

# The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho (1993)

The shepherd boy's name is Santiago. He is from a small village in Spain. He falls asleep in an abandoned church whose roof is gone & a sycamore is growing inside, but he awakes from a dream that he will find his treasure near the great pyramids. In his travels to sell his wool, he meets a wise old man who knows more about the boy than possible for a stranger. The old man told him "you must always know what you want" & to follow his dream to the end. The boy gave him 10% of his sheep in exchange for a blessing. He sold the rest of his sheep and sailed to Africa.

The day he arrived, someone stole his money and he was alone in a strange land. He got a job with a shopkeeper, where he worked for a year. They were both blessed because of it. During this time he got discouraged from his dream and was saving to go home. But the shopkeeper told about a dream he had when he was young and regretted not following it. He changed his mind and joined a caravan across the desert to Egypt.

They arrived at an oasis and were told to stay since the nomad tribes were at war. The camel driver was not worried if they would be killed because he didn't live in the past or the future, but only the present. He met a beautiful girl by the well & fell in love. Santiago remembered the old man's advise to see the signs & omens left by God along his path.

He had a dream & told the camel driver who took him to the village chief. His dream told of an attack on the oasis. The chief would reward him if it were true or kill him if it was not. The next day the oasis was attacked, but they were ready & Santiago was a hero. He then met the Alchemist & proposed to the girl. The Alchemist told him "wherever your heart is, there you will find your treasure."

God created the world in such a way that we can learn spiritual teaching through His physical creation. It takes courage to overcome our fears, to be willing to lose what we have to follow our dreams. Your eyes show the strength of your soul. The Alchemist shared his wisdom with the boy, but said "the best way to learn is from action." The two of them set out toward the pyramids.

When we love, we strive to be better than we are, & everything around us becomes better. We all play a part in the lives of those around us, but many of us don't realize it. They had been robbed along the way and found a monastery in sight of the pyramids the Alchemist told he must finish this on his own. Legend has it that the Alchemist made gold out of lead and gave some to the boy & the monk.

The boy was out by the pyramids and started digging where he thought the treasure might be, when along came a man who said two years ago at that exact spot he had a dream. That he would travel to Spain in an old church with a sycamore tree & find his treasure. The boy returned to the oasis to get the girl and then Spain to find his treasure. Yes, it was a chest of gold.