I, Juan de Pareja Study Guide

I, Juan de Pareja by Elizabeth B. de Trevino

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Overview

In I, Juan de Pareja, Trevino recreates the Spain of the first half of the 1600s.

During these years, Spain's empire included most of Latin America, parts of Africa, and parts of the Far East. It was a dynamic time of high adventure, great wealth, and significant achievements in the arts. I, Juan de Pareja illuminates this exciting time in a fascinating country. The story focuses on Juan, a slave who embarks on harrowing adventures, defying the odds and the law to fulfill his intense inner purpose: he teaches himself to be an artist. The novel shows how people lived in Juan's day and depicts the everyday lives of King Philip and the artist Velazquez. Juan de Pareja's adventures are sometimes exciting, always suspenseful, and enjoyable to read.

About the Author

Elizabeth Borton de Trevino was born in Bakersfield, California, on September 2, 1904, to Fred Ellsworth Borton, a lawyer, and Carrie Borton. Her first home was a four-room wooden cottage, from which the Bortons moved across town in about 1909 in order for Fred to be closer to his office in the Producer's Bank Building. In 1910 Elizabeth contracted malaria, and she began spending her summers with her grandmother in the healthier climate near the ocean. Elizabeth's parents and her grandmother all enjoyed reading and encouraged her to read; she spent many hours in the public library. Her father, in particular, encouraged her to write, teaching her the self-discipline necessary for successful writing. When young Elizabeth's first poem was published in the Monterey Peninsula Herald in 1912, she knew that she wanted to be a professional writer.

In 1925 Trevino graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in Latin American history from Stanford University.

From 1925 to 1934, she studied violin at the Boston Conservatory of Music and worked as a newspaper reporter for the Boston Herald, beginning as an assistant music reviewer. She enjoyed the life of a newspaper reporter and in 1934 won an assignment to journey to Mexico to write a series of articles about some of Mexico's leaders. While on this assignment, she met Luis Trevino Gomez, who had been assigned as her escort by the Monterrey Chamber of Commerce. By the time Elizabeth finished her reporting assignment, she and Luis were engaged to be married. Their wedding was held on August 10, 1935, and they made their first home in Monterrey, in Nuevo Leon State, Mexico. The couple later moved to San Angel, near Mexico City, where Luis, an ambitious insurance and real estate agent, could be closer to Mexico's centers of power.

Although Trevino continues to reside in Mexico, now in Cuernavaca in Morelos State, she has remained an American citizen. During her years in Mexico, she has raised two children and worked as a secretary, while also writing books for young readers and adults. In 1966 her novel I, Juan de Pareja won the Newbery Medal for the outstanding American children's book of 1965.

Like several of her other books, I, Juan de Pareja was inspired by Trevino's study of Spanish culture. The important seventeenth-century Spanish painter Velazquez had painted a portrait of his black slave Juan de Pareja, whom he later freed and who became a significant painter in his own right. This portrait inspired Trevino to write her historical novel about Pareja. In the same year that Trevino won the Newbery Medal, the Wildenstein Gallery of New York bought the painting for $5,544,000, then a record price for an auctioned painting. Customarily called The Slave of Velazquez, it reveals a man of great dignity.

Plot Summary

I, Juan de Pareja is the story of a slave of African ancestry in Spain during the first half of the seventeenth century. Juan de Pareja is born to a slave, a black seamstress. At the age of five, he becomes a pageboy to a wealthy Madrid woman when his mother dies. His mistress is kind and teaches him to read and write. After his owner's death from plague, the kindly monk Brother Isidro cares for Juan. Bequeathed to the famous painter Diego Velbzquez, Juan is taken to Madrid by a cruel gypsy named Carmelo, who beats the boy and starves him. In Madrid, Juan becomes a valued part of the Velbzquez household. He begins to paint secretly, knowing that it is illegal for slaves to practice any of the arts. Juan's painting leads to his estrangement from the Roman Catholic Church. Ultimately, he is reconciled to the Church and granted his freedom, thanks to the kindness of his owner, the famous Baroque painter Diego Velbzquez.

As the novel begins, Juan's mother dies of a mysterious illness when he is just five years old. He must work as a pageboy for Dosa Emilia. The impulsive but kind woman teaches him to read and write. The entire household is stricken with the plague. Juan awakes weak from a fever to find that he and the little dog Toto are the only ones left in the house. All of the servants have fled, fearing contamination. A generous monk, Brother Isidro, nurses Juan back to health. Just nine years old when Dosa Emilia dies, Juan is inherited by her nephew in Madrid, the painter Diego Velbzquez.

A cruel gypsy muleteer named Carmelo is hired to transport the household belongings, including Juan, to Velbzquez in Madrid. The muleteer refuses to feed Juan, urging the boy to steal instead. Starving, Juan learns to pilfer and to beg for alms on the church steps. He finally manages to run away from the muleteer and find temporary employment with a baker. When the muleteer recaptures Juan, he beats the boy viciously.

Arriving in Madrid, Juan is grateful to discover that his new master is kind. He is soon accepted into the Velbzquez household, which includes two tiny girls, nicknamed Paquita and La Nisa. Don Diego sets Juan to work in the studio, mixing paints and stretching canvas. Juan is mesmerized by art, and he quietly learns all that Don Diego is teaching his many apprentices. Slaves are forbidden to practice the arts, but Juan begins to paint in secret.

Juan's guilt and duplicity produce a rift with the Church. One of the apprentices, Murillo, convinces Juan that it is no sin to be a slave. Juan confesses his lies and thefts of paint, and he returns to the Church, a major source of solace in his life. With Velbzquez, Juan travels to Italy twice, observing the work of many famous painters of the Baroque period.

Returning home, the king discovers that Juan has been painting, in defiance of the law. The king is fond of Juan but cannot avoid punishing him for breaking the law. Don Diego steps in and frees Juan from slavery before the king can pass judgment. Juan also wins freedom for Lolis, the household cook, and he marries her. After the tragic deaths of

Paquita, her mother and Velbzquez, Juan returns to Madrid to live with friends and paint.

Elizabeth Borton de Treviso's novel is loosely based on the lives of Diego Velbzquez, the premier Spanish Baroque painter, and his slave, the painter Juan de Pareja. Actual events incorporated into the novel include the king's discovery of Juan's painting and the subsequent manumission. De Treviso has skillfully crafted a narrative using the little available information about these two men. She earned the Newberry Award in 1966 for this story of kindness, loyalty and the nature of art.

Chapter 1, In Which I Learn My Letters

Chapter 1, In Which I Learn My Letters Summary

I, Juan de Pareja is the story of a slave of African ancestry in Spain during the first half of the seventeenth century. Juan de Pareja is born to a slave, a black seamstress. At the age of five, he becomes a pageboy to a wealthy Madrid woman when his mother dies. His mistress is kind and teaches him to read and write. After his owner's death from plague, the kindly monk Brother Isidro cares for Juan. Bequeathed to the famous painter Diego Velbzquez, Juan is taken to Madrid by a cruel gypsy named Carmelo, who beats the boy and starves him. In Madrid, Juan becomes a valued part of the Velbzquez household. He begins to paint secretly, knowing that it is illegal for slaves to practice any of the arts. Juan's painting leads to his estrangement from the Roman Catholic Church. Ultimately, he is reconciled to the Church and granted his freedom, thanks to the kindness of his owner, the famous Baroque painter Diego Velbzquez.

Juan de Pareja was born a slave in the early 1600s. His mother, Zulema, was a beautiful black woman. She never told him the name of his father, but he suspects it was a white Spaniard who worked in the warehouses. The only thing Juan knows about his father is that he gave Zulema a beautiful gold bracelet and earrings. His mother died when Juan was around five years old. The child was merely told that she had gone to heaven. He never knew the circumstances of her death. She probably died of a fever.

After Juan's mother's death, Juan begins to work as a pageboy. His mistress calls him Juanico. She keeps the gold bracelet for herself, but allows Juan to have his mother's gold hoop earrings. The Mistress pierces his ear, and lets him wear one hoop. The other, she puts away for safekeeping. Mistress is young and capricious. She is often kind, but she sometimes slaps him in the face with her folded fan. Juan is devoted to her because she gives him money to buy sweets and occasionally allows him to watch the players in the fair.

Mistress generously teaches Juan to read when he is about nine years old. Every morning after Mass, they have a lesson, and Juan is left undisturbed to practice his letters during siesta. When Juan can write well, the mistress begins to dictate all her letters to him.

The mistress is devoted to her husband. Master is dark, slender and sickly, with yellowish skin. He owns warehouses near the wharf. When he falls sick yet again, the mistress writes her sister to send healing herbs. Nothing works, and soon Mistress is dictating a letter to her nephew Diego, telling him of the death of his Uncle Basilio. She promises that she will come to visit Diego in Madrid the next year.

Don Diego is a great painter who was a student of the artist Francisco Pacheco, in Juan's own city of Seville. Don Diego married his tutor's daughter, and the pair now lives in Madrid. Juan is intrigued by the art of painting and often wanders past Pacheco's

house, hoping to catch a glimpse of him working on the patio. One day as Juan detours past the painter's house on an errand, he sees a funeral cortege. He learns that Don Pacheco's youngest daughter died just the night before. He continues to the bakery and finds it closed, with a notice on the door warning of plague.

Frightened, Juan rushes home. By the next day, Juan himself is painting the cross on the zagubn, warning of pestilence within. By the end of the day, Mistress is dead, and Juan is sick. He suffers fevers and hallucinations, lying on his cot retching and drenched with sweat. When at last he can rise from his bed, Juan finds the house dusty and deserted. The few servants who did not die of the plague have fled in fear. Starving, Juan wanders onto the patio and finds an overripe orange fallen from a tree. He eats it and goes back to bed.

Juan is awakened by a voice calling in the empty house. It is Brother Isidro, a monk Juan has often seen on the streets. The man gives him broth and feeds Mistress's little dog, Toto. Brother Isidro assures Juan that he has been delivered for a purpose and must do God's will. A few days later, Juan learns that he has been inherited by the mistress's nephew, the painter Don Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velbzquez.

Chapter 1, In Which I Learn My Letters Analysis

Art and religion are the most important forces in Juan's life. Already at the age of nine, Juan is interested in art and finds consolation in religion. Juan and his mistress attend Mass at the cathedral every morning. Often, the boy loses himself in the beauty and mystery of the Eucharist. Juan carries the Mistress's rosary and missal for her constantly. The mistress's death is foreshadowed by the death of Don Pacheco's younger daughter and the red sign of the cross on the door of the bakery.

The inescapable condition of Juan's life is slavery. Juan is inexplicably content to be a slave, although he has had to work from the age of five. He seems completely unaware of any other possible existence. In part, this is because his mistress is often kind. She shares her hot chocolate with him, dresses him expensively and always makes sure that he has coins for sweets.

Chapter 2, In Which I Prepare for a Journey

Chapter 2, In Which I Prepare for a Journey Summary

Brother Isidro returns the following day. He brings a magistrate, who is accompanied by a slave boy and a clerk. The magistrate forces Juan, who is still weak from his illness, to stand while he inventories all the household possessions. He forces the trembling boy to bring armload after armload of heavy books from the library. When the magistrate finally leaves, Juan collapses on his cot in exhaustion.

That evening Brother Isidro returns, bringing bread and cheese. He wraps Juan in a castoff cloak and takes him to the convent. Brother Isidro tries to excuse the magistrate's conduct, saying that the man is not cruel. He simply sees a slave as a worker, not a human being. Juan asks how Brother Isidro sees him, and the monk replies, "I see a person. A boy. A human being with a soul, made in God's image." Brother Isidro takes Juan to the convent outside town to care for him while he grows stronger.

