



YOUR KINDLE NOTES FOR:

The Alchemist

by Paulo Coelho

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36 Highlights

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 2

A man sets out on a journey, dreaming of a beautiful or magical place, in pursuit of some unknown treasure. At the end of his journey, the man realizes the treasure was with him the entire time.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 2

The book hit the New York Times bestseller list, an important milestone for any author, and stayed there for more than three hundred weeks. It has since been translated into more than eighty different languages, the most translated book by any living author, and is widely considered one of the ten best books of the twentieth century.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 16

Everyone seems to have a clear idea of how other people should lead their lives, but none about his or her own.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 18

“It’s this: that at a certain point in our lives, we lose control of what’s happening to us, and our lives become controlled by fate. That’s the world’s greatest lie.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 22

“It’s what you have always wanted to accomplish. Everyone, when they are young, knows what their Personal Legend is. “At that point in their lives, everything is clear and everything is possible. They are not afraid to dream, and to yearn for everything they would like to see happen to them in their lives. But, as time passes, a mysterious force begins to convince them that it will be impossible for them to realize their Personal Legend.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 23

“Why do you tend a flock of sheep?” “Because I like to travel.” The old man pointed to a baker standing in his shop window at one corner of the plaza. “When he was a child, that man wanted to travel, too. But he decided first to buy his bakery and put some money aside. When he’s an old man, he’s going to spend a month in Africa. He never realized that people are capable, at any time in their lives, of doing what they dream of.” “He should

have decided to become a shepherd,” the boy said. “Well, he thought about that,” the old man said. “But bakers are more important people than shepherds. Bakers have homes, while shepherds sleep out in the open. Parents would rather see their children marry bakers than shepherds.” The boy felt a pang in his heart, thinking about the merchant’s daughter. There was surely a baker in her town. The old man continued, “In the long run, what people think about shepherds and bakers becomes more important for them than their own Personal Legends.”

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“Why are you telling me all this?” “Because you are trying to realize your Personal Legend. And you are at the point where you’re about to give it all up.” “And that’s when you always appear on the scene?”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 24

“Not always in this way, but I always appear in one form or another. Sometimes I appear in the form of a solution, or a good idea. At other times, at a crucial moment, I make it easier for things to happen. There are other things I do, too, but most of the time people don’t realize I’ve done them.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 24

The miner had abandoned everything to go mining for emeralds. For five years he had been working a certain river, and had examined hundreds of thousands of stones looking for an emerald. The miner was about to give it all up, right at the point when, if he were to examine just one more stone—just one more—he would find his emerald. Since the miner had sacrificed everything to his Personal Legend, the old man decided to become involved. He transformed himself into a stone that rolled up to the miner’s foot.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 25

“People learn, early in their lives, what is their reason for being,” said the old man, with a certain bitterness. “Maybe that’s why they give up on it so early, too. But that’s the way it is.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 28

He was sure that it made no difference to her on which day he appeared: for her, every day was the same, and when each day is the same as the next, it’s because people fail to recognize the good things that happen in their lives every day that the sun rises.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 38

But he trusted in the old man, who had said that, when you really want something, the universe always conspires in your favor.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 42

“I’m like everyone else—I see the world in terms of what I would like to see happen, not what actually does.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 55

“The Prophet gave us the Koran, and left us just five obligations to satisfy during our lives. The most important is to believe only in the one true God. The others are to pray five times a day, fast during Ramadan, and be charitable to the poor.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 56

“The fifth obligation of every Muslim is a pilgrimage. We are obliged, at least once in our lives, to visit the holy city of Mecca.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 64

But the sheep had taught him something even more important: that there was a language in the world that everyone understood, a language the boy had used throughout the time that he was trying to improve things at the shop. It was the language of enthusiasm, of things accomplished with love and purpose, and as part of a search for something believed in and desired. Tangier was no longer a strange city, and he felt that, just as he had conquered this place, he could conquer the world.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 71

When someone makes a decision, he is really diving into a strong current that will carry him to places he had never dreamed of when he first made the decision.

