**THE ALCHEMIST**

***The Central Idea***

**The Alchemist, by Paulo Coelho, conveys a universal theme. It focuses on fulfilling our own “Personal Legends,” Coelho encourages his reader's to follow their dreams. Everyone has their own Personal Legend, their ultimate goal in life, but too many of us never pursue it.**

***The Story***

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* **The story starts with a scene where Santiago comes to an old church to rest with his sheep- wakes suddenly in the middle of a dream he has seen earlier too**
* **Santiago – a shepherd – leads a simple life – simple desires**
* **Learns from observation – specially from his sheep**
* **Has been with his sheep for two years – great bonding with them- calls them by names- read out to them parts from books he reads**
* **Speaks with them – most importantly about the girl he is looking forward to meet again after a year**
* **The girl is the daughter of a merchant – whom he had visited a year ago for work**
* **Met her in her father’s shop- she had shown interest in the fact that he could read**
* **The father had called him again after a year – looking forward to meet the girl**
* **How could a shepherd read?**
* **Santiago’s parents wanted him to become a priest – had also joined a seminary**
* **But he wanted to travel – finally mustered the courage to tell them**
* **The father – tried to tell him that nothing would be gained by travelling and that he would come back at the end**
* **But when he saw that Santiago was convinced about his ‘Personal Legend’ – he relented and suggested he become a shepherd**
* **Gave him 3 Spanish gold coins and Santiago bought sheep**
* **It seems the father too had had a dream but had not fulfilled it**
* **Coelho – emphasises how a possibility of a dream come true makes life exciting**
* **At Tarifa – Santiago meets a gypsy woman – asks to interpret his dream**
* **Dream – a child playing with his sheep- takes him to Egyptian pyramids – tells him there is a treasure hidden- when he is about to show the location – Santiago is awake**
* **The gypsy woman interprets – charging 1/10th of his treasure – only if he finds it**
* **Santiago is irritated as the gypsy woman doesn’t say anything different**
* **While Santiago is thinking about the girl- an old man disturbs him**
* **Santiago is irritated but keeps quiet- has learnt to respect elders**
* **The old man tells him about the world’s greatest lie- AT SOME POINT OF TIME WE LOSE CONTROL OVER OUR LIFE- DESTINY CONTROLS IT-**
* **The old man appreciates that Santiago has pursued his dream**
* **Tells Santiago that if he gives him 1/10th of the flock – he will tell him where the treasure is**
* **Santiago thinks its some trick of the Gypsy woman**
* **Then the old man writes on the sand his parents name and many other things about him**

**Santiago thinks the man is Mythical / has Supernatural powers**

* **His name is Melchizedek ( a biblical figure)**
* **Santiago asks Melchizedek why his is talking to a shepherd inspite of being a king**
* **He says because he is creating his Personal Legend – unlike the baker who is waiting for a later time**
* **WHEN YOU WANT SOMETHING ALL THE UNIVERSE CONSPIRES IN HELPING YOU ACHIEVE IT**
* **CHILDREN ARE DREAMERS – DREAM ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL LEGENDS BUT GIVE UP DUE TO WORLDLY PRESSURES**
* **He tells him that he would come the next day – he should keep the 1/10th of the stock ready – will tell him about the treasure.**
* **IF YOU START BY PROMISING WHAT YOU DON’T HAVE – YOU WILL LOSE YOUR DESIRE TO WORK TOWARD GETTING IT**
* **Story of a miner ( had gone in search for a precious stone – spent many years – couldn’t find it – finally picked one and threw it in anger- it fell upon another stone which cracked – and there – there was the precious stone he wanted- moral – not to give up – many a times the goal is just nearby**