When the boy starts to cry, Brother Isidro soothes him by reciting the rosary with him as they walk to the convent. The convent is full of children, the lame, the sick, old people and animals. The Franciscan brothers in their brown robes are very poor, spending all their money helping the poor and sick. It is very different from the quiet place of scholarship and prayer that Juan expected. In response to his questions, Juan assures the brother that he has made his first Communion.

Juan stays at the convent for six days. On the seventh day, Brother Isidro takes the boy to the magistrate's house. In the morning, Juan will leave for Madrid. Standing in the corridor, Juan sees Brother Isidro arguing with the magistrate. He looks angry and sad. The brother blesses Juan when he leaves, so Juan knows he will not see the monk again. Juan stands for hours, until his legs ache. Finally, he sits in the hallway and falls asleep.

A servant wakes Juan with an angry kick. The magistrate says he is to be taken to Don Diego in Madrid the following day, with the rest of Dosa Emilia's possessions. The magistrate has been awarded no money to feed the boy and tells Juan he will have to help the muleteer to earn his keep on the journey. The magistrate says that because he is such a kind man, he will feed Juan before he leaves. Juan knows enough to distrust anyone who talks about his own generosity. In the kitchen, he is given a lukewarm bowl of thin soup. He falls asleep in the stables, covered by a horse blanket.

Chapter 2, In Which I Prepare for a Journey Analysis

In contrast to Brother Isidro's kindness, the magistrate is cruel. He can easily see Juan's weakened condition, and yet he forces the child to labor to the point of exhaustion. Despite Brother Isidro's excuses for the man, there seems little justification for such vicious behavior.

Juan continues to encounter both kindness and cruelty throughout his life. At the convent, Juan realizes that Brother Isidro's kindness extends to the lame, the elderly, children and animals. The monks beg to support their many charges. The convent is noisy and disorganized. In portraying a religious community that is cluttered and confusing, the author suggests that God works in many different ways among different people. These impoverished monks begging in the streets are doing God's will as surely as - and perhaps more so than - pale aesthetes praying in spiritual retreats. When Juan says he is a slave and a servant, Brother Isidro replies, "Who is not?" implying that every Christian is a servant of God, and by extension, the disadvantaged.

The reality of Juan's situation is made clear to him by the magistrate's behavior. He is simply a possession, like Dosa Emilia's books and tables. Now that she is dead, he will be transported like a stick of wood. Juan has hardly felt the yoke of slavery until this point in his life, because his owners have been kind, if sometimes impetuous. Juan may also accept his enslavement as God's will. He experiences true cruelty for the first time at the magistrate's hands. This foreshadows the privations of the journey to come.

Chapter 3, In Which I Meet Don Carmelo

Chapter 3, In Which I Meet Don Carmelo Summary

The next morning Juan is awakened with a dash of cold water to the face. A swarthy Romany man with scars on his face stands over him. Carmelo, the muleteer, insists on being addressed as a gentleman. When the mule is stubborn, Don Carmelo strikes him a fierce blow with casual cruelty. He tells Juan that he will receive the same, if he is not obedient. They travel ten exhausting miles the first day.

Juan is relieved when Don Carmelo stops early. He soon learns that the man loves to sing, dance and drink wine around the fire wherever he can find a gypsy camp. Juan is exhausted and hungry that first night. He begs Don Carmelo for food, and the man strikes him with a club. The man tells him to learn to steal his food "like a Romany rye."

The following day, Juan realizes that he has been protected and even loved all his life. He will have to follow Don Carmelo's dictum to steal, if he wants to eat. The man does not intend to supply Juan with food. Juan begins to take fruit, a cabbage or bread in the villages whenever he can. Don Carmelo frequently snares birds or rabbits, or milks a cow or ewe as the two pass a farm, but he never shares these windfalls with Juan. When he is the hungriest, Juan begs outside the churches, as Father Isidro did in Seville. If that is unsuccessful, sometimes he merely knocks on the doors of fine houses and begs.

When Don Carmelo sees that Juan is beginning to feed himself, he demands that the boy bring him bread each morning. Often the muleteer steals the money Juan has begged. When the man can find none of his own people, he amuses himself in the evening by beating Juan. The boy resolves to slip away and make his own way to Madrid.

Outside a church, a baker named Don Dimas asks if Juan belongs to Don Carmelo. Juan snobbishly replies that a gypsy cannot own a black slave. He adds, "Certainly not. Through adverse circumstances, I am in his caravan. He is taking goods to my master in Madrid."

The baker's son is ill, and he needs someone to help tend the oven. He offers two loaves of bread a day as wages. Juan drives a hard bargain and demands cheese or meat, and a warm coat when he leaves, as well. He agrees to serve for forty days. The man seems flattered when Juan asks for his word of honor.

When Juan's time is served, he collects the patchwork coat the baker's wife has sewn for him and begins the six-day trek to Madrid. After three days, he encounters a handsome blond stranger. The young man allows Juan to travel with him until the night before they reach Madrid. There, the man explains that he cannot be seen in Madrid

with a slave. If he does, Juan will be sold to pay the man's many debts. The man gives Juan a *real*, a Spanish coin, when they part. Juan hides the money in his sash.

That night, Juan sleeps in the stable, knowing he must go on alone in the morning. Suddenly he is jerked awake. Don Carmelo is beating him with a leather whip and shouting about his disloyalty in running away. Dazed and bloody, the boy stumbles into Madrid tied to the man's saddle. When he awakes, it is dark. He hears a voice calling him Juanico. He is taken into a house and given a bowl of meat with chopped onions.

Looking up, Juan sees a young man with black hair and deep eyes. He is short and slender, dressed in dark clothes with no jewels of any sort. Juan assumes he must be a secretary or clerk. Hesitantly, he asks if the Master of the house is kind. The young man assures him he will be cared for and never beaten again. Then he says, "I am the Master, Juanico. I will take care of you. You will learn to help me. You will be useful here in my house, but your tasks will not be too hard."

Chapter 3, In Which I Meet Don Carmelo Analysis

Don Carmelo's vicious treatment of the mules foreshadows his cruelty to Juan. De Treviso's portrait of the Romany as a cruel savage who demands that Juan learn to steal like a Romany child seems stereotypical. Carmelo cares only for dancing around a campfire at night with the beautiful gypsy women in colorful flowing skirts.

While the baker is not especially kind to Juan, he at least treats him fairly. The young blond stranger on the highway is a Christ-like figure. He is an impoverished, itinerate stranger who is nevertheless kind to Juan. He could easily have trapped Juan, selling the boy to settle part of his debts. Yet, the man is generous and even gives Juan money when they part. The author implies that the poor are as likely to be generous as the wealthy. The *real* symbolizes the kindness and generosity from strangers that Juan encounters on his travels. When Juan meets Don Diego, he proves to be kind, as well.

Juan's time serving at the bakery is reminiscent of Jesus' forty days of trial in the wilderness. Both are suffering a finite time of voluntary penance in hopes of future salvation. It is harsh duty, and Juan receives no special treatment from the family. Still, he is much better off than when he was with Carmelo.

Interestingly, despite Juan's many trials, he never considers escaping. Free of both Carmelo and his owner, Juan could travel to a distant city or to Africa in an attempt to avoid slavery altogether. The thought seems never to occur to him. This may be because Juan considers slavery God's will in his life. The reason may also lie in the text, when De Treviso says, "Freedom, I had learned on the highways, is hard defended, and all along the way the weak fall victims to the strong." Juan may simply have decided that the comforts of a warm bed, a full stomach and clean clothes outweigh the lure of freedom.

Chapter 4, In Which I Learn My Duties

Chapter 4, In Which I Learn My Duties Summary

Within a week, Juan has recovered from his injuries and been given a new suit of clothes. The clothes are a dignified solid brown, instead of the bright silks preferred by Dosa Emilia. This pleases Juan greatly. His gold earring has disappeared, along with the *real* hidden in his sash. They were undoubtedly stolen by the gypsy, Carmelo. Juan is pleased when his new master, Don Diego, gives him the second earring from the pair to wear. Juan eats his meals with the cook and has a small room off the kitchen to sleep in.

Juan soon learns that his duties will be helping his master in the studio. A large room filled with pure, cold light on the second floor, the studio is freezing in winter and sweltering in summer. When the windows are open to catch a breeze, it is filled with noxious odors of horse dung and a nearby tannery. The room is furnished only with several sturdy easels and a few chairs. Still, Juan is happy to work there. He quickly learns to clean the artist's brushes and painstakingly grind the colors for paints.

Once Juan has learned the simpler tasks, he is taught to stretch the canvas on frames. He practices for hours, attempting to make a perfectly square wooden frame and stretch the canvas on it tautly. Juan finds this a hard task to master, and he is reduced to tears. Master kindly demonstrates the technique, and Juan is soon adept at it.

Master also teaches Juan about color. He points out that a piece of blue brocade is actually not blue at all. It is violet with touches of rose and highlights of red and bright green, all over a faint underlay of blue. Juan looks again and realizes that Master is right. Delighted, Juan says that he would like to paint. Master replies cryptically, saying only that he cannot teach him. Juan wonders if Master dislikes teaching. That notion is soon dispelled, when the Mistress confides that several apprentices are to join the household.

Juan soon learns the reason he cannot be taught to paint. While slaves are permitted to learn crafts, Spanish law forbids them from competing with free men in the arts. Mistress tries to console Juan by allowing him to choose the colors for her embroidery and to be in charge of the colorful background clothes used by the painter. Soon a scroll arrives from the palace. Don Diego is commissioned to paint a portrait of the king.

Chapter 4, In Which I Learn My Duties Analysis

Diego Velbzquez is considered a precursor of the impressionist movement. His remarks on color are particularly evocative. Like the impressionists who followed him, Velbzquez painted with tiny dots of color, which from a short distance resolve into complex and accurate colors. Velbzquez believed that the painter's task is to accurately reproduce

the colors found in nature, rather than painting an object the color everyone assumes it to be.

In stealing Juan's earring and real, the muleteer Carmelo has symbolically separated Juan from any source of kindness, generosity or independence. This act of cruelty is counteracted by the kindness of Juan's new master and mistress. Don Diego is especially generous when he gives the second earring to Juan, symbolically restoring the boy's birthright. Juan is disappointed and puzzled at the seeming cruelty of Master's refusal to teach him to paint. Slavery becomes a major constraint in Juan's life only when he wishes to learn to paint. With kind owners and a comfortable life, Juan is satisfied with his lot in life. Mistress is kind as well, trying to compensate the boy for his limited opportunities.

Chapter 5, In Which Rubens Visits Our Court

Chapter 5, In Which Rubens Visits Our Court Summary

The studio is relocated to a light, airy room within the palace. For several weeks, they do not see the king, only his favorite, the Duke of Olivares. The duke is a vulgar, greasy fat man who nevertheless is convinced everyone loves him. After a few weeks, the king begins to visit the studio. He is quiet and shy, with yellow hair, blue eyes and pink skin. Juan can tell that the king hopes for friendship. The master is a man of few words, but the king seems to find his quiet consoling. The first portrait the master paints shows the king as a distrustful, lonely man, yet tender and full of hope.

One day in 1628, the king announces that the famous painter Peter Paul Rubens is to visit the court. The king insists that Master is the better painter, but Velbzquez says he will be glad to learn from the Dutch painter. With Rubens, Velbzquez and Juan visit the workshop of a maker of religious images, Gil Medina. The swaggering Duke of Olivares is their guide. Rubens remarks on the realism of the crucifixes. Don Medina confides that the duke frequently supplies tortured criminals, convicted to die, as models. One man allowed himself to be killed by crucifixion, to ensure an accurate reproduction. Returning home, Don Diego lectures one of his apprentices on the nature of art. "Art should be Truth; and Truth unadorned, un-sentimentalized, is Beauty. You must learn this, Cristobal."

