

The Alchemist

Paolo Coelho

Teacher's Guide

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Synopsis

Introduction

Coelho summarizes the four obstacles to success: being told our desires are impossible, fear of hurting others, fear of defeat, and fear of succeeding.

Prologue

The alchemist reads the myth of Narcissus, which begins with the drowning of the beautiful, introspective title character in a lake. Because the lake turns to saltwater from weeping over the loss, the goddesses of the forest inquire about the cause. The lake replies that it saw in Narcissus's eyes its own beauty reflected.

Part One

Santiago, a shepherd in Andalusia, studies at a seminary until age 16, then chooses a life of travel. For two years, he tends his own flock of sheep, which he buys with three gold coins that his father gives him. At age 18, Santiago encloses his flock in the sacristy of an abandoned church. He anticipates returning to the dry goods shop to see the merchant's daughter that he saw the previous year. At Tarifa, he tells a gypsy woman his dream of hidden treasure at the pyramids. She doesn't charge him for the visit, but demands a tenth of his treasure.

In the plaza, the boy encounters Melchizedek, an old man from Salem who claims to be a king. To establish credibility, the man writes in the sand the names of the boy's parents, the merchant's daughter, and the seminary he attended, and some of the boy's secrets. Melchizedek promises to help Santiago achieve his earthly mission just as the old man helped a miner find a huge emerald the week before. For payment, Melchizedek demands a tenth of Santiago's flock.

The shepherd climbs an old Moorish fort, looks south to Africa, and considers buying a ticket to Morocco. The next day at noon, Melchizedek instructs him to follow the signs and use two divination stones, the Urim and Thummim, to interpret omens. That afternoon, Santiago sails toward Morocco. After foolishly entrusting his cash to a Spanish-speaking man in Tangier, Santiago is

cheated. To earn money, he aids a candy seller and receives a sweet. A crystal merchant regrets that business has moved east to Ceuta. Santiago cleans glasses for him and improves trade.

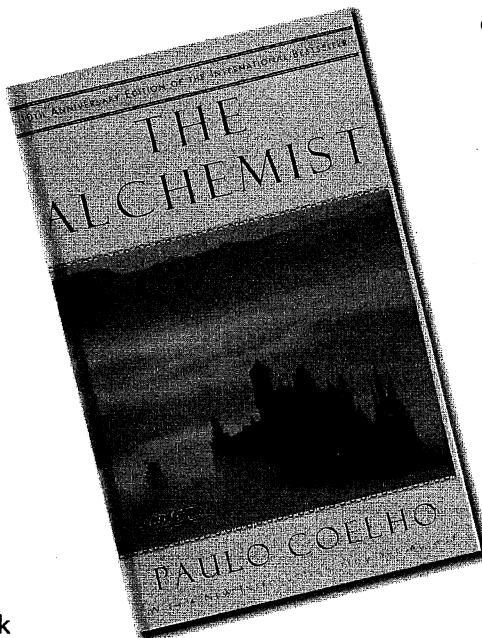
Part Two

Within a year, Santiago builds the crystal business by selling tea in polished cups. After acquiring wealth from commissions, he determines to return to Andalusia buy sheep. The merchant gives him a blessing. After seeing the two stones fall from their pouch, Santiago decides to seek adventure by joining a caravan of 200 journeyers and 400 animals. He encounters

an Englishman who wants to master alchemy. To complete his study, the man must visit an alchemist at the Al-Fayoum oasis. Santiago and the Englishman share an interest in omens.

Santiago studies the desert while the Englishman reads learned texts on alchemy. The caravan leader, formerly an orchard keeper from El Cairum, hears rumors of tribal wars. The Englishman realizes that Santiago's dream puts the boy close to the Soul of the World. The Englishman teaches the boy about alchemy, the purification of metals to achieve the Master Work. The pace of the caravan increases as Bedouins appear more frequently. The travelers fall silent in anticipation of attack.

At the oasis, the travelers remain among Arab residents while desert wars rage. The Englishman searches for the alchemist, a renowned healer who



appears at will. Santiago falls in love with Fatima, a beautiful Arab girl who points to the south where the alchemist resides. He proposes marriage and meets her daily for a month, and he spies two hawks in conflict. A seer agrees that Santiago's vision of combat is warning of war. Because the oasis chieftains revere Joseph, the biblical seer of Egypt, they promise gold to Santiago if his vision is true and death if he is wrong.

The attack of 2,000 armed warriors on the oasis ends in victory for the chieftains, who reward Santiago with 50 pieces of gold and the post of counselor of the oasis. That night, the alchemist appears on a white horse. He promises to help the boy find his treasure. The next night, the two journey into the desert, where the alchemist pulls a cobra from a hole in the sand. The older man warns that immediate marriage to Fatima will bring discontent and regret that Santiago has not fulfilled his dream.

The next morning, Santiago and the alchemist set out for the pyramids. A week later, the boy studies a cryptic message on the Emerald Tablet. Five days later, they encounter armed tribesmen. That night, Santiago prepares for a severe test. The next day, armed tribesmen question the two travelers, then let them continue on their way. One day, only a two-day journey from the pyramids, horsemen capture Santiago and the alchemist. The alchemist promises the chief that Santiago can change himself into the wind.

At first, Santiago is terrified of failure. Three days later, after talking with the desert, the wind, and the sun, he succeeds. At the end of the day, the alchemist and Santiago shelter at a Coptic monastery, where the alchemist turns lead into gold. He divides the disk into four pieces, one for the monk, one for Santiago, and one in escrow at the monastery if Santiago should need money. The alchemist tells the boy a story about a Roman man whose warrior son spreads momentous words.

Alone that night, Santiago rides to the pyramids and spies a scarab beetle, an omen of treasure and emblem of identity. The boy digs into the sand until desert brigands seize and beat him. At sunrise, Santiago admits that he is looking for treasure. The leader of the thieves reports that, two years past, he dreams of finding treasure in a ruined sacristy.

Epilogue

Santiago makes the connection with his original dream and returns to Spain to dig up a conquistador's treasure of gold pieces and masks, stone statues, and jewels. He intends to reward the gypsy woman at Tarifa and to return to Fatima at the oasis.

Timeline

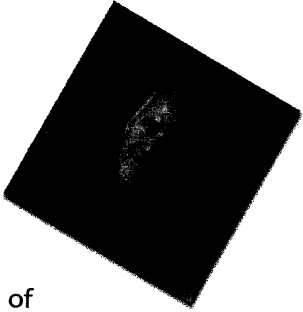
childhood	Santiago admires the image of Saint Santiago Matamoros on a white horse.
age 16	Santiago leaves the seminary and begins tending sheep.
age 17	Santiago meets the merchant's daughter.
three days before the story begins	Melchizedek helps a miner find a huge emerald.
age 18	Santiago shelters for the night in a ruined church.
one day later	At Tarifa, a gypsy woman listens to his dream of finding treasure at the pyramids of Egypt.
three days later	Melchizedek promises to help Santiago achieve his earthly mission.
noon the next day	Melchizedek tells Santiago to follow omens and gives him two stones to interpret the signs.
that afternoon later	Santiago sails for Morocco. After a thief steals Santiago's money, the boy works for a crystal merchant in Tangier.
a month later	The merchant dreams of making a pilgrimage to Mecca.
two months later	Santiago learns Arabic and begins selling tea.
nine months later	Santiago earns a sizeable commission and a license to import goods from Africa.
that afternoon	Santiago sets out with a caravan toward Al-Fayoum.
later	During tribal wars, the caravan pauses at the oasis. Santiago proposes to Fatima.
a month later	The camel driver discontinues the journey. Santiago reports a vision of war to the oasis chieftains.
later	The alchemist appears to Santiago.

