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Study Guide

for

I, Juan de Pareja

by Elizabeth Borton de Treviño



New York, New York Columbus, Ohio Woodland Hills, California Peoria, Illinois

Meet Elizabeth Borton de Treviño



Aaaaaa for A. A stuttering bbbbbb, then a sound like K, or kkkkkk for C, and so on. This went on for some time, and seemed to have no reason. It was just something teachers made you do.

But one day she showed three letters and we sounded each one. C (kkkkkk) A (aaaaaa) T (tttttt). And there, on the chart, was a picture of a cat. And we had said it! CAT! The wonderful, radiant light broke over me. This was reading! I never got over it.

—Elizabeth Borton de Treviño

Do you remember the exact moment when you learned to read? This amazing discovery is what Elizabeth Borton de Treviño describes in the above quotation. This unfolding sense of wonder is also what de Treviño brings to her writing.

Elizabeth Borton de Treviño was born in Bakersfield, California, in 1904. A child of vivid imagination, de Treviño began writing poetry when she was eight years old. Her first poem was published in 1912. De Treviño marched into the office of the editor of the *Monterey Peninsula Herald* and presented him with a poem she had written. Six days later, the poem appeared in the newspaper with a note: “This poem was written by little Beth Borton, aged eight.” De Treviño continued to write throughout high school.

In 1925 she graduated from Stanford University with a degree in Latin American history. From there she went to Boston where she studied violin at the Boston Conservatory of Music. Her knowledge of music led her to write music reviews and to become a reporter for the *Boston Herald*. Although she was finished with school, she soon learned her education was just beginning:

My life as a reporter carried me into places and situations I would never have known as an ordinary young woman merely passing time until the “right man” came along. I visited prisons, I attended murder trials, I studied mental hospitals, I called on people in all sorts of trouble.

In 1935 de Treviño married Luis Treviño Gómez, a young Mexican man she had met on a business trip. After they married, the couple moved to Mexico permanently. They had two sons, and when the boys were old enough for school, de Treviño took a job writing press releases and worked on her own writing as well. Her novel *I, Juan de Pareja* won the Newbery Medal in 1966. This medal is given each year for originality, excellence, and distinction in literature for young people.

In her acceptance speech, de Treviño tells this story:

Before I had achieved any publication, [my father] took an office for me, equipped it with table, typewriter, and chair, and paid me a small salary. “Now,” he said, “you will write every day from nine to twelve and from one to five. Writing is work. You may have Saturdays off.” When I reported to him one day that I had started a novel, he commented, “Probably 5649 other persons started novels today. Chances are that 5640 have more talent than you. But honey, you can do what 5000 won’t do. You can finish yours.

De Treviño never forgot this advice from her father, and published novels, memoirs, and many children’s books.

Introducing the Novel

Biographies of many painters are constructed by scholars from a study of their works, plus known facts. In fiction, then, I think the author may be pardoned for making her own interpretations of some of the paintings that have come down to us over the centuries, Velazquez's only recorded "conversations."

—Elizabeth Borton de Treviño

Elizabeth Borton de Treviño's novel, *I, Juan de Pareja*, is based on a true story. An enslaved man named Juan de Pareja really did exist, and, it is reasonable to assume, he was born in the early years of the seventeenth century. A portrait of him still exists today. It was painted by Diego Velázquez, perhaps the greatest painter in Spanish history. The picture was painted during 1649 and 1650, and it shows a man maybe as old as forty. De Treviño writes in the novel's afterword:

It is known that Velázquez inherited Juan de Pareja from relatives in Seville; it is known that he gave him his freedom, and in the way in which my story sets it forth. It is known that the great portrait of Pareja was painted by Velázquez in Italy, at or about the time he painted Pope Innocent X.

Beyond these facts, we know little of the real life of Juan de Pareja. Yet de Treviño has taken a little "kernel of truth," as she calls it, and woven a world around it. This novel tells the story that Juan de Pareja himself might have written if he had authored an autobiography.

De Pareja's journey from his childhood home to the house of the great artist is touching and sometimes frightening. What he finds there is a quiet painter who treats him with respect and kindness. Although de Pareja leads a peaceful life, he is enslaved and his life is not his own. De Pareja has no money of his own, and he cannot own property. There is also the possibility that he could be sold.