Chapter 5, In Which Rubens Visits Our Court Analysis

Velbzquez's work is set apart by his devotion to realism, the art of accurately reproducing reality on canvas. Unlike other artists of the time who sought to flatter their subjects, Velbzquez painted portraits "warts and all." This was based on his belief that Art should be Truth, and rendering an ugly scene perfectly is far superior to glamorizing it. Velbzquez's preference for realism is based on religion. He believes that man is unable to improve on the work of God, however imperfect it may appear to the onlooker.

Despite Don Diego's devotion to using live models and producing faithful reproductions, he is shocked by the cruelty he finds at Gil Medina's workshop. Don Diego would never bring tortured and dying men, even criminals sentenced to death, into his workshop to benefit from their pain. Velbzquez's kindness contrasts starkly with the cruelty of Gil Medina and the Duke of Olivares.

Chapter 6, In Which I Fall in Love

Chapter 6, In Which I Fall in Love Summary

The banquet to honor Rubens is an elaborate, formal affair. Juan, like the other slaves, stands behind his master at the table, ready to fulfill any request. One of the ladies in Rubens's train is attended by a dainty young African slave girl named Miri. The girl has creamy skin, huge dark eyes and long, curling dark hair. After dinner, she entertains the party with Arabic songs played on her lute. Juan falls in love with the girl at the sight of her sorrowful face while she sings. His mistress soon notices and exclaims indulgently, "Juanico is in love, I think, Diego. Love is terrible." When the master receives a note from Rubens, he sends Juan with a reply. The boy hopes to catch a glimpse of Miri while he is at the Flemish painter's house.

When Juan arrives, he finds the Rubens household in turmoil. Miri has had a fit of convulsions and collapsed, unconscious. The painter sends Juan to summon a doctor. When Juan returns, he follows the doctor into the sick room. Miri's mistress tries to console her, but Miri says, "I am so afraid, for I am a trouble a disturbance for Mistress, and some day she will get tired of me. . . and sell me. . . " This is a fear that has never occurred to Juan. Suddenly, he is frightened as well. Rubens's entourage leaves Spain soon, and Juan's heart is broken. He knows he will never see Miri again. Yet, he cannot forget the new fear she has introduced, the prospect of being sold.

Chapter 6, In Which I Fall in Love Analysis

The author takes pains to point out that many slaves were taught valuable trades such as being a valet or a seamstress. Of course, since the master was legally entitled to all the slave's earnings, these skills benefited the master, not the slave. The cruelty of his situation is emphasized when Juan realizes that he cannot seek out Miri and will never see her again after the Rubens's entourage departs. Despite his master's kindness, Juan learns that slavery is essentially a cruel practice. A new fear is introduced, that he will be sold, perhaps to a master as vicious as the muleteer Carmelo is.

Chapter 7, In Which I Visit Italy

Chapter 7, In Which I Visit Italy Summary

Within a few months, the Velbzquez family is given an apartment in the palace near the studio. The artist's two small daughters frequently disrupt his work. One day Juan asks permission to go to church, and Mistress gives him several errands to run on the way. Returning, he stops at the shop of a lace maker he knows. The owner, Dosa Trini, says Juan always brings her good luck. Juan asks for a kitten from her Persian's recent litter. Dosa Trini gives him the runt of the litter, a tiny white fur ball with one blue eye and one green. When Mistress chastises Juan for being late, he shows her the kitten he has brought as a gift for the two little girls, Paquita and la Nisa. Mistress and the children are immediately captivated by the kitten, which they name Mooshi.

The king sends Don Diego to Italy to paint a portrait of his sister, the Infanta Maria. While he is there, Don Diego will buy art for the king and study the methods of the renowned Italian painters. While the painter and slave are gone, the family will stay with Dosa Juana's father in Seville. Their departure from Seville is hindered when Master is stricken by a migraine. Finally, he is well enough to travel. Tiny Paquita grasps Juan's legs and cries, "Juanico not go! Juanico not leave Paquita!" Despite the tiny girl's protests, the two men leave. They are soon aboard a small boat bound for Italy. Don Diego is horribly seasick all the way.

Italy is dirty and crowded, with pickpockets on every corner. Still, the entire country is devoted to art, and Juan can excuse many flaws. Don Diego exclaims over the Italian light. "The light here is different from that of Spain. Here the light seems liquid and has a soft glow, like firelight. In Spain, the light is clear, sharp, and blinding. Shadows are deeper, more dramatic, in Spain. Here they are gentle, and they soften the outlines of objects."

In Italy, Don Diego copies the work of other great masters such as Michelangelo, Raffael and Tintoretto to learn their techniques. Juan is inspired by Italy to finally become a painter himself. He sells his precious earring to buy paint, paintbrushes and canvas. Finally, the two men return to Seville. Their joyous homecoming is spoiled when they learn that the entire family has been sick. La Nisa, Don Diego's beloved younger daughter Ignacia, has died while the men were away.

Chapter 7, In Which I Visit Italy Analysis

Juan draws great comfort and serenity from the Roman Catholic Church with its fragrant incense and dim heights. In many ways, the Roman Catholic Church is the slave's only real home. Juan buys the kitten as a way of keeping the painter's two tiny daughters quiet while he works. The white Persian cat is a symbol of Juan's affection for the Velbzquez family. Paquita shows her great affection for him when she objects to his

departure. The slave has mixed feelings about returning to Seville. He has fond memories of his mother there, but the journey carries painful reminders of Carmelo's cruelty. Juan is confident enough in his mistress's kindness to ask her to be generous to Brother Isidro's mission.

More of Velbzquez's view of art is revealed in his comments on the light in Italy. Like the impressionists after him, Velbzquez believes that a painter merely renders light on canvas. To do so accurately is his highest aim. Juan's growing commitment to Art is illustrated by the sale of his one heirloom, his mother's earring. By selling the ring, he is symbolically leaving childhood behind. He is also embracing a commitment to art as the driving force of his life, rather than his family or slavery. This action is fueled partly by the fact that it is not illegal for slaves to paint in Italy.

Chapter 8, In Which I Speak of a Small Red Flower

Chapter 8, In Which I Speak of a Small Red Flower Summary

As the years go by, the master paints many portraits of the king and powerful courtiers, including the Duke of Olivares. Although Master is always courteous, it is clear he feels real affection for the king, but not the duke. The normally shy and reserved king often talks intimately to the painter during his sittings. One day the painter pleases the king when he says, "Your Majesty was not made by God to converse, but to listen, with affection and paternal care to his subjects."

Various apprentices come and go over the years. Juan listens to each lesson carefully and applies it to his own secret painting. One apprentice, Juan Bautista del Mazo, is a vain, handsome young man. Paquita has grown into a beautiful young woman, and del Mazo asks Juan to carry a secret message to her. Juan refuses. It is impossible for him to refuse Paquita, however. She asks him to take a tiny red flower to del Mazo, and Juan complies. Soon he is carrying notes between the two, despite the danger.

Juan is relieved when Velbzquez discovers one of the notes. The painter corrects his daughter's spelling and replaces the wilted red flower with a flawlessly painted one, signing it with his characteristic large V. When del Mazo receives the note, he realizes that Velbzquez is giving tacit approval for the match. The two young people celebrate feverishly at dinner that night, but Dosa Juana sobs quietly into her handkerchief. Velbzquez asks his wife if being married to a painter has been so bad. She replies that it has been heaven. Don Diego pats her arm and tells her, "We will allow Paquita a small section of heaven, too." Don Diego finishes a portrait of Paquita, showing her in love and radiantly happy.

Chapter 8, In Which I Speak of a Small Red Flower Analysis

Although Juan has lived and worked with the Velbzquez family for many years, he is wary of abetting the two lovers. He realizes that should their tryst be discovered, he may well be punished. Juan's status as a slave makes his very existence precarious. Theoretically, a master could even have a slave put to death at his whim.

Velbzquez's quiet charm and kindness are displayed in his reaction to the clandestine affair. Far from being angry, he is understanding of the two young lovers and urges his wife to accept her daughter's marriage. Characteristically, Don Diego has waited to finish the portrait of Paquita until he can see into her heart, to paint the Truth.

Chapter 9, In Which I Make Friends at Court

Chapter 9, In Which I Make Friends at Court Summary

About a year after Paquita's wedding, Juan accompanies Don Diego on a trip to the north of Spain with the royal family. Juan is nervous that someone will discover his illicit paintings in his absence. Although Don Diego still has no idea that Juan is painting, he notices the slave's discomfort. Don Diego generously gives him a wooden box with a lock for his possessions.

On the hunting excursion, Juan notices that the king's favorite hunting dog, Corso, is ill. He treats the dog with herbs and medicines for a liver ailment, and the hound soon improves. His Majesty is exceedingly pleased, and gives Juan a bag of ducats, which Don Diego allows him to keep. Juan feels especially guilty for concealing his painting from his master, when the man is so kind. Still, he reasons that for his own safety Don Diego should know nothing of Juan's illegal activities.

Back at the palace, Don Diego begins to paint several of the court dwarves. He paints El Bobo and Francisco Lezcano, known as El Niso de Vallecas, a man who is no taller than a three-year-old boy. The dwarf tells Juan, "We are brothers, you and I, because we are enslaved by reason of the way we were born. You were born strong, a fine normal being, but black. I was born, as I am, a man in the body of a little creeping child. Why did God put this burden on us, Juanico?" Juan replies that God said the lowest will be the first, and those who exhaust themselves will be brought low. When he looks at the paintings of the dwarves, Juan sees in every case a soul imprisoned.

Chapter 9, In Which I Make Friends at Court Analysis

The paintings of the dwarves are among Velbzquez's most famous works. In keeping with the artist's preference for realism, he has accurately rendered subjects of lower status deemed unworthy of a portrait by many others. Velbzquez seeks to understand and applaud creation, without attempting to improve upon it. Again, the painter was ahead of his time, when people of humble birth, including most women, children and workers, were not considered appropriate subjects for artwork.

The dwarf's statement that being born black is a disability akin to being a dwarf seems insensitive, irrational and racist by today's standards. Many people would argue that being black is not a defect, but a difference to be celebrated. However, this statement reflects the culture of the time, when Juan's skin tone is seen as responsible for him being confined to slavery. De Treviso also seems to accept that to have dark skin inevitably dooms one to a lifetime of slavery, at least within the context of the novel's setting, although there are many free Negroes in the novel. Thus, instead of attributing

enslavement to the treachery of slavers, it is attributed to the color of the character's skin, as if slavery is a natural destiny of dark-toned people. Many readers will find these assumptions offensive.

The primacy of religion in Juan's life is emphasized when Juan offers solace to the dwarf. Juan assures him that those who are the humblest in this life will be rewarded the most in heaven. Don Diego's kindness towards the slave is illustrated again in this chapter. Master allows Juan to have a locked box for his personal possessions. The king also rewards Juan lavishly for saving the life of his favorite hunting dog, and Don Diego allows Juan to keep the money the king has given him. Technically, as a slave, Juan is not allowed to own anything. Everything he has, by rights, belongs to his master.

Chapter 10, In Which I Confess

Chapter 10, In Which I Confess Summary

The apprentices come and go. After Paquita's marriage, Master often sends them to her husband, Juan Bautista. No doubt, Don Diego is thinking that the young people, now parents of a baby girl, can use the money. One day, however, a new apprentice arrives. His is Bertolomy Esteban Murillo of Seville. Murillo is a broad, lively fellow with a round face. Velbzquez is impressed that the young man paints angels and saints from live models. Murillo says that he paints what is holy in each person.

