



The Alchemist

By: Paulo Coelho

Reviewed by: Amina Akhram (20170006270)

Everyone has his or her own “Personal Legend”, that desire that we all have deep within our heart. The purpose of our very being, a “mission on earth.” How many of us had dreams like that? Was it a childhood dream? Everything seemed attainable as children. There was never a dream too big or too impossible to achieve. How many of us lost sight of those dream as we grew up but why? Did the world show us the harsh reality? Did it implant a fear of failure into our minds? Did we believe that it was just not meant to be? Did we start believing in the ‘world’s greatest lie’ that at a certain point of our lives, we can no longer control what’s happening to us and leave the rest to fate? Dreams suddenly became a silly notion; something that only fate can permit. In “The alchemist”, any dream is within your reach as long as you set your mind and heart to it. “Whoever you are or whatever it is that you do, when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.”

It is a book about following your dreams. It tells a story about a shepherd Santiago who sets out on a quest for treasure. At first he is content with being a shepherd, moving from town to town and even dreaming about marrying a merchant’s daughter. But everything changes when he decides to meet an old woman to interpret his recurrent dreams. She tells him to follow his dream and find the treasure, which is located near the pyramids in Egypt. He then starts his journey that is filled with life lessons, experiences, romance, perseverance, and courage that we can all learn from.

Like Paulo Coelho said, “the story of everyone, and one man’s quest is the quest of all humanity.” This book is universal and prevalent no matter what culture or era it is. It bonds us together as we read about an individual who follows his dreams and teaches us about following ours. The main obstacle in our dreams is not the process or the means for achieving it, but our own fear of failure.

Two words that would sum up the alchemist would be simple and powerful. The book does not consist of any complex literary techniques or highly advanced vocabulary. His diction and imagery are simple yet powerful. As a reader, every sentence creeps into our imagination and vividly plays the text in our mind as a movie. Coelho effortlessly controls the reader’s mind and imagination with his words, successfully evoking any feelings and mood onto them like which of a puppet master with his puppets. His writing style is soft, gentle and articulate similar to the poets of romanticism. The personification he used towards the end with the sun, desert and wind awakens the spirituality in all of us regardless of our faith. Coelho signifies the importance of our existence that we are all connected to each other one-way or the other. “No matter what he does, every person on earth plays a central role in history of the world.”

Even the good and bad things are connected to each other. Maybe something bad needs to happen so we can get closer to the good. According to the book, the universe runs on omens, it is the language of god. Moreover, it redefines the definition of alchemy altogether that it is not just about turning lead into gold. It is something deeper that alchemy exists so that we can search for our treasure and after finding it; become better than our previous self.

“That’s what alchemist do. They show that when we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better, too.”

We can only find our treasure through our inner self. Our experiences and discoveries define our inner self. It is those experiences and lessons we learn along the way to our “treasure” that really enable us to reach it in the first place and make us worthy to do so.

“The Alchemist”, opens our minds, takes us on an epic journey, and teaches us the most inspiring lesson of all that we shouldn’t settle for anything less than our dreams. It is the sort of book that changes your perspective and outlook on life. How we should never let our heart stray away from our dreams. That the universe is on our side, the only negative force is inside our mind. It demonstrates the endless possibilities our life beholds. Our

dreams are not just merely dreams but the essence of our soul and the purpose of our lives. It stays with you forever. No one will turn away from his or her dreams after reading this book. You will begin to dig deep into your soul and learn to follow your own heart and dreams. “Where your treasure is, there also will be your heart”.

Coelho shows the readers the beauty and elegance that is evident in simplicity that many forget. Through such simplicity, we can begin to look at and value the purpose of our life. Indeed, the most beautiful things in life are the simple ones. Just like this book, Paulo Coelho can write a beautiful book that inspires generations for years to come just by simplicity alone.