Furthermore, de Pareja must hide his growing interest in art, because it is illegal for enslaved people to practice the arts.

Around this situation, de Treviño creates a portrait of life in seventeenth-century Spain. Readers go with Juan from the dusty caravans of the Spanish plains to the busy marketplace, to rolling ships in swelling seas, to enormous silent halls of palaces. He meets counts and kings and criminals as he goes about with Velázquez. Family, business, politics, and sometimes tragedy make up his world as well.

Watching and listening, de Pareja learns much about art. He comes to admire Velázquez, an artist great enough to paint portraits of King Philip IV of Spain and Pope Innocent X. De Pareja is a person of deep feelings, however, and he admires more than Velázquez's talent. A true friendship develops, and it is this friendship that is the real story of *I, Juan de Pareja*.

THE TIME AND PLACE

I, Juan de Pareja takes place in Spain during the seventeenth century. Some people regard the seventeenth century as the first modern age. A scientific revolution was underway. Polish astronomer Copernicus's idea that the sun and planets did not revolve around the earth was slowly becoming accepted. Galileo was studying planets with a new device called a telescope, and Antoni van Leeuwenhoek's microscope would eventually lead him to discover that the human body is made up of cells.

The previous century had been what was called "a golden age" for Spain. United by the marriage of two royal cousins, Ferdinand of Castille and Isabella of Aragon, Spain rose to become a world power. Its military was unmatched in Europe and its art, music, literature, dress, and manners were imitated everywhere in the West.

After a century and a half as one of the world's mightiest kingdoms, however, Spain had begun to weaken. Muslims, Jews, and any people who disagreed with Catholic religious ideas were severely persecuted—many were forced to leave the country by the beginning of the 1600s.

Terrible epidemics dramatically reduced the population. Farms were abandoned because of lack of labor, and Spain had to buy food from other countries. Furthermore, the supply of silver coming into Spain began to decrease. Because most of the silver was used to maintain Spain's military, there was little left to pay off the country's

debts and purchase necessary goods from other countries.

Spain's King Philip IV took the throne in 1621. King Philip IV was not interested in politics, but rather in arts and culture. This interest supported a great period in Spanish art and architecture. Meanwhile, Count Olivares was left to run the government. Olivares tried to increase Spanish power abroad by raising taxes, drafting soldiers, and going back to war.

The war went poorly, and revolution in Spain followed. In 1650, however, Spain was still a powerful country. The court and the artists of that era represented a golden empire at its height.

Did You Know?

Art and architecture in Europe during the seventeenth century was heavily influenced by what is called the baroque style. Baroque art is mostly known for its grandeur and richness, and its sense of motion and energy.

In their attempt to bring out the emotions of the viewers, artists of this period viewed their craft differently from artists of the past. They were more concerned with individuals and tried to show them as realistically as possible through the use of fine details.

Baroque artists were also very interested in the use of light and shadow. They showed space around subjects with more depth, and their works suggested motion and energy. As a result, baroque art expresses the uniqueness of its subjects and a truer picture of proportion and

perspective, or the way in which things or people are viewed from a distance.

It is not clear exactly where the word *baroque* originated. There are two theories. One is that the word comes from the Italian word *barocco*, which was used to describe twisted logic. Another theory is that *baroque* comes from the Portuguese word *barroco*, meaning an oddly shaped pearl. In either case, the term was not used as praise. This new style of art was "baroque," or strange, because it went against earlier rules of style and subject.

As the value of new styles became clear, the word *baroque* gradually lost its negative meaning. The term now generally refers to the many forms of art, architecture, and music produced from about 1580 to 1750 in Europe and the Americas.

Before You Read

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 1–5

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Do you ever think about who you are? What is your earliest memory? What things about your life so far seem most important? How would you tell the story of your life to someone?

List Ideas

List some of the events you would include if you were going to write your own life story. Consider why you would include each one.

Setting a Purpose

As you read the first five chapters of *I, Juan de Pareja*, discover the events the narrator includes from his early life.