Murillo soon befriends Juan, calling him "Juan amigo" instead of the diminutive Juanico, as everyone else does. Despite his lighthearted joviality, Murillo is a deeply religious man and a daily communicant. When he learns Juan no longer receives communion, Murillo wants to know why. Juan admits that he is sick with repentance and guilt over his illicit painting. Murillo convinces him that painting itself is not a sin and that the law forbidding slaves from painting is unjust. He agrees that Juan must confess his sins of stealing paints from his master and lying.

Juan is particularly torn because he has just finished painting a black Madonna. He wonders if it is blasphemous self-exaltation to create a Virgin of his own race. Murillo assures him it is not and that God would want him to find the beautiful and holy in all people. Murillo has earned Juan's loyalty, and the slave secretly vows to serve the man as well as he can.

Chapter 10, In Which I Confess Analysis

Murillo's philosophy of Art is similar to that of Velbzquez, but for different reasons. Both men practice realism. Murillo, however, sees divinity in each person and therefore feels no need to improve upon them. Velbzquez believes that God made the imperfections as well as the beauty in life and attempts to accurately reproduce both.

Much of Juan's sometimes-puzzling acceptance of slavery is explained in this chapter. Murillo asks if it is a sin to be a slave. Juan replies, "No. It is an injustice. But I am a religious man. I do not expect justice here on earth, but only in heaven. And I am not a rebellious slave. I love Master and Mistress." Thus, in Juan's belief system, slavery is God's will for him. He would sin by being a rebellious or violent slave.

Murillo's exceeding kindness is a balm to Juan. Murillo's argument that painting is illegal, but not sinful, does seem theologically suspect. Since at the time, the king was widely believed to be invested with power from God, it would appear that breaking the law would be a sin. Juan, however, accepts Murillo's arguments and is able to make confession and go to Holy Eucharist again, which gives him great solace.

Chapter 11, In Which I Return to Italy

Chapter 11, In Which I Return to Italy Summary

After three years, Murillo returns to his native Seville to marry and to paint many religious figures. In 1649, the king sends Juan and his master to Italy again. Both Juan and Master are violently ill during a storm on the sea voyage. During the tossing of the ship, Master is flung against a wooden box, and his right hand is badly scratched. The hand soon becomes swollen and inflamed. Once ashore, Juan nurses Master back to health, and Velbzquez is exceedingly grateful. "You shall ask what you wish of this hand, Juanico," he tells the slave. Juan replies that he wants for nothing now, but hopes he may ask in the future if he needs something.

While traveling through the countryside, the two are caught in a storm. Master's hand again becomes swollen and red. None of the medicines seems to make it better. Not knowing what else to do, Juan goes to a church and prays. He promises the Virgin Mary that if Master is healed, he will stop concealing his painting. When Juan returns, the swelling is gone, and the Master is sleeping peacefully.

Velbzquez is somewhat hesitant about his ability to paint with the injured hand. The king of Spain arranges a commission for him to paint a portrait of the Pope, but the Italian nobles are still leery of this upstart Spanish artist. Juan convinces his master to paint his portrait as a practice study. Velbzquez says, "Yes, I will paint you, Juanico. As you are, loyal, resourceful, and good. And also proud and dignified. God guide my hand."

Chapter 11, In Which I Return to Italy Analysis

Once again, Juan's religious faith is a tremendous source of solace for him. At the moment of despair, he is able to go to church and pray for Don Diego to be healed. His prayer is miraculously answered, and Master's hand is healthy, with no sign of the scratches, when he returns.

Velbzquez, kind as always, offers to give Juan anything he wants in gratitude. Many slaves would ask to be freed, but Juan does not. Instead, he assures Master that he has everything that he wants. He does ask if he may call upon the Don in the future, should need arise. Velbzquez graciously says yes.

Chapter 12, In Which My Portrait Is Painted

Chapter 12, In Which My Portrait Is Painted Summary

Velbzquez paints Juan in his everyday clothes, adding only a large lace collar that belongs to Don Diego himself. The portrait is amazingly accurate. Juan is concerned because Don Diego still has received no commissions from the Italian nobles. One morning he takes the portrait to the Duke of Ponti. The duke reluctantly admits him, and Juan shows him the portrait. Juan repeats this stratagem several times. Everyone admires the painting's realism. Soon, Italian nobles are clamoring to have their portrait painted by the Spaniard.

When Don Diego paints the Pope, Juan becomes concerned. The portrait shows the Pontiff as a sharp, ambitious, unmerciful, difficult man, just as he is in real life. Juan worries whether the Pope will be pleased with such a portrait. The master assures Juan that everyone is inured to his or her own face, and most people are fond of the way they look. True to his prediction, the Pontiff is delighted with the portrait.

Shortly before Christmas, the two men return home. Mistress has become sickly and weak in their absence. She acquired a new slave, an African woman named Lolis to nurse the mistress and tend the household. The full-bodied woman has an appealing low voice. Lolis has the ability to foresee the future. She says that at times, it unfurls before her like a painted curtain. Her first revelation is that the mistress will die.

Lolis clearly resents her status as a slave, but she is reluctant to influence Juan. She tells him, "I would not have you bitter and rebellious, as I am. It is too hard, hiding it, and waiting, waiting, always. You are a good man. Be happy." Gradually Juan realizes he has fallen in love with Lolis. He decides to ask Master to grant the request he promised in Italy. Juan will ask for Lolis to be his wife.

Chapter 12, In Which My Portrait Is Painted Analysis

The Italian nobles are reluctant to commission any portraits from the Spanish painter, not wanting to suggest that Spain is superior to Italy in anything, especially painting. When Don Diego produces a realistic portrait of Juan, instead of the glamorized, flattering and sentimental work of many Italian painters of the time, everyone is impressed. Portions of this chapter are based on fact. There is, in fact, a famous portrait of the slave Juan Pareja, painted by Diego Velbzquez. Juan de Pareja did carry it around Rome in 1649, soliciting commissions from noblemen. Many historians believe that Velbzquez required his slave to do so. The loose, fluid brushwork of this portrait is considered by many to have borne the seeds of impressionism.

Lolis has a very different view of slavery from Juan's own. She is hostile, resentful and rebellious, although she usually controls her emotions in front of her owners. This is partly because Lolis has been treated cruelly by her former masters. She bitterly resents all white people, not just her owners. Another reason for Lolis's bitterness is that unlike Juan, she does not accept slavery as God's will for her. In fact, she sees it as a violation of God's will. Still, Lolis realizes that Juan is much happier as he is and does not try to convert him to her point of view.

Chapter 13, In Which I Am Made Free

Chapter 13, In Which I Am Made Free Summary

The king often visits the studio informally, quietly passing away an hour admiring the various paintings propped against the wall. When he is alone with Don Diego and his slave, he does not require the usual formalities, although Don Diego always keeps cakes and wine on hand for such occasions. Juan places one of his own canvases among those leaning against the walls. It is a large portrait of the king's three favorite hounds. One of the dogs is Corso, the hunting dog that Juan cured. Juan trembles in fear waiting for the king to discover it.

One day, the king turns the painting over, as Juan knew he eventually would. The painting is good, but both the king and Don Diego immediately realize it is not Velbzquez's work. Juan throws himself at the king's feet, confesses and begs for mercy. The king is faced with a crisis when he learns of Juan's guilt. He has great affection for the slave. The portrait itself reminds the king of the incident when Juan saved the life of his favorite hunting hound, Corso. The king is deeply grateful to Juan and does not want to imprison him, or even worse, have him executed. Yet, Juan has arrogantly defied the king's edict. There seems no way for a man as kind as the king to enforce the law, which is his duty. Don Diego rescues all three of them from this dilemma with his quick action.

The king asks, "What. . . what shall we do. . . with this. . . this. . . disobedient slave?" Master, paying bills at his desk, asks the king's permission to write an urgent letter before he replies. The king assents. Don Diego quickly scratches the letter out and presents it to the king. When he is finished, Master tells Juan to rise and gives him the letter. It is a letter of manumission, granting Juan his freedom from slavery. The letter also grants Juan the position of Don Diego's assistant. After Juan has read it, Don Diego shows it to the king, saying, "You were saying, Sire, something about a slave? I have no slave." The king smiles broadly, greatly pleased at this solution to his thorny problem.

As the two men leave, Don Diego calls his former slave Juan, instead of Juanico, for the first time. When Juan calls him Master, Don Diego objects. Juan points out that Master also means Maestro and teacher. Juan tells the man, "I was never ashamed to call you my master, and I am not ashamed now. I shall always give you the respect of that title." On the way back to their home, Juan decides to make a happy day even happier. He asks Don Diego to allow the slave Lolis to be his wife. Don Diego agrees to ask his Dosa Juana.

A few days later, Don Diego broaches the matter with Dosa Juana in front of Lolis. To Juan's surprise, Lolis refuses to marry him, saying she does not wish to bear children into slavery. Don Diego immediately understands. He insists that Dosa Juana will want to give Lolis her freedom, as a wedding present. Mistress takes up a pen and

immediately writes the manumission papers. Once she is free, Lolis agrees to become Juan's wife.

Chapter 13, In Which I Am Made Free Analysis

This scene of Juan de Pareja's manumission is based on a documented historical incident, although no one knows if Velbzquez was truly ignorant of his slave's painting. By granting Juan his freedom, Don Diego eliminates the problem. This is a very generous act, as a slave was a significant investment and all the money will be lost in granting Juan his freedom. Don Diego will even have to pay Juan a salary now. The king is obviously relieved at this solution. Don Diego acts kindly yet again when he grants Lolis her freedom and gives his permission for the two to wed.

Lolis's abhorrence of slavery causes her to decline Juan's first offer of marriage. Although Lolis loves him, any children she bears as a slave will become the property of her owner, Dosa Juana. Lolis believes that God created all humans free and that slavery is a great sin. She cannot bring herself to doom her children to slavery, however much she may care for Juan. Fortunately, Don Diego's kindness solves this problem, as well.

Chapter 14, In Which I Say a Sad Good-by

Chapter 14, In Which I Say a Sad Good-by Summary

Juan and Lolis are married in a joyous ceremony at the church where Juan confessed with Murillo. Master and Paquita are there, as well as Paquita's husband. Mistress is very ill, but she gives her blessing before they go to the church. They have been given two rooms in Don Diego's house for their own, and the king has sent a bag of thirty ducats.

A series of tragedies follows. Paquita dies in childbirth shortly afterwards. Her baby is stillborn. Less than two months later, Mistress succumbs to her illness, as well. The king often comes to keep Master company, sitting silently in the studio. The king gives Master a brilliant commission, asking him to design the pavilion for the wedding of the king's sister, the Infanta Maria Teresa, to King Louis XIV of France. Designing the paintings, floral arrangements and pavilion distracts Master from his grief.

After the wedding, Don Diego falls ill with a fever. Lolis and Juan nurse him for twenty-one days. Finally, the fever breaks, and they celebrate. Master is very weak, but he will recover. One day, Don Diego asks Juan to take him to the studio again. He can barely walk. In the studio, Don Diego collapses in front of his latest painting. He is dead. After a quiet funeral, Master is laid to rest near the graves of his wife and daughter. The king gives Juan his former master's easel, clothes and a goodly sum of money.

Juan and Lolis decide to return to Seville. Before Juan leaves, the king asks him to help with one task. He has awarded Don Diego the honor of being proclaimed a Knight of Santiago, posthumously. Now, the king wants Juan to help him paint the Cross of Santiago on Don Diego's portrait. With the King holding the brush, and Juan guiding his hand, they add the badge of honor to the self-portrait with the royal family called Las Meninas.