next morning	An attack on the oasis ends in victory for the chieftains.
that night	The alchemist promises to help Santiago find his treasure.
next night	The alchemist locates a cobra in the sand.
sunrise	Santiago follows the alchemist toward the pyramids.
a week later	Santiago studies the inscription on the Emerald Tablet.
five days later	The pair encounter armed tribesman.
next day	Three armed tribesmen allow the two to travel on.
a two-day ride from the pyramids	Armed horsemen capture Santiago and the alchemist.
three days later	Santiago transforms himself into the wind.
late afternoon	The alchemist and Santiago rest at a Coptic monastery, where the alchemist transforms lead into gold.
hours later	Santiago views the pyramids by moonlight and digs for treasure.
later	Santiago returns to the ruined sacristy, strikes gold, and plans to reward the gypsy woman before he marries Fatima.

Critics Corner

O Alquimista (The Alchemist), a *Der Spiegel* best-seller, receives scathing reviews from literary critics who denounce its sexism and yawn at its repackaging of medieval storytelling and various tenets of Chinese yin-yang, Greek philosophy, Christianity, and Islam. Nonetheless, the fable won a Sydney Morning Herald book of 1993, a Bambi award, the 1995 Grand Prix Litteraire of Elle in France, Yugoslavia's Golden Book Award in 1995 and 1996, the 1996 Super Grinzane Cavour Book Award and Flaiano International Award in Italy, the 2002 Corine International Award, and the 2004 Nielsen Gold Book Award in the United Kingdom. In addition to being the highest seller of any book published in Portuguese, it is available in 57 languages and in numerous adaptations—illustrated editions, dance theatre, puppetry, dramatic reading, musical stage play, opera, and eventually, screenplay.

Author Sketch



An international literary star, Paulo/Paulo Coelho (pronounce pow'loh kway' loh), is a Brazilian, born in Rio de Janeiro in 1947 to Lygia and Pedro Coelho, an engineer. In 1954, he began formal education at the Jesuit School of San Ignacio, a pious institute that earned his displeasure. Determined to write, he won a poetry contest and, vicariously, an essay competition with a rejected piece his sister Sonia retrieved from the trash. Rather than follow his father's trade, he educated himself through reading. After poring over Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*, Coelho rebelled against a stern household. In 1964, his father committed him to a mental institution where doctors used electroconvulsive therapy to reduce his intractability.

In his late teens, Coelho became a journalist and amateur actor. For his flamboyant behavior, his parents readmitted him to the psychiatric hospital. An independent diagnosis warned that the boy needed to make his own way. Returned to the study of engineering, he tried to please his parents. After quitting school, he dressed like a hippie, dabbled in LSD, and involved himself in theater and a shortlived magazine. He wrote lyrics for musicians Elis Regina and Raul Seixas, who issued 60 popular records. At age 26, Coelho joined the Alternative Society, a leftist group that condoned magic, and began publishing *Kring-ha*, a libertarian comic.

For his revolt against Brazil's repressive government, Coelho was jailed and tortured. He tricked his tormentors by pretending to be a self-destructive madman. He married and took a job with Polygram Records. At age 30, he settled in London to become a writer, but gave up and moved back home to produce records for CBS. After a divorce, he married Christina Oiticica and traveled Europe. After a mystic experience spawned by a tour of Dachau, he immersed himself in Christian mysticism and made a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, Spain, a popular route with penitents since the early Middle Ages. At age 40, Coelho published *The Pilgrimage*, the beginning of his unique writings. He followed with *The Alchemist*, a global bestseller. He writes columns and sponsors charitable programs for children and the aged through UNESCO.

Other Works by the Author

The Pilgrimage, 1987
The Alchemist, 1988
Brida, 1990
The Gift, 1991
The Valkyries, 1992
By The River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept, 1994
Maktub, 1994
The Fifth Mountain, 1996
Manual of the Warrior of Light, 1997
Love Letters from a Prophet, 1997
Veronika Decides to Die, 1998
Paulo Coelho: The Confessions of a Pilgrim, 1999
The Devil and Miss Prym, 2000
Fathers, Sons, and Grandsons, 2001
Eleven Minutes, 2003
On the Seventh Day, 2004
The Genie and the Roses, 2004
O Zahir, 2005

Media Versions

Audio CD

The Alchemist, read by Jeremy Irons, HarperAudio, 2001

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The Alchemist, Random House Audio, 1995

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The Alchemist, HarperCollins, 1998

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Hart, Stephen M. "Review: *The Alchemist*," *Romance Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (fall 2004): 304-312.
McGrath, Liam. *Seven Days: A Journey with Paolo Coelho*. Irish Film Board, 2002.
"October Bestsellers," *Publishers Weekly* 250, no. 41 (31 October 2003): 31.
"The Paulo Coelho Official Site," <http://www.paulocoelho.com.br/eng/>.

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General Objectives

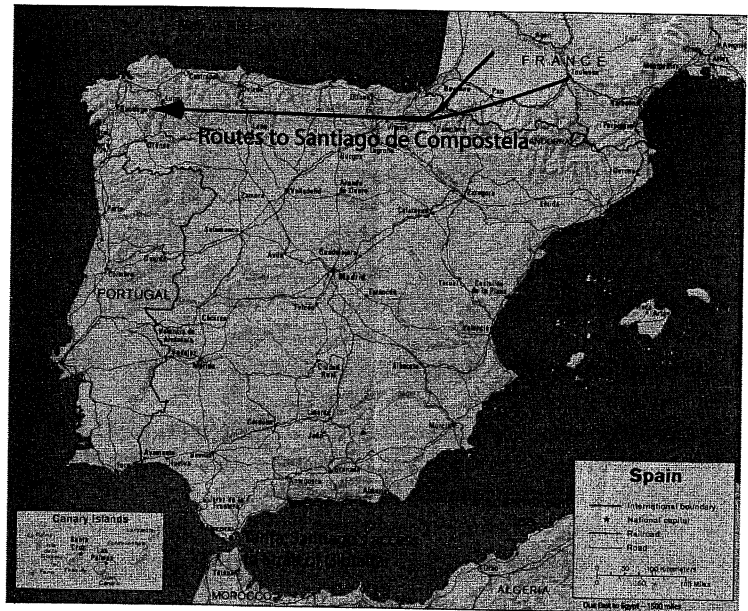
1. To experience and read aloud examples of wisdom lore
2. To identify and explain examples of dialogue, nested stories, cautionary tales, myth, legend, and epilogue
3. To picture episodes in chronological order
4. To envision gradual maturity and the acquisition of wisdom
5. To enumerate significant relationships
6. To explain the roles of warriors, seers, monks, and desert women
7. To set the events in their social and geographic context
8. To comprehend loss, dreams, omens, and visions as motivators
9. To evaluate everyday compromises
10. To discuss the use of shifting settings as a commentary on the action