BACKGROUND

Slavery

In Spain in the 1600s, slavery was a fairly common practice. In fact, slavery has existed in different parts of the world for almost all of recorded history. Most frequently, people were enslaved against their will, although sometimes people went into slavery to pay off their debts. In medieval Europe, most enslaved persons were enslaved from birth. Freedom could be gained only by consent of the slaveholder.

When the Spaniards invaded South America, they found that the people living there used enslaved workers. The Spaniards continued the practice in their mines. South Americans died quickly from European diseases, however, so Spain began to import enslaved Africans in 1517. Spain formally abolished slavery in its American colonies in 1871.

Did You Know?

Few people objected to slavery until the second half of the 1700s. Many parts of the world ended slavery in the first half of the 1800s. In the United States, slavery ended with the Civil War in 1865. In parts of Africa and the Arabian peninsula, slavery persisted well into the 1900s. In 1980, Mauritania, in northwest Africa, became the last nation to formally abolish slavery.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

adverse [əd vɜrs ˈ] *adj.* unfavorable; harmful

capricious [kə prɪʃ ˈəs] *adj.* changeable; fanciful

composition [kəm ˈpə zɪʃ ˈən] *n.* elements or pattern of images and light in a work of art

constrict [kən strɪkt ˈ] *v.* to shrink; to squeeze

cryptic [krɪp ˈtɪk] *adj.* obscure; secretive

derelict [dɛr ˈəl ɪkt ˈ] *n.* poor person; forsaken one

fatalism [fæt ˈəl ɪz əm] *n.* acceptance of what seems bound to happen

lithe [lɪθ] *adj.* flexible

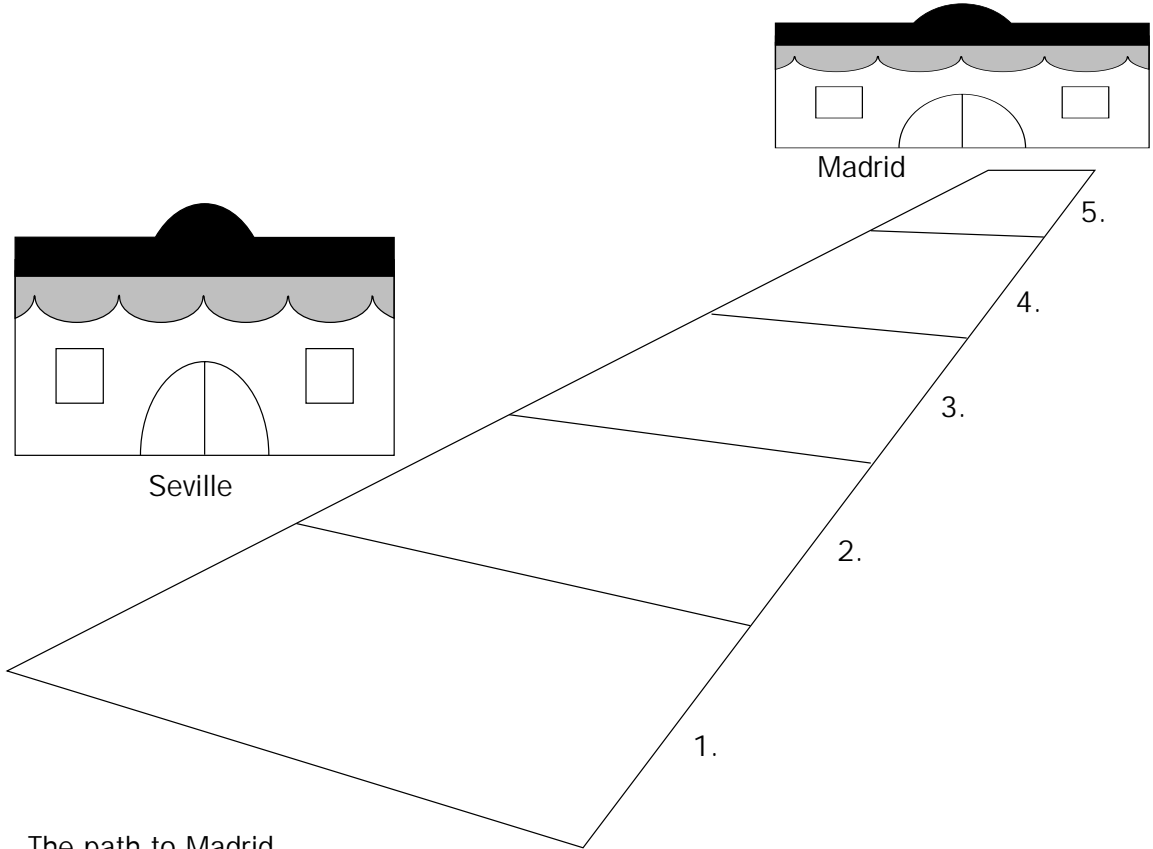
prophetic [prə fet ˈɪk] *adj.* foretelling; predictive