Chapter 14, In Which I Say a Sad Good-by Analysis

Juan and Lolis's wedding illustrates how thoroughly the Velbzquez family, through their kindness to the slaves, has become their surrogate family. Juan is as fond of Paquita as he would be of his own daughter. He is deeply touched that Master and Mistress do their best to make the occasion special. Even the king contributes to the happy event. The importance of religion in Juan's life is emphasized again, as he chooses the church that was the site of his spiritual reconciliation to be the location for the wedding.

De Treviso again draws on history for her material. Las Meninas, a portrait of the Spanish royal family showing the painter working, is Velbzquez's most famous work. Art historians tell us that a different hand added the Cross of Santiago on the painter's

chest, later. Las Meninas is Velbzquez's ultimate treatise on the nature of Art. Ostensibly a picture of the Maids of Honor of the Spanish court, it is actually a beautifully composed portrait of the royal family. The king and queen are evident only in a reflection in the mirror, although they are the fulcrum of the painting. Invoking realism again, the artist created a composition showing the tiny Infanta Marguerita surrounded by her young Ladies in Waiting, a dwarf and her pet hound. Art, Velbzquez suggests, is what is going on behind the painter's back while he is creating the stiff, posed portrait. The picture is so true to life that in earlier times it was inventoried simply as "the family picture."

Chapter 15, In Which I Find Another Home

Chapter 15, In Which I Find Another Home Summary

Juan feels good to be back in Seville again. Before he looks for a job, Juan goes to find his old friend, Bertolomy Esteban Murillo. As soon as Murillo sees him, he greets the former slave with the words "Juan, my friend!" and invites him to stay overnight. Murillo offers Juan rooms in his house and says Juan can paint as much as he likes. Juan is deeply touched that Murillo, who has not yet heard that Juan has been freed, would treat him so kindly. Juan reflects that to Murillo, it never mattered that he was a slave.

Chapter 15, In Which I Find Another Home Analysis

Bertolomy Esteban Murillo offers Juan a place to stay and a studio to work in, even when he believes Juan may be an escaped slave doing illegal work. Juan is deeply touched by the man's kindness and realizes that he has found a true friend.

Characters

Juan de Pareja

Juan de Pareja is the protagonist of the novel. He is a Negro man, born into slavery in 1610. His mother is Zulema, a beautiful Negro slave. Juan never knows who his father is. He suspects that a Spaniard from one of Master's warehouses is his father. As a boy, Juan is content to be a slave and devoted to his mistress, who provides him with food and occasionally allows him to watch strolling players at the fair. Juan must go to work as a pageboy at the age of six, when his mother dies. Juan is deeply religious. As a boy, he often loses track of time in church, and as a man, religion is a source of great solace to him. Juan serenely accepts slavery as his lot in life, believing that it is God's will for him. He resents his cruel treatment at the hands of people like the muleteer Carmelo, but both of Juan's owners are kind.

Once in the household of the famous painter Diego Velbzquez, art mesmerizes Juan. He agrees with many of Don Diego's philosophies regarding the importance of realism in art, and the relationship between art and truth. Juan's passionate commitment to art leads him to secretly begin painting, an occupation that is forbidden to slaves in Spain. Wracked with guilt over his duplicity, Juan avoids Holy Eucharist for several years. Bertolomy Esteban Murillo helps Juan reconcile with the church while Murillo is serving an apprenticeship with Don Diego.

Don Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velbzquez

The character of Don Diego is based on the renowned Baroque painter whose works hang in most major art museums. After Dosa Emilia dies, her nephew, Don Diego, inherits her property, including Juan. Master is thin, dark and silent. He is an unassuming man of few words, preferring to speak through his paintings. Velbzquez usually dresses in black and avoids any jewels or shows of opulence. Velbzquez is devoted to his wife Dosa Juana and to his two small daughters, Paquita and La Nisa. Velbzquez is rather delicate, frequently suffering migraine headaches and prone to seasickness, fevers and infections. Despite his taciturn habits, Velbzquez is a very kind man, and Juan finds slavery tolerable because of this.

Don Diego is the premier artist of Spain in his generation. Soon after Juan joins the household, Velbzquez is attached to the court of Philip IV of Spain. He rapidly becomes the primary painter of the Spanish royal family. Velbzquez is devoted to realism. He would rather create an accurate portrait than a beautiful or flattering one. Juan is concerned that the Pope, among others, will be offended, but Don Diego points out that everyone is partial to his or her own face. His predictions are accurate, and the portraits are universally well received. Velbzquez's brushstrokes and use of color inspired the Impressionist painters. His works have been copied and adapted by modern artists such as Salvatore Dali and Pablo Picasso.

Dosa Juana de Miranda Pacheco Velbzquez

Juan's new mistress in Madrid, Dosa Juana, is the wife of renowned painter Diego Velbzquez and the daughter of his former tutor, Francisco Pacheco. She is plump and round, a bustling woman and a competent housekeeper. Dosa Juana is devoted to her husband and takes care of all his clothes herself instead of letting Juan do it, because she enjoys caring for her husband. She is kind to Juan, giving him pocket money and allowing him to play with her daughters. Dosa Juana treats the slave almost as a member of the family.

Zulema

A beautiful black woman, Juan's mother is a slave who works as a seamstress for Dosa Emilia. She dies of a mysterious illness when Juan is just five, leaving him only two earrings, golden hoops that he cherishes. She is tender and kind, with a rich contralto voice. Her skin is beautiful, glowing like a dark grape.

Dosa Emilia de Silva y Rodriguez

Juan's first owner is a young, capricious woman from the city of Oporto in Portugal. She is religious, attending Mass every day. After his mother's death, Juan works as her pageboy. The mistress is slender and beautiful, devoted to her ailing husband. She is temperamental but often kind. When she is served hot cocoa while visiting, she allows Juan to drain the dregs of the cup. Most importantly, the mistress, barely literate herself, teaches Juan to read and write, valuable skills for a slave. Juan is content as a pageboy until Mistress, and everyone else in the house, dies of the plague when he is nine years old.

Don Basilio de Silva y Rodriguez

Juan's first master is slender, dark and sickly. He eats little and soon suffers a relapse of a mysterious malady. By the time Master dies, Juan can write well enough to pen the letter informing Mistress's nephew Diego of the death.

Francisco Pacheco

A painter, Dosa Juana Velbzquez's father and Velbzquez's former tutor, Francisco Pacheco lives in Madrid.

Brother Isidro

A Franciscan monk frequently seen ministering to the sick on the streets of Seville, Brother Isidro cares for Juan when he has been abandoned. He is an old man, with a

white tonsure. Several of his teeth are missing, and he whistles when he talks. Brother Isidro was a soldier traveling to the Indies, when his ship sank. Only the monk survived. He realized that this was a sign that God meant him to nurse the sick. The brother protects Juan and hides him at the convent for six days to prepare for his journey to Madrid.

Carmelo

The Romany muleteer has a dark complexion and a scarred face. He is about thirty, broad shouldered and savagely handsome, with dark eyes and gleaming teeth. The man is casually brutal to both his mules and Juan, while the boy is in his care. Don Carmelo refuses to feed the boy and tells him to steal his bread. When Juan reluctantly complies, Don Carmelo takes his food away and laughs. The gypsy cares more about singing, dancing and drinking wine around a campfire each night than caring for his charge.

The Duke of Olivares

The king's favorite, the duke is swarthy, fat, vulgar and greasy. He has mean eyes but is constantly joking and laughing. The duke is certain that everyone will love him. In the ultimate act of cruelty, the duke supplies the ruined bodies of dying men tortured by the Inquisition to icon maker Gil Merino as models.

The King

Based on Philip IV of Spain, the king is tall and pale. He has pink skin, blue eyes and yellow hair. His shoulders are broad, but his legs are spindly. The king has a rather bony face with an under slung jaw. He is shy, uncertain and hopes for friendship. He has both a lisp and a speech impediment, which makes him even shyer and more reluctant to speak in public.

Miri

Miri is Juan's first love, a beautiful, dainty African girl with creamy skin, huge dark eyes and curling dark hair. She has lived among the Arab people and entertains with Arabic songs on her lyre. When she sings, Miri's face is a mask of sorrow and longing. Miri's health is delicate, and Juan is sent to summon a doctor when the girl goes into convulsions.

Francisca "Paquita" de Silva y Velbzquez

Juan becomes deeply attached to Don Diego's older daughter, Francisca, nicknamed Paquita. The girl is an active child who grows into a beautiful, plump young woman with

dark eyes and hair. Paquita uses Juan's deep affection to convince him to carry notes to her paramour, her father's apprentice, Juan Bautista del Mazo. Juan is secretly relieved when Don Diego discovers the couple's duplicity and even happier when Master gives his blessing to the union. Francisca suffers a severe depression after the birth of her daughter and dies in childbirth just a few years later.

Ignacia "La Nisa" de Silva y Velbzquez

Ignacia, nicknamed La Nisa, is Velbzquez's younger daughter. With her sister, the happy child often interrupts her father's work in the studio. It is part of Juan's duties to distract and occupy the youngsters. La Nisa is barely a toddler when her father and Juan travel to Italy. Upon returning to Seville, they learn the tiny girl has died.

Juan Bautista del Mazo

An apprentice of Velbzquez, del Mazo is handsome and vain. His hair is trained into the tiny ringlets of a Greek scholar. The young man asks Juan to carry secret messages to Paquita. At first Juan refuses, but he soon finds himself involved in the lovers' intrigue. Fortunately, when Velbzquez learns of the match, he approves of it, and he congratulates the two young lovers.

Bertolomy Esteban Murillo

Based on the most famous Spanish religious painter of the Baroque period, Bertolomy is an apprentice from Seville who arrives unexpectedly. He is stocky, with a round dark face and lively, sparkling brown eyes. Murillo is filled with good humor, always laughing and singing. More important, he is a deeply religious and truly kind man. He becomes Juan's first true friend, calling him "Juan amigo" instead of Juanico. Bertolomy convinces Juan that painting is not a sin and coaxes him to return to the Holy Eucharist. When Juan returns to Seville, Bertolomy welcomes him and offers him shelter without even asking if the slave has run away.

Lolis

After the second trip to Italy, Juan returns to find that Mistress has grown weak and sickly. She has purchased a new slave to act as nurse and tend to household duties. The quiet African woman's name is Lolis. She is full-bodied, strong and graceful with a deep throaty voice. Lolis has an explosive temper, and unlike Juan, she bitterly resents her status as a slave. Lolis is gifted with the second site, the ability to accurately predict the future. Her first revelation is that Mistress will die of her illness. Her second is that she and Juan will marry.

Objects/Places

Seville

Juan is born in Seville, where his mother lives. He lives there until he is about nine or ten years old. When Juan's mistress is killed by the plague, he is inherited by her nephew, the painter Diego Velbzquez, who lives in Madrid.

Madrid

Juan is escorted to Madrid by the cruel muleteer Carmelo. He continues to live in Madrid for many years, a member of the famous painter's household.

Italy

To Juan, the cities of Italy seem dirtier than those in Spain, and the people seem less friendly. There are pickpockets on every street, and Juan finds it hard to like the people. Still, there is art everywhere in Italy. The entire country seems devoted to art, which excuses many failings in Juan's eyes.

Toto

Toto is a spaniel, a tiny lap dog. Along with Juan, he is deserted by the servants during the plague. Brother Isidro rescues Toto and makes sure he has a good home.

The Studio

Velbzquez's studio is a large room on the second floor of his home. It is almost bare, except for the easels and a chair or two. The light in the studio is pure and brilliant. The room is bitterly cold in the winter and hot as an oven in the summer. When the windows are open, the reek of horse dung from the streets and the odor of a nearby tannery invade the room. Don Diego is oblivious to every discomfort in the room. He is only affected by the changes in light on foggy or rainy days.