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The closer one gets to realizing his Personal Legend, the more that Personal Legend becomes his true reason for being, thought the boy.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 79

people need not fear the unknown if they are capable of achieving what they need and want.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 84

The book that most interested the boy told the stories of the famous alchemists. They were men who had dedicated their entire lives to the purification of metals in their laboratories; they believed that, if a metal were heated for many years, it would free itself of all its individual properties, and what was left would be the Soul of the World. This Soul of the World allowed them to understand anything on the face of the earth, because it was the language with which all things communicated. They called that discovery the Master Work—it was part liquid and part solid. “Can’t you just observe men and omens in order to understand the language?” the boy asked. “You have a mania for simplifying everything,” answered the Englishman, irritated. “Alchemy is a serious discipline. Every step has to be followed exactly as it was followed by the masters.” The boy learned that the liquid part of the Master Work was called the Elixir of Life, and that it cured all illnesses; it also kept the alchemist from growing old. And the solid part was called the Philosopher’s Stone.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 85

“Also,” said the Englishman, “the Philosopher’s Stone has a fascinating property. A small sliver of the stone can transform large quantities of metal into gold.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 88

“Because I don’t live in either my past or my future. I’m interested only in the present. If you can concentrate always on the present, you’ll be a happy man. You’ll see that there is life in the desert, that there are stars in the heavens, and that tribesmen fight because they are part of the human race. Life will be a party for you, a grand festival, because life is the moment we’re living right now.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 93

In his pursuit of the dream, he was being constantly subjected to tests of his persistence and courage. So he could not be hasty, nor impatient. If he pushed forward impulsively, he would fail to see the signs and omens left by God along his path.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 97

At that moment, it seemed to him that time stood still, and the Soul of the World surged within him. When he looked into her dark eyes, and saw that her lips were poised between a laugh and silence, he learned the most important part of the language that all the world spoke—the language that everyone on earth was capable of understanding in their heart. It was love. Something older than humanity, more ancient than the desert. Something that exerted the same force whenever two pairs of eyes met, as had theirs here at the well.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 97

It was the pure Language of the World. It required no explanation, just as the universe needs none as it travels through endless time. What the boy felt at that moment was that he was in the presence of the only woman in his life, and that, with no need for words, she recognized the same thing. He was more certain of it than of anything in the world. He had been told by his parents and grandparents that he must fall in love and really know a person before becoming committed. But maybe people who felt that way had never learned the universal language. Because, when you know that language, it’s easy to understand that someone in the world awaits you, whether it’s in the middle of the desert or in some great city. And when two such people encounter each other, and their eyes meet, the past and the future become unimportant. There is only that moment, and the incredible certainty that everything under the sun has been written by one hand only. It is the hand that evokes love, and creates a twin soul for every person in the world. Without such love, one’s dreams would have no meaning.

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 107

“Well, maybe I just want to know the future so I can prepare myself for what’s coming.” “If good things are coming, they will be a pleasant surprise,” said the seer. “If bad things are, and you know in advance, you will suffer greatly before they even occur.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 108

The secret is here in the present. If you pay attention to the present, you can improve upon it. And, if you improve on the present, what comes later will also be better. Forget about the future, and live each day according to the teachings, confident that God loves his children. Each day, in itself, brings with it an eternity.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 128

“I had a dream, and I met with a king. I sold crystal and crossed the desert. And, because the tribes declared war, I went to the well, seeking the alchemist. So, I love you because the entire universe conspired to help me find you.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 135

“Why do we have to listen to our hearts?” the boy asked, when they had made camp that day. “Because, wherever your heart is, that is where you’ll find your treasure.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 137

“When I have been truly searching for my treasure, every day has been luminous, because I’ve known that every hour was a part of the dream that I would find it. When I have been truly searching for my treasure, I’ve discovered things along the way that I never would have seen had I not had the courage to try things that seemed impossible for a shepherd to achieve.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 138

“Everyone on earth has a treasure that awaits him,” his heart said. “We, people’s hearts, seldom say much about those treasures, because people no longer want to go in search of them. We speak of them only to children. Later, we simply let life proceed, in its own direction, toward its own fate. But, unfortunately, very few follow the path laid out for them—the path to their Personal Legends, and to happiness. Most people see the world as a threatening place, and, because they do, the world turns out, indeed, to be a threatening place.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 138

“Why don’t people’s hearts tell them to continue to follow their dreams?” the boy asked the alchemist. “Because that’s what makes a heart suffer most, and hearts don’t like to suffer.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 139

“What you still need to know is this: before a dream is realized, the Soul of the World tests everything that was learned along the way. It does this not because it is evil, but so that we can, in addition to realizing our dreams, master the lessons we’ve learned as we’ve moved toward that dream. That’s the point at which most people give up. It’s the point at which, as we say in the language of the desert, one ‘dies of thirst just when the palm trees have appeared on the horizon.’ “Every search begins with beginner’s luck. And every search ends with the victor’s being severely tested.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 143

“Your eyes show the strength of your soul,”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 149

“If a person is living out his Personal Legend, he knows everything he needs to know. There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure.”

Highlight (Yellow) | Page 158

“This is why alchemy exists,” the boy said. “So that everyone will search for his treasure, find it, and then want to be better than he was in his former life. Lead will play its role until the world has no further need for lead; and then lead will have to turn itself into gold. “That’s what alchemists do. They show that, when we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better, too.”