taciturn [tas ˈə turn ˈ] *adj.* quiet; reserved

Active Reading

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 1–5

In these chapters, you will see young Juan de Pareja make his way from his childhood home in Seville to the house of the artist Diego Velázquez. As you read, record the events that happen from the time de Pareja gets sick in Seville until he arrives in Madrid.



The path to Madrid . . .

1. Master and Mistress sicken and die.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Responding

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 1–5

Personal Response

What part of de Pareja's story in these chapters did you find most interesting? Why? What went through your mind as you read?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Describe de Pareja's first mistress, Doña Emilia. How does he feel about her?

2. Why must Juan de Pareja leave Seville?

3. Compare the characters of Brother Isidro and Don Carmelo. What is different about the way each of them views de Pareja?

Responding

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 1–5

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. Does de Pareja seem to accept his position in life? Explain.

5. What incident from these chapters affected you the most? Why?

Literature and Writing

Analysis of Events

In the **Focus Activity** on page 12, you considered what incidents you would put in your life story. Why did Juan choose the ones he did? Write a paragraph about the most vivid events in the story so far, and why you think they would be ones that Juan would be most likely to recall. In what way are these events important to him?

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

As he wanders the lonely Spanish roads on the second half of his journey to Madrid, de Pareja faces certain challenges on his own. In what sorts of situations might children today find themselves alone? In your groups, create a list of these types of situations. Discuss the challenges a child might face in such situations, and the decisions she or he might have to make.

Learning for Life

Using your **Literature Groups** discussion as a springboard, write a handbook for young children on how to handle a challenging situation alone. Include such things as rules for dealing with strangers and a list of important phone numbers.

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Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 6–10

FOCUS ACTIVITY

Do you believe in fate, or in the idea that if things are meant to happen they will happen regardless of other circumstances?

Discuss

In small groups, discuss the idea of fate. How do our circumstances affect the decisions we make? Do we have a choice in changing our circumstances?

Setting a Purpose

As you read Chapters 6 through 10, observe the people and events that affect de Pareja's life.

BACKGROUND

Did You Know?

In the 1600s, photographs and film had not yet been invented. The only way to preserve someone's likeness was to draw or paint it. When Velázquez was working, modern methods such as oil painting had only been in common use for about 100 years.

Portrait of the Artist

Juan de Pareja's story revolves around the famous artist Diego Velázquez. Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velázquez was born in Seville, Spain, in 1599. At the age of twelve, he became an apprentice to a Spanish artist named Francisco Pacheco, whose daughter he later married. He developed a striking style, working heavily with the contrasts between dark and light and portraying his subjects realistically. Velázquez was appointed court painter to King Philip IV in 1623. In 1629, 1649 and 1650, Velázquez visited Italy to study famous Italian painters.

Velázquez died in 1660. One of the finest painters of all time, his portraits reveal a deep understanding of human nature. More than 300 years later, in a review of the first Velázquez exhibition to be shown in the United States, Robert Hughes writes about the artist, "His cool gaze settles on everything with equal curiosity. Nothing human is alien to him. Everything is worthy of respect—a respect whose sign is an unswerving [steady] attentiveness."