The Earring

When Zulema dies, she leaves a golden bracelet and a pair of gold hoop earrings. Both were gifts from Juan's father. Dosa Emilia keeps the bracelet, as is her right as mistress. She generously gives one of the earrings to Juan to wear and promises to keep the second for him. The earring symbolizes his mother's love and Juan's pride in his heritage. It is stolen from him by the cruel muleteer Carmelo.

Juan is especially grateful when Don Diego gives him the second earring, a true act of kindness. Symbolically, the artist is restoring Juan's pride and the memory of his mother's love to him. By selling the earring in Italy to buy paints, Juan is symbolically leaving childhood behind. He is also embracing a commitment to art as the driving force of his life, rather than his family or slavery.

The Real

Along the road from Madrid to Seville, Juan encounters a young blond man who is kind. The man allows Juan to travel under his protection and generously gives him a golden *real*, a Spanish coin. The real symbolizes kindness, and Juan is especially disappointed when it is stolen by the muleteer Carmelo.

Mooshi

Charged with keeping two active toddlers quiet while his master paints, Juan gets the girls a kitten. The tiny white Persian has one blue eye and one green one. The kitten is a symbol of the affection Juan has come to feel for the Velbzquez family, especially Paquita and la Nisa. Mooshi is a favorite of the family for many years.

Corso

Juan notices that the king's favorite hunting hound, Corso, is ill, and he cures the dog of a liver ailment. The king is grateful and generously rewards the slave with money. When the king discovers a painting by Juan, it is a portrait of his three favorite dogs, now deceased. The king well remembers Juan's kindness and is loathe to punish him, but he cannot let such a brazen lawbreaker go unpunished. He is saved from this dilemma by Don Diego's act of freeing Juan.

Portrait of Juan de Pareja

While in Italy in 1648 to paint a portrait of the Pope, Velbzquez produces a realistic portrait of Juan. The portrait is displayed publicly and soon earns the master many commissions. One of Velbzquez's best known portraits, it was purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City for the record price of $5.5 million in 1971.

Portrait of Pope Innocent X

When Velbzquez paints a realistic portrait of the Pope revealing the man to be suspicious, shifty-eyed and unmerciful, Juan is worried. Don Diego assures him, however, that people are partial to their own images, and the Pope will be satisfied. This proves to be the case. The portrait today is among Velbzquez's most famous works.

Las Meninas

The portrait of the Spanish Royal Family called Las Meninas was so famous that it was inventoried for many years simply as "the family picture." Considered by many Velbzquez's masterpiece, the elaborate composition shows the Infanta Margarita flanked by her Ladies in Waiting, favorite dog and a dwarf. They are playing behind the painter while he executes a formal portrait of the king and queen, visible only in a mirror. The painting has been called a statement on the nature of art and "the theology of painting." Art historians say that the Cross of Santiago was added to Velbzquez's chest years after the original work. A key plot point is de Treviso's fictionalized explanation that Juan de Pareja helps the king to bestow this honor.

Setting

The events all take place during the first half of the seventeenth century, at first in Seville and later in Madrid, where Velazquez and King Philip live. Twice, Velazquez and Pareja visit Italy to buy art for their king. The people of Seville live in constant fear of the plague; Pareja's first owners die from the plague, and he nearly succumbs, too. His first mistress's nephew, Don Diego, inherits him, and Pareja is sent to Madrid to live with his new owners. Madrid is an exciting place, the center of an empire. Here, Pareja lives with Don Diego's family in a house that has a room open to most of the day's sunlight. In that room, Don Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velazquez has his painting studio, and young Pareja learns to care for the artist's paints and other work materials. When Velazquez becomes painter to the king, he moves his work to a studio in the palace; again, it is a room with much sunlight during the day. As their relationship changes from that of master and slave to that of trusted friends, Pareja becomes Velazquez's indispensable assistant. When the king commissions him to journey to Italy and buy art for the palace, Velazquez takes Pareja with him. The two men are impressed by the masterworks of such artists as Michelangelo. On their first trip, they find that the society of art patrons is closed to them, but on their second trip, Pareja and Velazquez break into Italy's artistic society, and Velazquez wins high praise as a great portrait painter.

Social Sensitivity

I, Juan de Pareja is unrelenting in its portrayal of both the harsh and the fascinating aspects of seventeenth-century Spain. The author depicts Carmelo's cruelty and the many humiliations of slavery, including the treatment of Pareja as a plaything. The straightforward presentations of unpleasant scenes never approach sensationalism.

The point that slavery is a cruel and terrible life seems worth the emphasis Trevino's honest portrayal gives it, and the novel's theme of love tempers the cruelty.

The religious issues of I, Juan de Pareja may trouble some readers. The Catholic church is primarily shown in a positive light, and Pareja's religious faith serves as a source of strength in his hard life. Those who object to religious themes in their children's readings might object to this novel because religion is pervasive in the characters' lives. But religion's enormous influence on the daily life of seventeenth-century Spain is historical fact, and Trevino could hardly leave it out and maintain her novel's historical accuracy. Others might be distressed by some of the cruelty associated with religion, particularly the use of a dying man for Medina's depiction of Christ's crucifixion. The piety with which the crucifixion was committed and the victim's supposed consent may lead some readers to feel that their own faith is being criticized. Teachers should be prepared for questions about the depiction of Medina's methods; pointing out that it is historically accurate may stimulate some discussion of the role of religion in seventeenth-century Spain.

Literary Qualities

Just as Velazquez advocates an artistic truthfulness that reveals the inner life of the subject as well as the outward appearance, I, Juan de Pareja presents inner truths as well as accurate historical facts. In her Newbery Award acceptance speech, Trevino declared, "I, Juan de Pareja tells a story I learned, loved, and researched many years before it was written." Her careful research shows everywhere. Seville and its people are colorfully portrayed; life in Madrid is presented in complex detail, creating the sense that Trevino herself visited the city and knew the people. The careful reconstruction of seventeenth-century Spain provides a realistic backdrop for the events of Pareja's life.

This well-constructed backdrop adds depth and believability to the novel's main characters. Trevino transcends the facts of history to examine the humanity of the people who made that history. Little is known about Velazquez's and Pareja's actual personalities, but the author constructs well-rounded characters from the skeletal facts available to her. Pareja narrates the novel from a perspective many years after Velazquez's death, when Pareja has become an esteemed painter himself.

Although his narration makes him the novel's protagonist, Pareja shares much of the action with Velazquez, who is portrayed as idealistic and somewhat unworldly; although an artistic genius, he needs the level-headed Pareja to look after him. When Velazquez can find no work in Rome, Pareja saves him by boldly carrying Velazquez's portrait of him to art patrons. The resemblance between the painting and Pareja is so striking tha t the art patrons commission portraits of themselves, and Velazquez becomes celebrated even in Rome as a master portraitist.

Trevino mentions many paintings during her story. These are not reproduced in the book, but a good look at copies of them will enhance the reading experience. For instance, one look at Velazquez's portrait of Pareja explains Trevino's interpretation of him as a special man. His eyes are strikingly bold and uncompromising; his bearing expresses his mastery over his own life.

The rich colors and the delicate highlights make Pareja seem to project out from the surface of the painting. Trevino also depicts the events—some speculative—surrounding the creation of other paintings.

Enrico Arno's cover illustration for I, Juan de Pareja has stimulated the interest of art critics. Most admire its bold presentation through strong colors and forceful figures. It represents Trevino's own solution to the mystery of how the cross of a Knight of Santiago came to be painted on Velazquez's self-portrait after his death. King Philip, repenting that he had not honored Velazquez by naming him a Knight of Santiago, confers the honor posthumously, and Pareja guides his hand as he paints the cross on Velazquez's chest.

Themes

Art

Diego Velbzquez was the premier Spanish artist of the Baroque period. He is widely considered to have inspired both Impressionist artists and the Realism movement. Eduardo Manet, among other Impressionists, was inspired by Velbzquez's use of color and free brush strokes. Velbzquez, often known in the art world simply as The Spaniard, has influenced modern artists including Rene Magritte, Salvatore Dali and Pablo Picasso.

De Treviso's novel, like Velbzquez's finest work, deals with the nature of Art. One of the few enduring quotes by the taciturn artist, which de Treviso uses in her novel, is: "I would rather be first in painting something ugly than second in painting something beautiful." This statement invokes the credo of Realism, rendering an accurate representation of the physical world on canvas, without sentiment or glamorization. This frequently results in portraits that are true to life, but not flattering, such as the "ruthless" eyes of Pope Innocent X. Another example of realism at work is The Spaniard's paintings showing dwarfs and the disabled in frank, if sympathetic, detail. Velbzquez believed that the nature of Art was to reflect Truth, and that the painter had no right to try to improve upon God's world.

The novel also deals with Art's ability to transform the physical world. Juan is mesmerized by painting while mixing colors in his master's studio. Despite the illegality, he begins to paint in secret. When his artwork is eventually discovered, it leads to his manumission from slavery, the freedom of Lolis and their marriage. Thus, Art brings everything that he desires into Juan's life.

Slavery versus Freedom

Although the story depicts some cruelty and ends with Juan achieving freedom, De Treviso treats slavery as largely benign, a viewpoint that may disconcert many readers today. Juan never seems to bridle under the yoke of constant labor, although he has been forced to work from the age of five. He never longs for freedom or resents his masters. Juan never resents being deprived of all property or being inherited by his owner's nephew, along with her tables and chairs. Even when Juan is in a position to escape during the journey from Seville, his thoughts are only of delivering himself into captivity in Madrid. Juan's wife, Lolis, finds slavery less tolerable. She is described as angry and rebellious, with an explosive temper. These traits are treated as personality flaws, not the natural outgrowth of enslavement.

The harsher realities of slavery are also eliminated from the novel. Juan seems to have all the material possessions he desires, and he is constantly supplied with spending money. In essence, the author implies that slavery was a benign and acceptable

practice, especially when owners were kind and generous. Many will find the underlying assumption, that cups of cocoa and coins for sweets are a substitute for basic human freedom and dignity, offensive.

In a particularly evocative section in Chapter 9, Francisco Lezcano, a dwarf known as El Niso de Vallecas, tells Juan, "We are brothers, you and I, because we are enslaved by reason of the way we were born. You were born strong, a fine normal being, but black. I was born as I am, a man in the body of a little creeping child. Why did God put this burden on us, Juanico?" De Treviso seems to imply that slavery is the necessary and natural outgrowth of being born with dark skin, a viewpoint that many will find inflammatory today.

Kindness versus Cruelty

Juan's enslavement is made more tolerable through his owner's kindness. This is contrasted with the cruelty of the muleteer Carmelo and of the Duke of Olivares. Juan's original owner, Dosa Emilia, can be capacious but is usually kind. She shares treats such as hot cocoa with Juan and always supplies him with pocket change for sweets. Diego Velbzquez and his wife, Dosa Juana, are unfailingly kind and considerate. Don Diego even provides Juan with a locked box for his personal possessions and allows him to keep money given to him by the king.

Carmelo, the gypsy muleteer hired to transport the nine-year-old Juan from Seville to Madrid, is cruel. He refuses to feed the boy, urging him to steal his food like a "Romany ray." When Juan becomes proficient at begging alms at church doors, the muleteer begins to extract a fee from the boy each day. Starving and cold, the child finally flees and strikes a bargain with a local baker for temporary employment. Traveling to Madrid afterwards, Juan encounters a kind blond stranger on the road. The man provides protection for Juan and even gives him a real (a Spanish coin) when they part, although the stranger is deeply in debt himself. Juan is soon captured again by Carmelo, who beats him viciously with a whip. The muleteer steals Juan's earring and the real before delivering the boy to his new master.

