



# The Alchemist

*By: Paulo Coelho*

Reviewed by: Allyssa Gomez (20190007655)

In a current world where destinies are not given much thought, Coelho introduces you to a world where fulfilling one's destiny is the protagonist, Santiago's dream.

Through the eyes of Santiago, he begins this expedition by seeking an interpreter for his peculiar dream about the treasure at the pyramids of Egypt. It is from this point on where he meets the King, a stranger that convinces him that his dream is not a dream but a destiny. The King plays as a spiritual mentor that prevents Santiago from straying away from the path to his ultimate goal: creating his Personal Legend, a concept that Coelho explains as the path of achieving one's ultimate destiny in this world. "The boy's" struggle is beautifully illustrated from being a victim of a robbery to letting go of all the riches that he worked for, including people that he loved, just to pursue a treasure that had yet to be found.

Coelho shows a clear change of perspective that readers can take inspiration from as Santiago realizes that the obstacles he faces are simply just steps that lead towards his destiny. His moments of frustration and indecisiveness tie us to Santiago because it is what made his journey human. You progressively start to fall in love with his character as the story develops because his persistence, patience and optimism refuses to let the lowest points of his life become the end. There is not one moment where he stops using the world around him as a subject and a teacher. His insightfulness keeps you fascinated as you turn each page because he notices the finest details of every encounter and keeps track of the good moments amidst the bad.

There is also no doubt in my mind that Coelho is gifted in providing a vivid image of the world that surrounds Santiago. Each intense spiritual experience and each location the protagonist goes through is stunningly described and aided by enlightening biblical allusions and other religious texts. By personifying certain elements like the winds and the sands Santiago traverses on, the places he visits become full with life.

"The boy's" progress towards the pyramids is paced in a way that readers are able to feel each moment of satisfaction, each moment of contemplation and each moment of uncertainty. This is consistently highlighted through his constant battle between being fulfilled in the moment and being fulfilled for life, creating a bridge between him and what we as humans would experience when creating our own path.

Apart from this, the diverse amount of characters that Santiago encounters leaves a lasting impression on the reader as they all express words that are worthy of remembering. In particular, it is the King and the Alchemist's wisdom that conveys the importance of courage and how people can use the signs of the universe, referred to as "omens", to attain whatever we desire; in turn, painting a picture of what the epitome of human potential is. Every encounter that Santiago had with the King and the Alchemist required you to take a breath just to swallow the profoundness of their words.

The universe that Coelho creates feels so transcendent yet so close to reality when you realize how tightly interlinked it is with our world. The extent of what this novel can teach to today's society is undeniable and certainly relevant in understanding how blind we are to our true destinies and what we can do to finally see it. It is truly impossible not to finish the book because it is at the end when you realize, that that is when life truly begins.