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

apprehension [ap'ri hen'shən] *n.* anxiety; fear

conscientiously [kon'shē en'shəs lē] *adv.* honorably; carefully

exquisite [eks'kwizit] *adj.* beautiful; of highest quality

haughty [hō'tē] *adj.* arrogant; proud

intermittent [in'tər mit'ənt] *adj.* periodic; on and off

intrigue [in'trēg] *n.* secret plot

meticulous [mi tik'yə ləs] *adj.* detail-oriented; precise

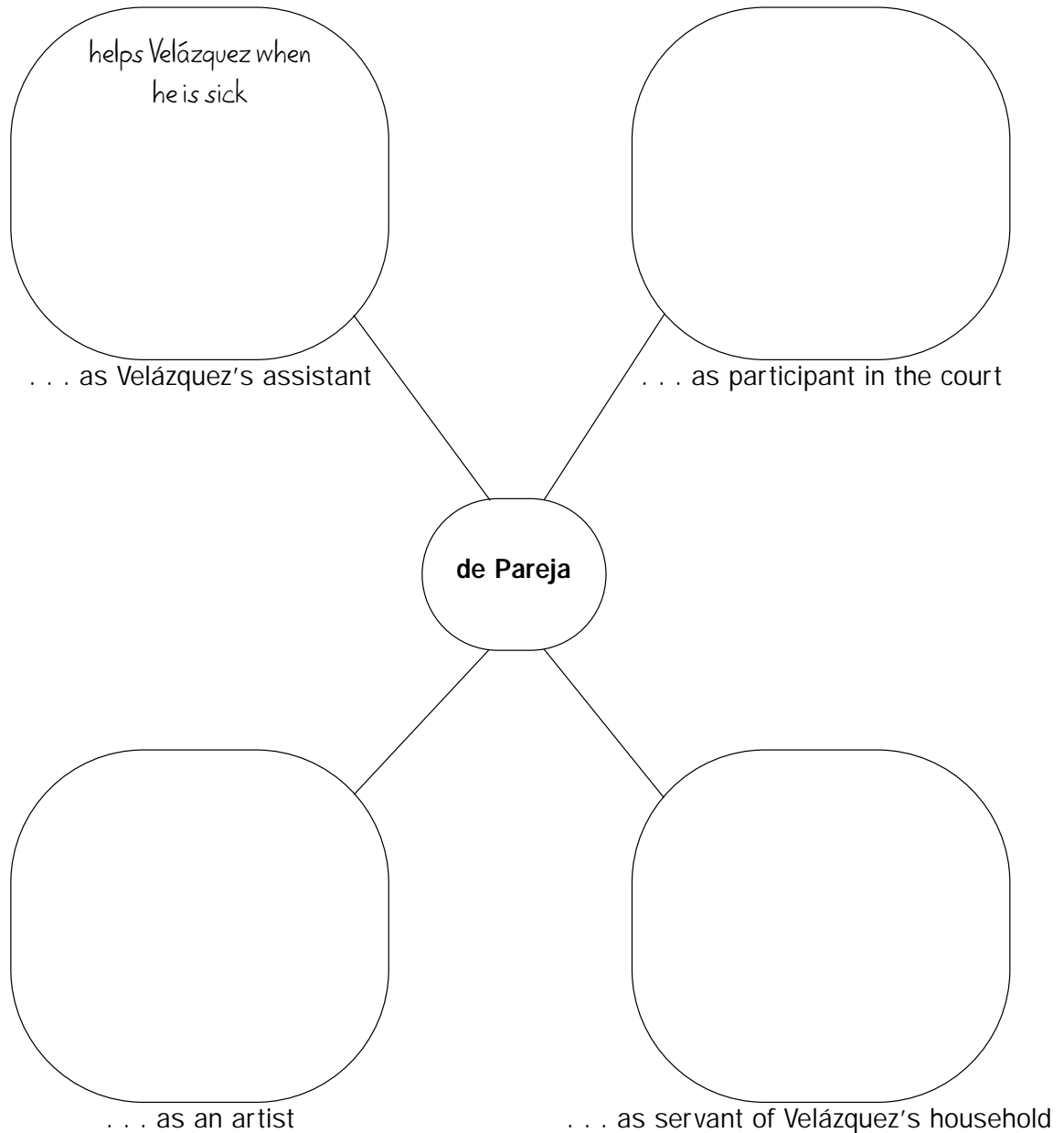
tremulous [trem'yə ləs] *adj.* quivering; trembling

trepidation [trep'ə dā'shən] *adj.* nervousness; uncertainty

Active Reading

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 6–10

As time goes by, de Pareja plays several different roles in the novel. As you read these chapters, describe a few things that he does as Velázquez's assistant, as a participant in the king's court, as a servant of the Velázquez household, and as an artist himself.