Specific Objectives

1. To summarize how Melchizedek advises Santiago
2. To analyze the misgivings that cloud Santiago's thinking
3. To explain the purpose of a marriage proposal to Fatima
4. To account for the mystic appearance of stones, stars, a scarab beetle, a cobra, and hawks
5. To discuss the alchemist's views on settling for less than success
6. To account for the Englishman's failure to master alchemy
7. To summarize references to famous alchemists, the Koran, the shepherds who encounter the Christ Child, Santiago Matamoros, and Joseph, the seer of Egypt
8. To contrast Coelho's teaching style with classroom lectures and texts
9. To justify the choice of fable as a genre for telling Santiago's story
10. To predict the effect of sharing the treasure with the gypsy woman and of returning to Fatima

The Importance Of Setting

The movement of Santiago the shepherd from familiar territory to Tarifa on the southern Iberian coast, across the Strait of Gibraltar to Tangiers, east across North Africa to the Al-Fayoum Oasis and to the pyramids at Giza, and back home to Andalusia encompasses his maturity and acceptance of intuitive wisdom. At home in southern Spain, he spends his days seeking water and pasturage for a flock of sheep that teach him about patience and commitment. From a night in the sacristy of a ruined church, he progresses to Tarifa, sells his sheep, and looks out from the city's old Moorish fort over the Mediterranean Sea to Morocco. With determination to broaden his horizons, he takes passage to Tangier.



The shift in locale introduces Santiago to the Arabic language, food, and dress and to Islamic customs and beliefs. After a guide robs him of his profits from herding, he acclimates himself to poverty and steady work as assistant to a crystal merchant. Amid sparkling cups and dishes, the boy amasses a new stake to pay his way home and buy more sheep. After discussing with the merchant the man's hesitation to make a life-fulfilling pilgrimage to Mecca, Santiago decides to continue toward the Egyptian pyramids by joining 200 travelers and 400 animals in the care of a skilled camel driver.

Travel with a caravan across the desert introduces Santiago to intriguing aspects of nature—winds, dunes, camels, star constellations, hawks—and encourages him to seek his treasure. His month-long sojourn at the Al-Fayoum Oasis introduces him to a more casual, less stressful life among Arabs who live in tents in the shade date palms. At a well, he observes veiled Arab women and meets Fatima, an unmarried girl. Still looking upward and outward, he travels on horseback with the alchemist eastward toward Giza, stopping for a night at a Coptic monastery.

Literary Terms And Applications

For a better understanding of Coelho's style, present the following terms and applications to the book:

dilemma a plot that depicts human characters in dire predicaments which they must resolve by making some sacrifice. At the tense climax to the fable, Santiago faces possible death at the hands of a desert army. The alchemist urges him to surrender his 50 pieces of gold from the oasis chieftains in exchange for three more days of life. The time offers the boy an opportunity to undergo a test of might by enlisting the help of the wind. The dilemma concludes with Santiago more at peace with himself and more in tune with nature than ever.

fable a brief, elementary moral story in verse or prose in which the characters are often simple peasants or animals demonstrating human foibles. *The Alchemist* begins with the enlightenment of a shepherd in his late teens. At a crucial point in his education, he chooses travel and risk over the familiar trek of sheep in search of food and water. The episodic story reaches heights of mysticism, wisdom, and challenge and the promise of a lasting love before Santiago locates his treasure.

foil a character whose presence in a literary work offsets or enhances the contrasting traits of another character. The Englishman whom Santiago encounters at the Al-Fayoum Oasis travels a different path to enlightenment than the boy. Through mastery of Esperanto and study of learned books, the Englishman attempts to recreate alchemic experiments that will teach him how to turn base metal into gold. He trades methods with Santiago

and begins studying nature, but returns to his original poring over texts. Coelho uses the paired foils to illustrate that each seeker has a unique path to wisdom. The pause at the great pyramids of Giza is a long-anticipated adventure that begins with the sighting of a scarab beetle, a symbol of divinity, ends rapidly with hurried digging into the night. In the custody of desert brigands, Santiago barely has time to admire the ancient pharaonic structures in the moonlight before he realizes that fate points him homeward. The Epilogue completes the circle with Santiago digging again, this time into a conquistador's gold treasure in the sacristy of the ruined church. Coelho indicates that, however satisfying the return to Andalusia, Santiago has changed toward his relationship to place. The perfumed wind from North Africa draws him back to Al-Fayoum and Fatima.

Cross-Curricular Sources

For related reading and more information about fables, Paulo Coelho, North Africa, caravans, the pyramids at Giza, Islam, the Koran, and conquistador treasure, consult these sources:

Article

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- Pierpont, Claudie Roth, "A Society of One: Zora Neale Hurston, American Contrarian," *New Yorker* (17 February 1997): 80-91.
- Rubin, Merle, "The Muse who Midwifed 'Treasure Island,'" *Wall Street Journal* (5 June 1995): 5A.
- Ryan, Alan, "Saint-Exupéry in Full Flight," *USA Today* (12 January 1995): 5D.
- Sax, Boria, "The Allure of Animal Anecdotes," *Storytelling* (spring 1992): 10-13.

Audiocassette

- Babbitt, Natalie, *Tuck Everlasting*, Listening Library
- Hajj, Al-Adly Audiovisual Center
- Wilde, Oscar, *The Canterville Ghost*, Recorded Books

CD

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- Weiss, Jim. *The Jungle Book*, Greathall Productions

Disc Recording

- Goss, Linda, *Afro-American Tales and Games*, Folkways Records

Film

- Caravans of Gold*, Films Incorporated

Filmstrip

- Treasure of the Boy King Tut*, Educational Dimensions

Internet

- "Aesop's Fables," <http://www.ai.mit.edu/people/torance/literature.html>.
- "Beatrix Potter," <http://www.cyberramp.net/~startrek/>
- Eliot, T. S., "Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats," <http://www.kirtland.cc.mi.us/honors/possums.htm>.
- "Hans Christian Andersen's Fables," <http://www.math.technion.ac.il/~rl/Andersen/vt>.
- Wilde, Oscar, "The Happy Prince," <http://sunsite.unc.edu/pub/docs/books/gutenberg/etext97/hpaot10.txt>.
- "The House of Pomegranates," <http://sunsite.unc.edu/pub/docs/books/gutenberg/etext97/hpomg10.txt>.

Plays

- Androcles and the Lion*, G. B. Shaw
- Peter Pan*, James M. Barrie

Poems

- "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," Robert Browning
- "The Goblin Market," Christina Rossetti

Reference Books

- As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry In Islam*, Columbia University Press
- Atlas of World History*, Barnes & Noble
- Beatrix Potter's Art*, Frederick Warne
- Companion to the Qur'an*, Oneworld
- Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols*, Scarecrow Press
- Dictionary of World Folklore*, Larousse
- The Encyclopedia of Fable*, ABC-CLIO
- The Encyclopedia of World Scripture*, McFarland
- The English Fable: Aesop and Literary Culture, 1651-1740*, Cambridge University Press
- Fable as Literature*, Athlone Press
- Fables and Fabulists: Ancient and Modern*, Elliot Stock
- Joel Chandler Harris, *Folklorist*, University of Georgia Press
- Paths Through the Forest: A Biography of the Brothers Grimm*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston
- Rudyard Kipling, *Realist and Fabulist*, University Press
- Storytellers*, McFarland