The Duke of Olivares's cruelty is even more chilling, if less personal. The duke regularly supplies convicted criminals who have been tortured to the icon maker, Gil Marino. The artist uses the men as models for his statues of saints and crucifixes. In one instance, an apprentice confides that a convicted man was brought into the studio to die, while the apprentices sketched his face. These incidents are even more shocking when the reader realizes that many of the "criminals" would in fact have been innocent victims of the Inquisition, tortured by priests and monks into false confessions of blasphemy.

The king displays great kindness towards Juan, as well. He is gracious and seldom requires that Velbzquez observe the court formalities when they are alone. When Juan cures the king's favorite dog, he is generously rewarded. Juan's confession produces a true dilemma for the king. He cannot ignore such egregious behavior as a slave illegally

painting. However, he feels kindly and affectionately towards Juan. Velbzquez senses the King's predicament and quickly effects a solution.

Religion

The Roman Catholic Church is a constant source of solace and beauty in Juan's life. As a young lad, he often loses himself in Mass. His mistress is a daily communicant, and Juan constantly carries her rosary and missal for her as a pageboy. Later in life, he retains his deep affection for the Church. When Juan starts painting clandestinely, the guilt and deception estrange him from his beloved Church. Murillo, one of Velbzquez's apprentices, convinces Juan to make a confession and return to Holy Eucharist.

When Don Diego's right hand becomes infected from a scratch in Italy, Juan prays to the Virgin Mary to heal it. He even promises that if Don Diego is allowed to paint again, he will stop hiding his illegal painting. Velbzquez is miraculously healed, leading Juan to confess to the king.

Juan's acceptance of slavery is partially due to his religious beliefs. Juan believes that slavery is part of God's plan for him and accepts it obediently. In Chapter 9, Juan replies to the dwarf that God said the lowest will be the first, and those who exhaust themselves will be brought low. Thus, Juan makes it clear that he expects justice in the next world, not in this one. Lolis, an equally devout Catholic, believes that all slavery is an act of evil against God's will and objects to it on that basis.

Themes/Characters

I, Juan de Pareja is thematically complex and teems with characters, but its principal themes focus on Pareja. Trevino has said that the novel's theme is that "the difficulties of love across racial barriers can give rise to strong and loyal devotion." Throughout his life, Pareja searches for love, loyalty, and the feeling of belonging—of having a home. When small, he gives his affection to his first mistress, a woman who dresses him up like a doll and treats him like a beloved dog. Having known no better life, Pareja responds with devotion. As he matures, Pareja's emotional life becomes more sophisticated.

When Pareja journeys from Seville to Madrid, where he will live with his new master, Velaquez, he must earn his keep by working for a muleteer. At the hands of Carmelo the muleteer, he is horribly mistreated; he is starved, forced to steal, and beaten mercilessly. He learns that slaves are less than mules to their owners, that they are property without rights. But then Velazquez becomes Pareja's master and treats him with sympathy. A somewhat aloof man who is always absorbed in his art, Velazquez is hard to get to know; his relationship with Pareja evolves slowly over decades. This evolution in the relationship of two men constitutes the main focus of the book.

Juan de Pareja is a sensitive and loving person. When first in the Velazquez household, he forms friendships with the family's two daughters, adopting them as if they were his own sisters. His master and mistress quickly learn to trust him. Although he is lonely, he accepts his role as a slave and devotes himself faithfully to the well-being of the Velazquez family.

It is Pareja's powerful artistic impulse, however, that elevates the story above other tales of the self-sacrifice of a noble but unappreciated servant. As a child, he often decorates his mistress's letters with drawings; when exposed to Velazquez's genius, he yearns to be a painter, too. Unfortunately, it is against the law in Spain for a slave to learn any of the arts; he may be a craftsman but never an artist. Thus, Pareja learns to properly prepare paints and painting surfaces, as well as the many techniques for adjusting the light that falls on a model and for arranging the setting for a painting, but his master tells him that he cannot be taught how to actually paint what he sees. Pareja's desire to be an artist overwhelms him, and he sells the one object that means the most to him—his mother's earring—in order to buy paints and brushes. He practices in secret, learning from watching his master.

Eventually Pareja can tolerate the deception no longer and shows his paintings to both Velazquez and King Philip. The developing relationship between master and slave leads to suspense because Pareja risks terrible punishment. As the two men's respect and affection for each other grows, Velazquez finally realizes that Pareja has risen above his station in life to become a valued friend and extraordinarily capable assistant. Velazquez then frees Pareja.

In the history of Pareja and Velazquez, Trevino finds the basis for a story of a love that transcends racial prejudice and the inherent cruelty of slavery. She concludes that Pareja's unusua l strength of character enables him to overcome the oppression of slavery to become a successful painter whose works now hang in major art museums.

Pareja is a complicated character, so well-rounded that he seems alive. His complex mind is deeply involved in the major issues of his time, and these issues transform Pareja's experiences into universal problems and ideas that have meaning for people of all times. For instance, Pareja yearns for freedom because he dreads the insecurity all slaves must face: "will I be sold some day?" His fears of being unloved and abandoned reflect common concerns.

Cruelty is a significant theme in the novel. Pareja is abused because he is a slave, and he learns that men sometimes commit acts of awful cruelty in the name of art. Although his noble master believes that art should always be truthful, Pareja learns that there can be no substitute for a good heart when making artistic judgments. When he and Velazquez visit Master Medina, who is famed for his religious sculptures, they learn that Medina has achieved the realistic expression of the crucified Christ by actually crucifying a condemned prisoner and copying his expression as he died in agony. This cruelty makes a mockery of the idea of "truth in art" by ignoring the truth of human suffering.

Medina disregards the meaning of the crucifixion and of Christ's suffering— that people should treat each other with kindness. Similarly, slavery makes a mockery of a society's pretensions of justice.

Religion and suffering are linked throughout I, Juan de Pareja. Pareja's fate depends almost exclusively on his owners' whims, and the church provides his sole source of security. He occasionally has trouble maintaining his faith during trying times, but Pareja always repents for his doubts and finds solace in reminding himself that Christ also suffered.

One of the exceptional aspects of I, Juan de Pareja is the vividness of its secondary characters. Brother Isidro, for instance, appears for only a few pages at the start of the book, but Trevino gives life to this trustworthy and caring soldier who gives up his military career when a religious experience inspires him to dedicate his life to serving the poor. Carmelo, the muleteer, is alive with malice and greed. Dona Juana de Miranda, a sickly but loving woman, exhibits the devotion to her husband Velazquez that Pareja eventually develops. The king of Spain is a vital, moving character who displays touching affection for Velazquez; his actions profoundly affect the lives of Velazquez and Pareja.

Another historical figure, the painter Bartolome Esteban Murillo, not only offers Pareja religious comfort but offers unconditional friendship that is undisturbed by the racial and social prejudices of his day.

Among these interesting characters move dwarfs, artists, servants, and tradespeople, some comic, others tragic, but all vividly portrayed.

Style

Point of View

I, Juan de Pareja is written in first person past tense from the point of view of the protagonist, Juan de Pareja. The plot is developed primarily through a series of scenes involving Juan. Juan's inner thoughts and feelings are exposed, although most of the novel consists of scene and dialogue. The personalities of other characters, especially Don Diego, Carmelo and Juan's eventual wife Lolis, are revealed through action and dialogue. Although Juan is a slave, he has accepted the prevailing culture of Spain and identifies strongly with his master and mistress.

The novel does not attempt to illustrate the typical life of a slave in Spain or a typical day. It is an uncomplicated telling, in retrospect, of a specific series of significant events by a much older Juan de Pareja. Thus, there are gaps of years and even decades in the story covered by a few words. This approach gives the narrative a somewhat remote, serene quality in fitting with the personality of Juan himself. Even during times of great stress, such as the journey with Carmelo, the emotional tone remains relatively calm. The events covered are of much greater import than suspense or emotional content.

Setting

The novel opens in Seville, where Juan lives until he is nine or ten years old. The boy moves to Madrid, where he is absorbed into the household of the painter Diego Velbzquez. Soon the painter is invited to establish a studio at the king's palace, although he never abandons his home. Juan travels with Don Diego to Italy twice to collect art for the king and for the artist to paint portraits.

The palace and the church are important locations in the novel. In Europe during the 17th century, a successful painter had just two sources of patronage - royalty or the Roman Catholic Church. Diego Velbzquez was chief painter to the Royal Court of Spain, and Bertolomy Esteban Murillo was the primary religious artist. As the king's portraitist, Velbzquez eventually enjoyed a high salary, job security and even a measure of protection from the Inquisition. The demands on his time, while extensive in later years, do not seem to have reduced his production. Murillo, as the foremost artist of the Church in Spain during the Baroque period, had a much lower income and died impoverished.

Juan travels to Italy twice with Velbzquez. He finds the cities, especially Rome, filthy, filled with rude people and pickpockets. The countryside, by contrast, is gentle, and the people are hospitable and honest. Despite the drawbacks, Juan learns to love Italy. Here is an entire country devoted to the worship of great art. Don Diego remarks on the different qualities of light in Italy. The air is softer and moister than in Spain, giving the colors a muted quality and blurring the shapes of objects. The clear, bright light of Spain

produces crisp outlines and deeper shadows. Velbzquez finds the different qualities of the light reflected in the art of each country.

Language and Meaning

The novel is written in age-appropriate, uncomplicated yet interesting language. A minimum of Spanish vocabulary is used. Terms particularly evocative of the period include reticule and missal. The author makes the choice to refer to Brother Isidro's chaotic, active compound as a convent, perhaps to avoid the austerity associated with the term monastery. All of Juan's owners use the diminutive "Juanico" in conversation with him, even long after he has reached maturity. His proudest moment is when the artist Velbzquez, on his manumission, calls him simply "Juan."

Throughout the novel, the author repeatedly refers to Juan as Negro, although in fact he is biracial, with a white father and a black mother. This is partly due to a sensibility dating from the 1960s and earlier, when any person of color was "Negro," even if only 1/16 black.

De Treviso's depiction of the gypsy muleteer Carmelo seems stereotypical and offensive. Carmelo is exclusively interested in drinking, dancing and singing by a gypsy campfire each night. His face is scarred by knife fighting, and he demands that Juan steal to eat. All of these traits reinforce commonly held prejudices against the Roma people. This can partly be excused by the ethos of the 1960s, when the novel was published. Although discrimination against African Americans was becoming less acceptable, few people recognized the prejudices against other ethnic groups.

Structure

I, Juan de Pareja is a chronological narrative told in fifteen named chapters, bracketed by a non-fiction forward and afterward. Chapters are titled in the traditional manner, with a simple statement of the main event. Thus, the first chapter is entitled "In Which I Learn My Letters." Each builds to Juan's eventually destiny as a free man and a painter. The climax of the novel comes in Chapter 13, "In Which I Am Made Free." In this chapter, the king discovers that Juan has been illegally painting for years and must decide on a punishment. Velbzquez steps in, and through an act of generosity, he is able to save his friend.

The deaths of the members of the Velbzquez family occur in Chapter 14, and the denouement, in which Juan finds another home and studio, is in the final chapter. There is no villain in the novel, with the possible exception of Carmelo the gypsy. Instead, the plot focuses on a gradual unfolding of events. The largest crisis is fueled by Juan's own guilt and his religious fervor.