Responding

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 6–10

Personal Response

If you could talk to Juan de Pareja at this point in the novel, what would you like to ask him? What would you like to tell him?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. Why can't de Pareja pursue Miri, the girl he falls in love with?

2. What role does de Pareja play in the marriage of Velázquez's daughter?

3. Why does de Pareja feel so guilty about his painting?

Responding

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 6–10

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. Do you feel that de Pareja's concerns about his painting are justified? Explain your answer.

5. What event or events in this section held your interest? Why?

Literature and Writing

Character Study

In the **Focus Activity** on page 16, you tried to imagine the things that might affect your life as you grow older. Now that de Pareja has grown up and you know him from reading the novel, what things have affected him most? Write a paragraph explaining the influences that have made de Pareja who he is at this point in the book. Use examples from the novel to illustrate and support your opinion.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

As you read *I, Juan de Pareja*, it is hard to not be aware of the fact that de Pareja is an enslaved person. This affects every part of his life. In your group, discuss whether he is happy or unhappy. Find passages in the story that support your opinions.

Performing

The story of *I, Juan de Pareja* is told as if a person were speaking directly to you. This is called **first-person point-of-view**, and it imitates speech. Give the book a voice. Select a passage from *I, Juan de Pareja*, and practice reading it aloud. Present your dramatic reading as if you were de Pareja, describing your life experiences to the class.



Save your work for your portfolio.

Before You Read

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 11–15

FOCUS ACTIVITY

How satisfied are you with your life so far? What do you think will make your life successful? What things might stand in your way?

Journal Writing

In your journal, write a paragraph in which you define success in your own life. Explain why you define success as you do.

Setting a Purpose

As you read the final chapters, consider what de Pareja needs in order to think of his life as a success. Does he find it?

BACKGROUND

Patronage

In Velázquez's time, there was not a market for art as there is today. At that time, the vast majority of the world's people were just trying to feed themselves and could not afford to buy art. How did artists make a living during the seventeenth century?

Until recently, a system called patronage supported artists and their art. Usually, only people of royalty and nobility could afford to be patrons, or supporters of artists. The advantage of this system was that patrons could be generous, allowing artists money and time to pursue their work. The disadvantage was that patrons could control what and who was painted, and often, how the painting was to be done. Patronage still exists today, although in a much more limited form. Wealthy people, governments, and other organizations still pay people to produce fine art, literature, and music.

Did You Know?

Religion plays a large role in Juan de Pareja's life. At this time in Europe, the Catholic Church was undertaking what is now called the Counter-Reformation. The Counter-Reformation was a movement by the Catholic Church against the spread of Protestant ideas about the Christian religion. At the same time, the Catholic Church was putting more emphasis on missionary efforts.

VOCABULARY PREVIEW

amiably [ā' mē ə blē] *adv.* pleasantly; good-naturedly

convalescence [kən' və les' əns] *n.* period of recovery

cynically [sɪn' i kəl] *adv.* sarcastically; skeptically

fervor [fɜr' vər] *n.* passion; emotion

insolent [ɪn' sə lənt] *adj.* boldly disrespectful; rude

proxy [prɒk' sē] *n.* substitute

rotund [rō tund'] *adj.* plump; rounded

somberly [sɒm' bər lē] *adv.* gloomily; solemnly

stupor [stōō' pər] *n.* dull state; trance

Active Reading

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 11–15

As the book moves toward its conclusion, de Pareja’s status as an enslaved person leads to some frustration and uncertainty. As you read, jot down how some of de Pareja’s dilemmas are resolved in the book’s final chapters.