Video

Africans: The Nature of a Continent, Barnard & Butler Media
Blood and Sand: War in the Sahara, Sharon Sopher Productions
Johnny Moses, Storyteller, American Indian Voices
The Little Prince, Paramount
The Point, Family Home Entertainment
The Story of Islam: The Heritage of Islam, International Film Bureau

Themes And Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* should include these aspects:

Themes

- dreams
- intuition
- travel
- loss
- divination
- mentoring
- wisdom
- longing
- regret
- maturity
- success

Motifs

- accepting and preparing for fate
- reuniting with home
- physical hardship and death threats
- developing values
- living a meaningful life

Related Reading

Adams, Richard, *Watership Down*
Aesop's Fables
 Atil, Esin, Kalila wa Dimna: Fables from a Fourteenth-Century Arabic Manuscript
 Bach, Richard, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*
 Balcells, Jacqueline, "The Enchanted Raisin"
 Bierce, Ambrose, *The Stories And Fables of Ambrose Bierce*
 Bodart, Anne, *The Blue Dog and other Fables for the French*
 Bruchac, Joseph, *Native Wisdom*
 Cabral, Len, *Len Cabral's Storytelling Book*
 Calvino, Italo, *Italian Folktales*
 Chekhov, Anton, "A Slander"

The Complete Grimms' Fairy Tales
 Creeden, Sharon, *Fair Is Fair: World Folktales of Justice*
 Dickens, Charles, *A Christmas Carol*
 Dinesen, Isak, *Babette's Feast*
 Faison, Edward, Jr., *African-American Folk Tales*
 Goethe, Johann, *The Story of Reynard the Fox*
 Hamilton, Virginia, *Her Stories: African American Folktales, Fairy Tales, and True Tales and The People Could Fly*
 Harris, Joel Chandler, *The Complete Tales of Uncle Remus*.
 Hawkes, Jacquetta, *A Woman as Great as the World and other Fables*
 Hurston, Zora Neale, *The Complete Stories*
 Kame'eleihiwa, Lilikala K., *A Legendary Tradition of Kamapua'a, the Hawaiian Pig-God*
 Kipling, Rudyard, *Just So Stories*
 Krylov, Ivan, *Krylov's Fables*.
 La Fontaine, Jean de, *Fables*
 Marie de France, *Fables*
 O. Henry, "The Gift Of The Magi"
One Thousand And One Nights
 Orwell, George, *Animal Farm*
The Panchatantra
 Potter, Beatrix, *The Complete Tales of Beatrix Potter*
 Reneaux, J. J., *Cajun Folktales*
 Ross, Gayle, *How Rabbit Tricked Otter and Other Cherokee Trickster Stories*
 Rostand, Edmond, *Chantecler*
 Saint-Exupéry, Antoine de, *The Little Prince*
 Schram, Peninnah, and Steven M. Rosman, *Eight Tales for Eight Nights: Stories for Chanukah*
 Shaw, G. B., *Androcles and the Lion*
 "The Sorcerer's Apprentice"
 Stevenson, Robert Louis, *Fables*
 Thurber, James, *Fables for our Time*
 Tong, Diane, *Gypsy Folktales*
 Twain, Mark, *The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain*
 Van Dyke, Henry, *The Story of the Other Wise Man*
 Wilde, Oscar, *The Picture of Dorian Gray and Selected Stories*
 Wolkstein, Diane, and Samuel Noah Kramer, *Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth, Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer*
 Yriarte, *Literary Fables of Yriarte*
Ysengrimus

Meaning Study

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the book. Explain each in context. Part and page numbers pinpoint each entry so that you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. The roof had fallen in long ago, and an enormous sycamore had grown on the spot where the sacristy had once stood. (Part One, p. 3)
(The beginning and ending of Santiago's story occur at the sacristy, the vestry or chamber in a church housing sacred vessels and ritual garments. Coelho stresses the symbolism of the boy's search for God at a seminary, a pedantic place that teaches him nothing. The ruined sacristy suggests the spiritual collapse of organized religion and the triumph of nature and natural wisdom.)
2. The girl was typical of the region of Andalusia, with flowing black hair, and eyes that vaguely recalled the Moorish conquerors. (Part One, p. 5)
(The narrative refers to the interbreeding of Caucasian Iberians with the swarthy Moroccans and Berbers who populated Spain between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries.)
3. They are called Urim and Thummim. (Part One, p. 30)
(According to Exodus 28:30, Leviticus 8:7-8, Deuteronomy 33:8, and Nehemiah 7:65, the ritual dress of Abraham, Aaron, and the high priests in ancient Israel was a robe, apron, and sash topped by a pouch or breastplate containing two divining stones or oracular devices. The stones, named "light" and "perfection," were used for casting lots and performing psychic readings limited to arbitrary statements of "yes" and "no.")
4. As a child in church, he had always looked at the image of Saint Santiago Matamoros on his white horse. (Part One, p. 34)
(At Santiago de Compostela, pilgrims summoned supernatural aid against Muslim invaders through dreams and prayers to Santiago Matamoros or Santiago the Moor Killer. Mounted on a white steed and brandishing a sword, he was a supernatural protector who rode to earth from the Milky Way. He slew Moorish infidels and performed battlefield miracles to rescue Christian crusaders from the

influx of Islam into Europe. By 1492, Christians ousted Muslims and controlled Iberia. For his intervention, Pope Benedict XIV made Santiago Matamoros Spain's patron saint, symbolized by scallop shells.)

5. The Prophet gave us the Koran, and left us just five obligations to satisfy during our lives. (Part Two, p. 54)
(Known as the Five Pillars of Islam, Koranic requirements for piety require daily recitation of the creed, five daily prayers face down toward Mecca, charity to uplift the poor, annual observance of thirty days of fasting during Ramadan, and a hadj or hajj, a sacred once-in-a-lifetime ritual journey to the Plaza of the Sacred Stone in Mecca, Arabia.)
6. *Maktub*, the merchant said, finally. (Part Two, p. 59)
(Maktub is the written word of the prophet Muhammed, which verbalizes the commands of Allah. Muslim children learn maktub in religious schools that require rote memorization of Koranic scriptures in the original Arabic.)
7. First he had studied Esperanto, then the world's religions, and now it was alchemy. (Part Two, p. 66)
(The Englishman's path to enlightenment begins with learning the international language of Esperanto, studying global faiths, and practicing alchemy. The latter is a speculative discipline that seeks to exploit the divine secrets of the universe—transformation of base metal into gold, a panacea for all ills, and a deathless life.)
8. "He lives at the Al-Fayoum Oasis," his friend had said. (Part Two, p. 67)
(An ancient settlement along the Nile River in northern Egypt, Al-Fayoum (also called al-Faiyum, al-Fayum, or al-Fayyum), dates to 1900 B. C. Archeological digs have located Copt, Demotic, and Greek papyri as well as neolithic farms and a mosque from the Mamluk period. The historical span of artifacts attests to the long life, prosperity, and influence of the community.)
9. At other times, mysterious, hooded men would appear; they were Bedouins who did surveillance along the caravan route. (Part Two, p. 77)

(The Bedou, an Arabic-speaking tribe of patriarchal nomads, wander Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. Spread over much of the area, they live in polygynous families and herd camels, cattle, goats, and sheep. Their autocratic clans answer to sheikhs and councils of elders.)

