



## Black Pearl's Cove

Mina glanced down at the map. The paper trembled in her hands. She wasn't sure if it was her nerves or the winter wind blowing in off the white-crested waves.

"Let's see," she said out loud. She glanced along the deserted beach. Her dark hair fell across her face. She blew it away with a puff and flattened down the map. "I've just passed Long Man's Barrow, so Black Pearl's Cove should be just beyond that bend."

A foghorn cry from a boat lost in the off-shore mist made Mina jump, but she carried on jogging across the sand. Thick clumps of grey sand clung to her trainers and the irksome surf splashed up to her knees. Crabs scuttled out of her way and 'gulls took to the air in fright. She didn't care. She'd been searching for Black Pearl's Cove ever since she'd moved to the coast in the summer.

Her father had spoken to the other professors at the university. They'd told him all of the local legends. It had taken a bit of luck in an old bookstore to give her the answer she needed. She'd found the map wedged between two books about the history of lifeboats.

A little bit more reading had led her to an ancient book bound in leather. "The History of the Powerful Queen of the Seas - Black Pearl". Mina had spent hours reading about how the pirate had plundered Spanish warships. She'd stolen thousands of pounds worth of gold and jewels. Legend said that she'd hidden it all in caves around the village. Mina hadn't paid much attention after that. Even one jewel would be worth enough to let them move back home.

Red rocks thrust out from the cliff-side ahead of her. Mina looked up at the towering Captain's Archway. She thought of the sea patiently carving away at the rock for hundreds of years. Would it have eroded Black Pearl's Cove? Would the treasure even be there if she found it?

Horrible questions fought each other in Mina's head. She took a deep breath and pushed herself to run harder. The soft sand slipped underfoot. She stumbled to her knees every other step. Her face was wet and cold. There was no point blowing her fringe anymore. It stuck to her face along with the sand.

Captain's Archway raced over Mina's head and she stopped suddenly. The folded rock of the cliff

seemed to have been torn open. There was a narrow cave at the bottom. It was barely high enough for Mina to walk into. She knew from the map that this was where Black Pearl's Cove should be. She turned sideways and breathed in. The rough stone scratched against her back.

The narrow tunnel didn't go on for long. It soon opened out into a much wider passageway. Mina raced along the dry sand until she stepped out into a cavern. The walls curved inward to a peaked roof high above her. The air smelt of rotten seaweed and dead crabs.

None of that mattered. Mina stopped in her tracks and stared. The legends were true.



## INFERENCE FOCUS

1. How is Mina feeling at the beginning of the story? How do you know?
2. Why didn't Mina pay attention after reading about the gold and jewels?
3. Why did Mina want to find the treasure?
4. Why did Mina jump at the foghorn?
5. How did Mina feel when she saw Captain's Archway? Find a phrase that tells you this.

## VIPERS QUESTIONS

**V**

Which word describes the sea as "annoying"?

**R**

Where does Mina's father work?

**R**

What type of material is the big book covered in?

**S**

What made it difficult for Mina to run?

**P**

What has Mina found in the cave? What do you think she will do next?

Answers:

1. Nervous. She thinks the paper trembling might be her nerves
2. That's all she could think about
3. It would mean they could move back home
4. It was loud/she was nervous/on edge
5. Scared/worried. "Horrible questions fought each other"

V: Irksome

R: The university

R: Leather

S: The sand was wet and soft. It slipped under her feet and she kept falling over.