Dilemma	Resolution
De Pareja is enslaved and does not enjoy any rights in Spanish society.	Velázquez gives de Pareja his freedom.
De Pareja loves his art but must keep it secret because he is enslaved.	
De Pareja has no personal life other than as Velázquez’s servant.	
De Pareja has no money of his own but depends entirely on Velázquez’s fortune.	

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Responding

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 11–15

Personal Response

What emotions did you feel as you finished the novel? Would you say the story of Juan de Pareja has a happy ending? Why or why not?

Analyzing Literature

Recall and Interpret

1. How does de Pareja get his portrait painted? In what ways does this help Velázquez?

2. How does de Pareja earn his freedom? Do you suppose de Pareja had this outcome in mind when he planned to reveal his art to the king? Explain.

3. Compare Lolis's views on slavery with de Pareja's views. How do they differ? Why might Lolis feel the way she does about being enslaved?

Responding

I, Juan de Pareja Chapters 11–15

Analyzing Literature (*continued*)

Evaluate and Connect

4. In the **Focus Activity** on page 20, you considered what makes a successful life. Is Juan de Pareja satisfied with his life? What in the story makes you think so?

5. Why, in your opinion, does de Pareja decide to wait to tell Murillo about his freedom?

Literature and Writing

Autobiography

This novel about Juan de Pareja’s life includes more than when he was born, where he went, and what he did. His story also includes what he cared about, what he wished for, what he feared, what he had to overcome, and what he felt as he considered these things. Write a one-page autobiography. Include basic information, but also what you care about, what you want from life—who you really are.

Extending Your Response

Literature Groups

In your group, discuss your favorite parts of the book. Which parts were most memorable? most pleasing? most disturbing? Share your responses to the story’s end. Is the author successful in making Juan de Pareja seem real to you?

Internet Connection

One way to learn more about the work of Velázquez is to search the Internet. Your teacher may guide this search. Find a gallery of Velázquez’s work on-line and find paintings to which Juan de Pareja refers in this book. Be sure to find the portrait of de Pareja himself. Which paintings do you like best? What do they add to the book? Share your opinions in an oral presentation to the class.



Save your work for your portfolio.



Juan de Pareja painting by Diego Velázquez

Before You View

Focus Question

When we read, we form a mental picture of the characters in the book. In this painting, does Juan de Pareja look at all like you imagined him while you were reading?

Background

Diego Velázquez painted this portrait of Juan de Pareja in the mid-1600s. When it was displayed at the Pantheon in Rome in 1650, one visitor said that while the other paintings were art, this painting alone was truth.

Responding to the Painting

1. Would you have guessed that de Pareja had been an enslaved person from looking at this painting? Why or why not?

2. What can you tell about de Pareja's character by looking at this painting?

3. What does this painting tell you about the relationship between the painter, Velázquez, and the subject, de Pareja?

4. **Making Connections** In your opinion, would de Pareja have painted a self-portrait similar to Velázquez's painting? How do you think he would have shown himself differently? Give reasons to support your opinion.

Making a Mental Sketch

In the portrait of Juan de Pareja, Velázquez portrays him as an adult, as he was near the end of the novel. Describe what de Pareja may have looked like at the beginning of the novel, before he joined Velázquez's household.

from The Painter's Eye

Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan

Before You Read

Focus Question

What makes modern art different from the art of Diego Velázquez and Juan de Pareja? How are the two art forms similar?

Background

Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan have worked together to write a book that offers answers to these questions. Greenberg is a writer and art educator. Jordan is a writer and photographer.

Responding to the Reading

1. What are four basic elements of art?

2. According to Greenberg and Jordan, what makes a work of art unique?

3. **Making Connections** Greenberg and Jordan suggest four questions to help us understand art: What do I see? How is the work composed? What do I think the artist is trying to say? How does the work make me feel? Which of these is answered in the following excerpt from *I, Juan de Pareja*:

Master's first portrait of the King was a plain study of his head only. He had the great craggy-featured face turned slightly, but the wary, pale blue eyes looked straight toward the painter. The mouth above the heavy, underslung jaw, was set, the lips unsmiling. Even that first portrait showed Master's perceptions; it was the face of a distrustful, but tender and hopeful, man.

