamonds are the hardest natural substance. Diamonds that are not gem-quality may end up on an industrial¹ cutting or grinding tool, possibly in the form of a diamond-tipped drill bit². However, the demand for all qualities of diamonds is higher than what can be mined. How does the diamond industry keep up with the demand?

One solution is the use of synthetic diamonds. Synthetic diamonds are not mined. Rather, they are created in a laboratory. It is possible to create a synthetic diamond that is exactly like a natural one. Only a gemologist with special equipment can tell the difference between them. Almost all synthetic diamonds are for industrial use. This is because of the fact that most of the diamonds produced are colored because of the chemicals involved in making them. It is much more expensive to create a colorless diamond than it is to mine one. However, almost all of the “fancy” colored diamonds used in jewelry are synthetic.

Another solution to the high demand of gem-quality diamonds is diamond enhancement. Cut diamonds are treated to improve their quality. Laser drilling removes inclusions³. Sealants fill tiny cracks. Other treatments can either change or remove color. Although enhanced diamonds look better after treatment, they are priced lower than untreated diamonds of similar quality. Also, the seller has to disclose⁴ that the diamond has been treated.

Finally, buyers who just want the look of the diamond without the huge price tag may be satisfied with a diamond simulant. A diamond simulant looks like a diamond. The most common simulant is the cubic zirconia. Cubic zirconia gems are synthetic. They aren't as hard as diamonds, so they are not for industrial use. A cubic zirconia is very sparkly and almost always colorless.

Diamonds are popular for gem or industrial use. However, synthetic diamonds, enhancements, and simulants have satisfied the high demand for diamonds.

¹manufacturing

²the cutting part of the drill

³black carbon specks within a gem



PEARLS/DIAMONDS

What is the problem as described in "Diamonds"?

What is the solution to the problem in "Diamonds"?

What are some similarities and differences between the pearl and diamond industries?