10. "It looks like *A Thousand and One Nights*," said the Englishman, impatient to meet with the alchemist. (Part Two, p. 88)
(The Middle Eastern secular narrative collection Alf Laylah Wa Laylah (A Thousand and One Nights), is a literary phenomenon of ninth-through fourteenth century Arabic, Indian, Syrian, and Egyptian storytelling. The interlocking stream of fable, folklore, anecdote, and fairy tales began as a Persian storybook. It assembles lore from Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. Among the collected narratives are legends of the roc, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, Aladdin and the Magic Lamp, shapeshifter stories, the Sinbad cycle, fool tales, and the episodic tales and proverbs of Scheherazade, a beautiful bride who charms a murderous sultan with her gift for oral lore.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important. Be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Plot

1. Why does Santiago leave the seminary?
(At age 16, Santiago, a native of Andalusia, grows restless and discontent at the seminary. Rather than study for the priesthood as a way of knowing God, he chooses to become a shepherd and roam southern Spain while providing water and pasturage for his flock. The impetus to his yearning for travel is an internal stimulus to see more of the world for himself and form his own impressions.)

Theme

2. Why is intuition a focal theme?
(Santiago is attuned to mental and spiritual stimuli that spur him to action and guide him on his way toward a dream treasure. After meeting Melchizedek and learning about his Personal Legend, the boy begins acquiring greater respect for innate stirrings. He studies nature and develops a reverence for God,

omens, and a universal language that allows him to perceive the feelings of others. One of his intuitions is love at first sight for Fatima, who promises to wait until he returns from Giza to the oasis at Al-Fayoum.

At a pivotal point in the fable, the warring hawks overhead deliver to Santiago an irrefutable message that danger is coming. By acting on his intuition, he warns the oasis chieftains of armed invaders to neutral territory and saves the lives of the Arabs from 2,000 armed warriors. His reward is 50 gold pieces and appointment to counselor of the commune.)

Symbolism

3. What elements take on symbolic meaning?
(Santiago relates to objects and beings that guide his path and inform him of progress. Sheep indicate the narrow confines of his boyhood world in search of pasturage and water. At the crystal shop, the polishing of glass represents his maturity and his clarification of outlook and dreams. While he travels with the caravan, the desert symbolizes the learning process, which requires observation of a great expanse and communion with living elements. At the pyramids of Giza, the scarab beetle, an ancient symbol of divinity, marks the spot at which Santiago moves closer to attaining his dream. The sacristy, a godly shelter within the ruins of a church in Andalusia, becomes both beginning and end of Santiago's quest.)

Conflict

4. Why does money seem impermanent and undependable?
(Santiago's original plan to travel relies on his success as a shepherd as the source of funds for the journey. After selling his flock, he has the money to buy a ticket from Tarifa to Tangiers. Loss of the cash to a guide in Tangiers forces Santiago to improvise a new means of rescuing him from poverty and of funding his adventure. From a year at the crystal shop, he observes in the merchant a reluctance to attain his dreams. Instead of investing in another flock, Santiago departs with a North African caravan. His journey with the alchemist re-establishes the pervasive themes of trust in a stranger and risk in an exotic locale. After brigands steal his 50 gold pieces and the quarter of the gold disk, he weeps at Giza before attaining his ambition—

direction to a buried treasure at the sacristy in Andalusia. Less exciting to him is the anticipation of reunion with Fatima.)

Character

5. Why does the camel driver demand obedience?
(Like Santiago, the camel driver knows the vicissitudes of fortune, especially in the Sahara Desert. After earth tremors destroy the orchard in El Cairum, he begins leading caravans from Tangier east to Egypt. His observation of potential dangers informs him of the need for group consensus. He demands that all 200 travelers obey his word.)

The dictum proves wise after rumors of tribal wars circulate, forcing the caravan to travel night and day and to observe silence. After the party reaches the oasis at Al-Fayoum, unity of action proves the salvation of residents who follow the direction of chieftains and ward off an attack by 2,000 armed warriors. Because of the fractious condition of desert politics, the camel driver wisely disbands his caravan.)

Motivation

6. How does Santiago impress the alchemist?
(Before the arrival of the caravan to Al-Fayoum, the alchemist lives apart from the population like a hermit and earns a reputation for healing the sick. In anticipation of a young disciple, the alchemist waits for the newcomer to exhibit unique qualities that set him apart from the average traveler or seeker. Santiago displays the courage of his convictions after accepting the chieftains' threat of reward or death for violating the tradition of neutrality at the oasis. As the boy walks under a full moon, he accepts the fact that what happens next is maktub. Without regrets, he stands still as a huge white horse rears above him. When the horseman dressed in black approaches, touches Santiago's forehead with the tip of his sword, and questions his temerity in interpreting the flight of hawks, the boy thinks on his hero, Santiago Matamoros. The image steadies him, even after the rider draws pricks Santiago's forehead. The boy passes the alchemist's test of courage and earns his regard.)

Character Responses

7. How does Santiago respond to a second death sentence?
(In the custody of desert warriors, the alchemist informs the Arab leader that Santiago is a powerful sorcerer who transforms himself into the wind. The boy cowers at the bold statement, but the alchemist urges a strong front to impress the desert wanderers, who disdain cowardice. Speechless and angry that the brigands took all his money, Santiago questions the alchemist, who reminds him that the money buys them three more days of life.)

Puzzled about the boast that Santiago is a shapeshifter, the boy fears failure. With the encouragement of the older man, the boy begins pondering death and listening to his heart. His motivation is love for Fatima, which causes him to debate with the desert, the wind, and the sun. After merging with the wind, Santiago, the alchemist's disciple, "[understands] the glory of God.")

Interpretation

8. Why did this book become a bestseller?
(Although critics scorn Coelho's simple fable, readers embrace it for its teasing adages and mystic wisdom. The open-ended philosophy encourages the study of innate understanding and an intuitive knowledge of God. Santiago's example of humility and self-reliance suggests that readers can open themselves to the universe without attaining great wisdom. He understands the emotions and misgivings of others without speaking their language. By studying the truths of the heart, he evolves courage and self-sufficiency that impress the leaders of the oasis and lethal desert warriors. At the plot resolution, Santiago finds treasure in humble home territory, a sign to readers to look for contentment and reward in their own backyards.)

Comparative Literature

9. How does *The Alchemist* compare with other quest fables?
(Coelho's fable bears similar elements to a number of famous works. Like The Panchatantra, jataka tales, and One Thousand and One Nights, the story contains nested myths and illustrative legends that educate and prepare the seeker to be tested. Like Joel Chandler

Harris's Br'er Rabbit stories, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," and Richard Adams's *Watership Down*, the conflict pits a single defenseless boy against a superior force that threatens annihilation of a peaceful, but vulnerable community. Other animal stories—Aesop and Jean de Fontaine's fables, Beatrix Potter's farmyard stories, Johann Goethe's *Reynard the Fox*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*—parallel Santiago's observations of nature as models of right thinking and sources of courage. Like Richard Bach's *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, Isak Dinesen's *Babette's Feast*, O. Henry's "The Gifts of the Magi," and Antoine de Sainte-Exúpery's *The Little Prince*, the stress on intuition and love indicates contemplative methods of knowing the truth, meeting challenges, and succeeding at fulfilling dreams.)