Quotes

"'Poor little fellow,' murmured [Brother Isidro]. 'I will take him with me; they will care for him at the convent. And you, boy, you must pray and give thanks, and ask to be shown why God has chosen to save you. There is something He wants you to do; there is some duty He has laid upon you.'" Chapter 1, pg. 15

"Now I had lived long enough and had heard enough from urchins my age and from other slaves, to distrust the person who calls himself merciful, or just, or kindly. Usually these are the most cruel, niggardly and selfish people, and slaves learn to fear the master who prefaces his remarks with tributes to his own virtues." Chapter 2, pg. 25

"'Learn to steal you food, like a Romany rye,' [Don Carmelo] told me, 'and I will teach you many useful tricks. But if you want to go hungry, sit and wait for your meal! It will not walk to you, I promise you that!'" Chapter 3, pg. 30

"'Tell me,' I stuttered, 'is Master good? Is he kind? Will he beat me? Oh, what will happen to me here?'" Chapter 3, pg. 39

"'The eye is complicated. It mixes the colors for you,' explained master. 'The painter must unmix them and lay them on again shade by shade, and then the eye of the beholder takes over and mixes them again.' "'I should like to paint!' I cried out in my joy at this revelation. "'Alas, I cannot teach you,' said Master, and then he became silent and returned to his easel." Chapter 4, pg. 46

"'I wish I could learn to paint also!' I blurted out, forgetting that I had promised myself not to mention the matter again. "'I wish you could,' Mistress answered, 'but there is a law in Spain which forbids slaves to practice any of the arts. The crafts, some manual skills, yes. But not art. However, do not grieve. Move back now, and do not let your tears fall on this taffeta; they will spot it. I know you love color, Juanico. You may help me choose the colors for my embroidery, and I will ask Master to give you sole charge of this chest.'" Chapter 4, pg. 49

"I ventured, 'Isn't it difficult to show people their true selves when you paint them, Master?' "'No. Nobody ever knows what he really looks like. Bring me some more of the ochre.'" Chapter 4, pg. 53

"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." Chapter 5, pg. 57

"'I sidled away, but before Master returned, one of the apprentices came up to me and whispered, 'They brought in a dying man, and Master hung him up on the cross and he died there. We all sketched. The Duke saw to it.'" Chapter 5, pg. 65

"'Alvaro was honest, and his picture is full of truth. Say to yourselves, 'I would rather paint exactly what I see, even if it is ugly, perfectly, than indifferently paint something superficially lovely.' Say to yourselves, 'Art is Truth, and to serve Art, I will never deceive.'" Chapter 5, pg. 67

"Even with my heart broken at parting, at knowing that I would never see Miri again (for they left the court soon after, to make their way to Italy, Rubens and all his train), that other fear that she had taught me persisted. Any distant singing, or silvery twanging on a psalter, brought that desolate cry into my mind: 'Mistress will tire of me. . . and sell me. . . '" Chapter 6, pg. 75

"'I can't send you out any more, Juanico,' she scolded me, annoyed, 'If you are going to take so long about my errands!' "'Mistress, I took time to look for a little present for Paquita. And here it is!' I put my hand into my jacket and drew out the little vibrating kitten, with its small pansy face.' "'Oh, Mooshi!' cried Mistress." Chapter 7, pg. 80

"Dear Paquita, who was always so kind to me, so lively and merry and gay, who loved little soft and helpless things and God's growing vines and flowers. Paquita, who made me her confidant, so that I might feel some share in the joy of her marriage. She has lain in her grave now for so many years, but those were very happy days we lived then, and it does my heart good to remember them." Chapter 8, pg. 104

"'Christ is in each one of us,' [Bertolomy] explained. 'When I need to paint a saint, I find holiness in the face of anyone available. It is always there. As for angels, I use little children! There is so littler difference between an angel and a child!'" Chapter 10, pg. 119

"I threw myself on my knees before him. 'I beg mercy, Sire,' I pleaded. 'The painting is mine. I have been working secretly all these years, with bits of canvas and color, copying the works of Master, to learn from them, and trying some original subjects by myself. I know very well that this is against the law. Master has never even suspected and has had nothing to do with my treachery. I am willing to endure whatever punishment you mete out to me.'" Chapter 13, pg. 155

"'It is not that I do not like him,' [Lolis] said, in her deep soft voice. '[Juan] is a good kind man, but I do not wish to bear any children into slavery.'" Chapter 13, pg. 160

"'Some day,' I assured her, 'some day, I know that all men will be free.'" Chapter 13, pg. 162

Topics for Discussion

1. Why is Pareja not more resentful of the silly way his first mistress dresses him up?

2. Would Pareja have been better off if he had been left at the monastery rather than sent to live with Velazquez?

3. What are some of the ways Spanish society of the 1600s demeaned slaves?

Note for instance how Pareja is called "Juanico" and how he is treated like a possession.

4. Why is Pareja so eager to be accepted as part of Velazquez's household?

5. Why is Pareja nearly always afraid? 6. How important is the concept of "truth" in I, Juan de Pareja? Note how truth is presented in different ways.

There is artistic truth, being truthful with oneself, and being truthful with others.

7. Why does Pareja yearn to tell people of his painting when he knows that it could lead to severe punishment?

8. Will Lolis make a good wife for Pareja? She seems very different from him.

9. Is Velazquez a good man? Why does he not help Pareja much earlier than he does?

Essay Topics

How do Juan de Pareja's religious beliefs influence his life?

Juan appears to never resent being a slave. In your opinion, is this reaction realistic? Why or why not?

Why is it illegal for Juan to paint? Does he accept this restriction?

In what two ways does Bertolomy Esteban Murillo have a profound effect on Juan's life?

How are Bertolomy Murillo and Diego Velbzquez's views of art similar? How are they different?

Diego Velbzquez made a point of accurately representing each subject's appearance and inner personality on the canvas. This resulted in many portraits of people who looked arrogant, mean, greedy or proud. Do you think this kind of portrait would please most people? Why or why not?

Diego Velbzquez is often cited as being a precursor to both the Impressionist Movement and the Realism Movement. Why?

Do some research online or in a library on the paintings of Diego Velbzquez. One of Velbzquez's most famous paintings shows several people, including at least one reflected in a mirror. Who are the people? What do you find remarkable about the painting?

Find an image of Velbzquez's portrait of his slave, Juan de Pareja, online at en.wikipedia.org or another source. De Treviso claims that the portrait shows a proud, serene man without any trace of anger or bitterness. Do you agree? Why or why not?

Is it possible that in real life Diego Velbzquez knew his slave was painting all along?

De Treviso portrays Don Carmelo, the gypsy, in a stereotypically negative way, as a thief who is only interested in drinking, singing and dancing around a gypsy campfire. Research the Roma people online or in the library. What is their background? Do you think De Treviso paints a balanced picture of most Romany people?

De Treviso suggests that Juan himself decided to solicit portrait commissions in Italy. Some historians think it far more likely that Velbzquez sent his slave on the mission. Which do you think is more likely? Why?

Elizabeth Borton De Treviso loosely based this novel on actual events, including an account of the manumission of Juan de Pareja after he was discovered illegally painting by the King of Spain. Can you think of another story that could be created from the same events?

Ideas for Reports and Papers

1. What is the history of slavery in Spain and its colonies? Were other ethnic groups besides blacks enslaved?

2. How did slavery in seventeenthcentury Spain differ from slavery in England's American colonies?

3. Who was Bartolome Esteban Murillo, and why is he important? Be sure to describe at least one of his paintings, as well as to summarize his life and what modern critics and historians think of him.

4. Compare Trevino's descriptions of Velazquez's paintings with pictures of the paintings. Why does Trevino emphasize Velazquez's dedication to truth in art when he seems to have altered his portraits of King Philip to make him more handsome than he really was?

Particularly note Velazquez's first portrait of the king, which the painter seems to have done twice—first with absolute accuracy, then painted over with a more idealistic version.

5. Write a short biography of Velazquez, emphasizing his place in the history of art.

6. Trevino says that all of her fiction deals with the theme of love. Is this true?

How do her other novels for young adults deal with love? Do they have anything in common with I, Juan de Pareja?

7. Look up Velazquez's portrait of the pope. What were the circumstances surrounding the painting? What did the pope really think of it? Why is it a significant painting?

8. Search for examples in art books and poster collections for paintings by Juan de Pareja. What were his subjects?

Which paintings are his best? Describe one in particular and explain what you like about it.

9. What role did the Catholic church play in the everyday lives of seventeenthcentury Spaniards? Is Trevino's depiction of that role accurate?

10. Who were the Knights of Santiago?

Why would Velazquez want to be one?

Further Study

Brown, Dale, et al. The World of Velazquez, 1599-1660. 1969. Rev. ed.

New York: Time-Life, 1972. Reproduces many of Velazquez's paintings, tells about his life and times, and analyzes some of his work. A good introduction, but it says little about Pareja.

Costello, Clare. "Elizabeth Borton de Trevino." School Library Journal (March 1966): 126-127. An editor for the publishers of I, Juan de Pareja, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Costello summarizes Trevino's life and accomplishments up to 1966.

De Montreville, Doris, and Donna Hill, eds. Third Book of Junior Authors. New York: H. W. Wilson, 1972. In an autobiographical sketch, Trevino tells of her life and of her research for her books for young readers.

Kingman, Lee, ed. Newbery and Caldecott Medal Books. 1966-1975. Boston: Horn Book, 1975. Contains a transcript of Trevino's Newbery Award acceptance speech as well as a character study of the author by her friend Ross Parmenter.

Kirkpatrick, D. L., ed. Twentieth-Century Children's Writers. New York: St. Martin's, 1978. Provides a bibliography of Trevino's books and a brief critical summary of her writings for young readers.

Trevino, Elizabeth B. de. The Hearthstone of My Heart. New York: Doubleday, 1977. Trevino's memoirs tell of her childhood and of her development as a writer.

"A Message from Elizabeth Borton Trevino." New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux. A publicity flier in which the author tells about her books and her purposes for writing them. This and other research materials were supplied by Lelia Wardwell of Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

My Heart Lies South: The Story of My Mexican Marriage. New York: Crowell, 1953. Trevino sees herself as an independent-minded reporter who had to adjust to life as a genteel Mexican wife. Her love for Mexico is ever present.

Where the Heart Is. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1974. More about her marriage and her experiences in Mexico. Tells of her spiritual growth.

Related Titles

Trevino has written a book about medieval Spain, Casilda of the Rising Moon, that tells the story of a Moorish princess who becomes a saint. Nacar, the White Deer is based on a historical event, the sending of an albino deer from the Philippines to Mexico in the seventeenth century. A story of daring and action, it is aimed at a somewhat younger audience than is I, Juan de Pareja. Beyond the Gates of Hercules is a fantasy about Atlantis that tells of the destruction wrought by a power-mad dictator.

Copyright Information

Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction

Editor
Kirk H. Beetz, Ph.D.

Cover Design
Amanda Mott

Cover Art is "Pierrot," 1947, by William Baziotes Oil on Canvas, 42 1/8 x 36 Donated by the Alisa Mellon Bruce Fund, ©, 1996 Reproduced with Permission from the Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction

Includes bibliographical references and index

Summary: A multi-volume compilation of analytical essays on and study activities for the works of authors of popular fiction. Includes biography data, publishing history, and resources for the author of each analyzed work.

ISBN 0-933833-41-5 (Volumes 1-3, Biography Series)
ISBN 0-933833-42-3 (Volumes 1-8, Analyses Series)
ISBN 0-933833-38-5 (Entire set, 11 volumes)

1. Popular literature□Bio-bibliography. 2. Fiction□19th century□Bio-bibliography. 3. Fiction□20th century□Bio-bibliography. I. Beetz, Kirk H., 1952-

Z6514.P7B43 1996[PN56.P55]809.3□dc20 96-20771 CIP

Printed in the United States of America First Printing, November 1996