Paint with Words

Every artist has a unique style. What is yours? Create a picture frame by cutting a rectangle approximately 3×4 inches from the center of a piece of paper. Look through the frame at the world around you until you frame a picture you like. Your subject could be one or more persons, a collection of objects, or a view from the window. After you have framed your picture, use your eyes to really see what you have framed. Look carefully at proportions, light and shadow, movement, and background. Consider how to use line, shape, color, and texture to create your picture. Write notes to yourself on how to make your picture, what to emphasize, what to include, and what colors to use. Later, use these notes to create a drawing or a painting.

Apprentices: Craftspeople in Training

Bernardine S. Stevens

Before You Read

Focus Question

What kind of work would you like to do when you are an adult? Are there things you could begin to do now to work toward that goal?

Background

In seventeenth-century Spain, enslaved people were not allowed to learn the arts. Juan de Pareja, however, taught himself to paint by watching his master and his master's apprentices. In seventeenth-century America, young people were apprenticed to craftspeople in order to learn a trade. This reading by writer Bernardine S. Stevens recounts what life was like for many apprenticed youths in colonial America.

Responding to the Reading

1. Compare the practice of apprenticeship in American history with slavery. How were they the same? How were they different?

2. **Making Connections** Based on this reading, do you think there were many apprentice painters in colonial America? Why or why not? Compare the lives of apprentices in colonial America to that of Juan de Pareja as Velázquez's assistant in seventeenth-century Spain.

Learning for Life

Look back at your answer to the **Focus Question**. How did you decide what kind of work you would like to do? What is most appealing about the job you chose? Do research in the library or on the Internet to learn what requirements you must meet to have the career of your choice. Report your findings to the class.

from *The Hunt for Hidden Killers*

Diane Yancey

Before You Read

Focus Question

Is the threat of death by disease as much a concern today as in the past? Are there any modern “plagues”?

Background

In the first chapter of *I, Juan de Pareja*, de Pareja hears “There is a pest in the city. . . . It came in with a boatload . . . from Africa.” The pest was bubonic plague, which killed about 25 million people in Europe in the fourteenth century and periodically invaded Europe until late in the seventeenth century. At the time, little was known about what caused diseases. Even now doctors and scientists can’t always recognize a particular disease. In *The Hunt for Hidden Killers*, Diane Yancey tells the stories of modern medical mysteries. Yancey, a writer of books for young people, has a background in biology.

Responding to the Reading

1. What steps do medical researchers take to keep plagues from spreading?

2. Yancey writes, “Plague-infected rodents, such as chipmunks and mice, are probably more numerous in North America today than were their ancestors in Europe during the time of the Black Death.” If this statement is true, why do you think so few people die from this disease now?

3. **Making Connections** Which symptoms did both Juan de Pareja and Jimmy Bistie display when they were sick? How can you explain different symptoms in two people with the plague?

Writing a Case History

A medical detective starts with case histories of people who are sick or who have died. Write a case history of Jimmy Bistie. Refer to the reading to gather information on Bistie and the disease that killed him. Include information on Bistie’s personal background and the history of his illness, including the onset, symptoms, and treatment.

from *Leona*

Elizabeth Borton de Treviño

Before You Read

Focus Question

Think of a historical figure you consider a hero. What do you think he or she was like as a teenager?

Background

Newbery Medal-winning writer Elizabeth Borton de Treviño introduces readers to Leona Vicario. Vicario was a true-life heroine in Mexico's fight for independence from Spain. This story, much like the book, *I, Juan de Pareja*, weaves fictional details into the life of a real person.

Responding to the Reading

1. Based on this excerpt, describe the personality of Leona Vicario.

2. In your opinion, what makes a person a hero? Who are your present-day heroes?

3. **Making Connections** *Leona: A Love Story* is another work by the author of *I, Juan de Pareja*. What are some similarities between the two works?

Creating a Time Line

On a separate sheet of paper, create a time line of the most important events of your life. Start with the year of your birth, decide what scale to use, and draw a line to the present. Include as many events as necessary for a future historian to write your biography.