Structure

10. Why does the fable conclude with an epilogue? (The focus of Santiago's quest is the journey itself. The episodes in Andalusia, Tarifa, Tangiers, the caravan route, Al-Fayoum, and Giza illustrate the main themes of ambition, self-knowledge, trust, and persistence. After the boy hears the brigand's dream, the suspense ends. The resolution passes rapidly over a return trip to Spain, locating the sacristy, and digging up the conquistador's chest of treasure. In the final lines, Santiago seems more excited about reuniting with Fatima than with riches.)

How Language Works

Much of *The Alchemist* takes the form of aphorism, a short statement of wisdom. For example:

1. Santiago, after two years of tending sheep, readies himself for adventure with good advice: "We have to be prepared for change."
2. The gypsy woman begins to interpret the palm reading by informing the boy, "Dreams are the language of God."
3. Melchizedek, the king of Salem, informs Santiago that his "desire originated in the soul of the universe. It's your mission on earth." The old man adds a warning, "Everything in life has its price."
4. The camel driver, battered by misfortune, suggests a North African outlook: "The desert is so huge, and the horizons so distant, that they make a person feel small, and as if he should remain silent."

5. The Englishman explains alchemy in scientific terms: "Everything on earth is being continuously transformed."
6. The alchemist summarizes the intuitive compass in each person: "Wherever your heart is, there you will find your treasure."

Across The Curriculum

Religion

1. Read aloud the biblical animal fable in II Samuel 12. Determine why Nathan, Jerusalem's high priest, takes a risk in rebuking King David through storytelling.
2. Comment aloud on the meaning of *maktub* or *maktab* to Islam. Compare the concept of fate to a similar view in Calvinism.

Geography

1. List topics that might accompany a graduate course on desert travel, including Bedouin history, oasis lore, Moorish influence on language and architecture, travel by horse and camel, caravan trade routes, navigation by constellations, cobras and hawks, wind patterns, and the pyramids of Giza.
2. Chart the paths of the simum, sirocco, and levanter. List dates when wind activity spawned disaster.
3. Using map software, generate a map covering places mentioned in the fable: Ceuta, Andalusia, Spain, Tarifa, Al-Cairum, Mecca, Sahara Desert, Giza, North Africa, and Al-Fayoum. Examine two possible locations for the kingdom of Salem: Salem in southern India and Jerusalem.

Research

1. Take notes on an overview of *One Thousand and One Nights*, a touchstone of Middle Eastern lore. Locate motifs and themes that impact Coelho's fable. Include quest lore, yearnings, interrupted journeys, love at first sight, mystic seers and guides, tests of courage and resilience, omens from nature, divination, treasure, and danger from brigands and desert wars.
2. Outline elements of world philosophy that Coelho incorporates in his fable. Summarize the Old Testament story of Joseph's sojourn in

Egypt, the Christian concepts of love and treasure, Islamic fatalism, the circular history of Greek philosophy, the Mormon reverence for the Urim and Thummim, and the Chinese concept of yin-yang.

3. Summarize Martin Buber's descriptions of the I-thou relationship. Explain why a soulful conversation about dreams between Santiago and the crystal merchant is beneficial to both men. Surmise why the two part with a formal blessing.

Journalism

1. Dramatize an interview with Paolo/Paulo Coelho for a magazine article, website, or television appearance. List questions to ask him about his interest in the North African deserts, the concepts of divination and intuitive wisdom, and his positive attitude toward locating success and contentment.

Math and Economics

1. Post a bulletin board diagram explaining the turns of monetary fortune in Santiago's life, beginning with his father's gift of three ancient gold coins to buy sheep. Continue to the unearthing of a conquistador's treasure in the ruined sacristy. Note the theme of risk as the shepherd moves far from familiar territory toward realization of his dreams.
2. Locate examples of mystic geometry and mathematics in the fable, particularly the defeat of 2,000 warriors, the reward of one piece of gold for every ten enemy corpses, six days of creation, earning enough commissions to buy 120 sheep, two divination stones, glimpses of the sun through swirling winds, the Roman father and his two sons, the mystic symbols on the Emerald Table, the hole in the sand, heavenly constellations, viewing the pyramids of Giza by moonlight, a semicircle of oasis chieftains, climbing the ramp at Tarifa, breaking the gold disk into four parts, placing twigs for interpretation of the future, a caravan 200 travelers with 400 animals, three days to prepare for a test of shapeshifting, and drawing the circle that lessens the cobra's threat.

Law

1. Outline the legal implications of neutral territory at the Al-Fayoum Oasis. Note the unwritten law of the desert that oases belong to all

travelers. Explain why sources of water should be protected from tribal warfare. List other places that conform to international laws of neutrality. Why do national leaders want outer space to remain neutral?

Psychology

1. With a panel, contrast the alchemist's teaching methods and thoughts on contentment with the stress and predictability of a shepherd's life. Propose ways for Santiago to find simple happiness with Fatima, for example, by living alternately in Andalusia and Al-Fayoum, by rearing their children to follow eclectic faiths and philosophies, and by introducing their family to a variety of languages, foods, dress, views of nature, and storytelling styles.
2. In a paragraph, contrast the roles of the father, gypsy woman, Melchizedek, the Englishman, the crystal merchant, Fatima, the camel driver, the seer, oasis chieftains, the thief in Tangiers, veiled women at the well, desert brigands, and the alchemist in helping Santiago achieve happiness. Explain how each figure promotes the boy's love of travel and his spirit of adventure.

Cinema

1. Make a list of dramatic scenes from the fable that would require intense use of lighting, costume, makeup, music, props, and advance preparation, particularly a conversation with the sun, digging in the ruined sacristy, increasing the merchant's crystal business, meeting a mystic figure wearing a black kerchief and riding a white horse, speaking to a veiled woman at the well, finding a hole in a pouch, addressing an angel in heaven, inquiring why a lake weeps for Narcissus, dreaming of pyramids, gazing from Tarifa toward Africa, reading a burial ceremony, changing from camel to horse travel, placing a cobra in a circle, meeting with a semicircle of oasis chieftains, and sensing Fatima's perfume in the wind.
2. Describe aspects of the book that are more suited to radio, film, mural, and tableau than to stage, for example, conjuring the wind and sun, digging deeper into the sand at Giza, reading alchemic texts at Al-Fayoum, recounting a dream to a gypsy woman, and reappearing next to the sentinel. Explain why Coelho

inserts a proposal of marriage, buying a ticket for a sea voyage, a description of sheep shearing from tail to neck, insulting veiled Arab women at the well, and an argument in a Tangier cafe among serious philosophical conversations.

Science And Health

1. Explain the dangers to human and animal health from exposure to extreme cold and heat, wind, sunburn, and sand storms in the desert. Sketch costumes and shelters that the Bedou and members of caravans use to protect themselves and their horses and camels.
2. Write a short report on the survival of the date palm, camel, horse, cobra, hawk, and scarab beetle in the North African desert. Illustrate your work with drawings of natural protection from skin, scales, leaves, hair, feathers, talons, and internal water reservoirs.

Language

1. Choose a series of lines from the fable that exemplify the stand-alone wisdom of adages, for example, "It's the simple things in life that are the most extraordinary," "When you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it," "Everything in life has its price," "Dreams are the language of God," "Intuition is really a sudden immersion of the soul into the universal current of life," "Everything is written in the Soul of the World, and there it will stay forever," "Trust in your heart," "When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better," "You must love the desert, but never trust it," "We have to be prepared for change," and "Wherever your heart is, there you will find your treasure."
2. Discuss the paradox of events: "Everything that happens once can never happen again. But everything that happens twice will surely happen a third time." What does the statement imply about absolutes?
3. Compose an extended definition of alchemy, mysticism, or divination. Use events from the fable that express the value of each to ordinary lives like that of an Andalusian shepherd, camel driver, seer, chieftain, member of a caravan, traveler to Giza, Coptic monk, brigand, or gypsy fortuneteller.

Art, Costume Design, And Music

1. Use desktop publishing, plaster of paris, masks, puppets, collage, fabric banners, mural, or sculptor's clay to create a gallery dramatizing the significance of the desert to Santiago's education. Include veiled Arab women at the well, stars above the oasis, warping hawks, the chieftains' tent, cooking over a small fire, 2,000 armed attackers, mirages, a seer casting twigs, the black rider on a white horse, Santiago's marriage proposal to Fatima, date palms and colored tents, children playing, a monk at the Coptic monastery, and a caravan of 200 people and 400 animals awaiting the end of tribal warfare.
2. Design a setting for a gypsy fortuneteller, alchemist, or Arab seer. Use background sights and sounds as well as illusion to enhance the reading of palms, transformation of lead into gold with a sliver of a magic egg, or the placement of twigs for divination.

Drama And Speech

1. Corroborate the alchemist's most dramatic statements with Santiago's private musings on solitude, fate, work, commitment, travel, adventure, love, mysticism, learning, loss, God, family, treasure, and sheep. Explain aloud to a small group how each experience becomes a teaching method to aid the boy unite with the Soul of the World.
2. Project a reunion between Santiago and the gypsy woman. Compose a welcome and speech in which she congratulates him on attaining his fortune at the sacristy. List questions about his adventures and elements of his dream that come true, particularly his view of the pyramids at Giza by moonlight.
3. Roleplay significant conversations dramatized by mystic elements of divination or prophecy. Choose from Santiago's encouragement of the crystal merchant to make a pilgrimage to Mecca or Santiago's first meeting with Melchizedek or the alchemist.

Composition

1. Write a diary entry describing hope and despair as Santiago experiences theft of his profits from shepherding, meeting the Englishman and learning about alchemy from learned texts, departing alone from the Coptic monastery toward Giza, courting

Fatima for a month at the well at Al-Fayoum, loss of the Urim and Thummim from a hole in his pouch, receiving 50 pieces of gold and appointment to counselor of the oasis, and smelling Fatima's perfume on the wind at the sacristy in Andalusia.

2. Compose a scene in which Melchizedek counsels the Englishman on the difference between reading learned texts and observing the desert. Propose a balance between the two methods of learning the secrets of the universe, for example, reading small passages, then looking for confirmation in the flight of hawks, the shift of sand into dunes, the revelation of star patterns in the night sky, the perfume of the North African wind, or the serenity of Arab life at an oasis.
3. Define storytelling as it applies to the nested stories about Narcissus, the boy carrying oil in a spoon, the story of the camel driver's loss of his orchard, the rise of Joseph to power in Egypt, and the tale of the Roman father and his two sons. Compose another illustrative story about desert settings that cautions, affirms, educates, or uplifts.
4. Compose a story of a perfect day in which you do all the everyday things that give you strength and courage, including meeting family and friends, eating, traveling, daydreaming, contemplating God and the universe, reading, planning the future, encountering someone new, and enjoying solitude in nature.

Literature

1. Discuss the nature and purpose of fables, particularly those of Aesop, Scheherazade, Geoffrey Chaucer, Marie de France, James Thurber, J. J. Reneaux, Antoine Saint-Exúpery, Hans Christian Andersen, Oscar Wilde, Beatrix Potter, Ambrose Bierce, Gayle Ross, O. Henry, Charles Dickens, Ivan Krylov, Anne Bodart, Italo Calvino, Len Cabral, Rudyard Kipling, Anton Chekhov, Alice and Phoebe Cary, Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, Zora Neale Hurston, Jacquetta Hawkes, Mark Twain, Virginia Hamilton, Richard Adams, the Grimm brothers, Joseph Bruchac, Johann Goethe, Jean de Fontaine, Isak Dinesen, Peter Dargin, and Joel Chandler Harris. Explain why the story of Narcissus and the grieving lake amuses the alchemist.
2. Read aloud from a variety of literary fables sig-

nificant passages about initiating a quest, accepting risk, and seeking fortune. Consider these examples: Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, Richard Adams's *Watership Down*, Isak Dinesen's *Babette's Feast*, John Steinbeck's *The Pearl*, Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*, The Panchatantra, *One Thousand and One Nights*, Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*, Antoine Saint-Exúpery's *The Little Prince*, Richard Bach's *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, and Grimm's fairy tales.

Education

1. Compose an introduction to fable that describes its use as an instructive tool from prehistory to the present day. Explain why illustrative and cautionary stories and dilemma tales are usually short, simple, but pithy.

Alternate Assessment

1. List in chronological order and describe significant events connected with the treasure. Mention digging near the scarab beetle, locating stone statues, penning sheep in the sacristy, sailing to Tangiers, cleaning crystal, riding a horse across the desert, addressing the chieftains in their tent, conferring with the sun, watching lead turn into gold, reading books on alchemy, meeting Fatima at the well, watching the stars, accepting three ancient gold pieces from Santiago's father, receiving 50 gold pieces and appointment as counselor of the oasis, leaving the seminary, working for a candy seller, and selling sheep.
2. List events from the book that express strong attitudes toward adventure, contentment, mystery, books, regret, money, danger, love, hesitation, persistence, and trust. Indicate Coelho's apparent philosophy on each.
3. Compose brief definitions of fable, aphorism, and wisdom as they apply to *The Alchemist*. What changes in the story would reduce the amount of mysticism in favor of philosophy? advice? fear? longing? faith in God?
4. Summarize scenes that depict conflict, particularly Santiago's uncertainty after his money is stolen in Tangiers, seizure by armed horsemen, a late-night beating in Giza, the crystal merchant's ambivalence toward making a pilgrimage to Mecca, the gypsy fortuneteller's rejection of pay, departure from study for the priesthood, control of a cobra, and combat with 2,000 attackers.

Vocabulary

Underline synonyms for each word in boldface.

1. **intuition**: wisdom, hunch, adage, instruction, premonition, thought, meditation, intimation, vision, mirage, reason, logic, foreboding, supposition
2. **trajectory**: agency, medium, itinerary, byway, pursuit, scheme, path, track, orbit, quest, hunt, chase, quarry, route, course, plot, intrigue
3. **conquistador**: vanquisher, opponent, subduer, knight, conqueror, cavalier, warrior, champion, challenger, noble, consort, liege, victor
4. **exultant**: delighted, rejoicing, plaintive, ululating, jubilant, repining, deploring, elegizing, querulous, elated, beaming, petulant, puling, lachrymose
5. **centurion**: impresario, marshal, sergeant, squire, yeoman, lackey, equerry, chieftain, potentate, sovereign, tetrarch, shah, sheikh, sultan
6. **strait**: tide, shortcut, caliber, chasm, void, dike, ravine, gorge, gulf, narrow, diameter, canyon, excavation, rift, fissure, notch, gully, wadi, delta
7. **infidel**: heretic, imp, abuser, unbeliever, atheist, sacrilege, saint, blasphemer, pagan, heathen, skeptic, freethinker, scoffer, secularist
8. **omen**: warning, portent, augury, sign, foretokening, foreshadowing, harbinger, forerunner, precursor, herald, presentiment, terror, hunch
9. **pilgrimage**: trek, passage, exertion, endeavor, mission, travail, drudgery, exercise, tussle, affair, task, onus, prostration, quest, assay
10. **elixir**: dose, balm, succor, cordial, tonic, panacea, stimulant, poison, curative, salve, sedative, syrup, draught, barbiturate, anesthetic, opiate

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Identification (20 points)

Identify the following characters.

- _____ 1. draws Santiago back to the wool merchant's shop
- _____ 2. gives Santiago three ancient gold coins
- _____ 3. draws a circle in the sand
- _____ 4. falls asleep in a plaza in Tangiers
- _____ 5. loses an orchard
- _____ 6. expects to wait for a lover to return
- _____ 7. gives Santiago textbooks
- _____ 8. hesitates to journey to Mecca
- _____ 9. steals the proceeds from the sale of sheep
- _____ 10. dreams of digging in a ruined sacristy

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- ___ 1. The alchemist is disappointed in the Englishman's methods.
- ___ 2. The chieftain threatens death to Santiago if his vision is wrong.
- ___ 3. The monk at the Coptic monastery demands a share of the gold disk.
- ___ 4. The cobra is an omen of tribal war.
- ___ 5. To Santiago, sheep seem simple.
- ___ 6. The crystal business from Tangiers gradually shifts to Ceuta.
- ___ 7. The camel driver demands obedience from his 200 travelers.
- ___ 8. Santiago convinces the sun and wind that love is not available to natural forces.
- ___ 9. The alchemist uses magic to command his falcon to locate hawks for dinner.
- ___ 10. Santiago is comfortable in Arabic clothing and speaking Arabic.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: Quotation Identification (20 points)

Name the character who speaks each of these lines. On the line below, explain the significance of each citation.

_____ 1. They're not for sale.

_____ 2. You will never be able to escape from your heart.

_____ 3. I can give you the money you need to get back to your country.

_____ 4. If you know how to read, why are you just a shepherd?

_____ 5. I'm not going to charge you anything.

Part IV: Essay Questions (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences on your own paper.

1. Account for Santiago's recurrent thoughts of Melchizedek and his wisdom.
2. Defend Santiago's decision to tell the oasis chieftains of his vision.
3. Compare Santiago's past as a seminary student with later years as a traveler.
4. Express the Englishman's attitude toward books.
5. Describe the circumstances that cause Santiago to propose marriage.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Choose the answer that best completes each statement below. Place the letter of your response in the blank at left.

- _____ 1. The dark rider on the white horse
- warns the oasis chieftains of an end to neutrality.
 - sends a falcon in search of life in the desert.
 - draws one drop of blood.
 - doesn't trust camels.
- _____ 2. At the Coptic monastery,
- the alchemist heats lead.
 - the monk demands half of the gold disk.
 - Santiago rests before the final week of travel to Giza.
 - the wind smells of Fatima's perfume.
- _____ 3. The camel driver demands
- obedience.
 - that no one bring weapons.
 - that Santiago stand by the sentinel.
 - silence from Tangiers to Al-Fayoum.
- _____ 4. In the chest are
- the names of conquistadors.
 - unusual markings on the Emerald Tablet.
 - rock crystals.
 - gold masks and stone statues.
- _____ 5. The scarab beetle
- digs at the cobra's hiding place.
 - is a symbol of God.
 - scuttles toward the pyramids of Giza.
 - falls to the bottom of the deep pit.
- _____ 6. One of the wind's names is
- Andalusia.
 - levanter.
 - Soul of the World.
 - love.
- _____ 7. The sun urges Santiago to
- return to the sacristy.
 - speak to the hand that wrote all.
 - consult the Urim and Thummim.
 - understand the glory of God in the desert.
- _____ 8. The desert offers
- the Englishman the Elixir of Life.
 - the camel driver more wealth than he obtained from an orchard.
 - Santiago an understanding of the world.
 - concealment to 2,000 horsemen who attack the monastery.
- _____ 9. The oasis
- conceals the great healer from caravans.
 - demands that Arab women like Fatima do all the work.
 - belongs to the Bedouin.
 - is traditionally neutral territory.
- _____ 10. As war begins,
- Santiago begins having dreams of his sheep.
 - boats stop journeying from Tarifa to Tangiers.
 - the Moors threaten alien Spaniards.
 - the caravan travels night and day.
- _____ 11. Shoppers
- like tea in crystal cups.
 - prefer the high grade of African merchandise in Ceuta.
 - overhear the shepherd arguing with the guide.
 - buy African wares from the camel driver.
- _____ 12. The king of Salem
- reads books in Esperanto.
 - awaits Santiago's return from Giza.
 - gives two stones to Santiago.
 - warns that the gypsy will demand more of Santiago's treasure.
- _____ 13. At age sixteen, Santiago
- longs for a wife.
 - saves money to buy sheep.
 - studies Elias, Fulcanelli, Geber, and Helvétius.
 - leaves the seminary.
- _____ 14. Santiago advances to
- counselor of the oasis.
 - camel driver.
 - owner of a crystal shop.
 - alchemist.
- _____ 15. Life rewards
- peacemakers at the oasis.
 - those who seek their Personal Legend.
 - followers of the alchemist.
 - the owners of the black and white stones.

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part II: Completion (20 points)

Complete each description with the name of a place.

- _____ 1. site of the pyramids
- _____ 2. desert that Santiago must cross
- _____ 3. rest stop three hours from the treasure
- _____ 4. shelter of 200 journeyers
- _____ 5. site of pasturage and a ruined church
- _____ 6. location of a Moorish fort
- _____ 7. site of the shrine that the crystal merchant wants to visit
- _____ 8. location of the lost orchard
- _____ 9. place where the alchemist grabs a cobra
- _____ 10. location of the chest

Part III: Fill-in (20 points)

Fill-in the words that complete the blanks in each statement below.

1. _____ promises to help Santiago achieve his earthly mission just as the old man helped a miner find a huge _____ the week before.
2. Santiago uses two _____ to interpret _____.
3. Within a year, Santiago improves the _____ business by selling _____ in polished cups.
4. After the merchant gives Santiago a formal _____, the boy seeks adventure by joining a North African _____.
5. To complete his study of _____, the _____ must visit a healer at the Al-Fayoum oasis.

Part IV: Essay Questions (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences on your own paper.

1. Account for Santiago's return to Andalusia.
2. Discuss the author's belief in intuitive wisdom.
3. Contrast Santiago before and after he meets the alchemist.
4. Describe Fatima's world.
5. Summarize mystic or magical events in the fable.

Answer Key

Vocabulary

1. hunch, premonition, intimation, foreboding
2. itinerary, path, track, orbit, route, course
3. conqueror, victor
4. delighted, rejoicing, jubilant, elated, beaming
5. sergeant

6. narrow
7. unbeliever, atheist, pagan, heathen, secularist
8. warning, portent, augury, sign, foretokening, foreshadowing, harbinger, forerunner, precursor, herald, presentiment, hunch
9. mission, quest
10. panacea, curative

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Identification (20 points)

1. merchant's daughter
2. Santiago's father
3. the alchemist
4. Santiago
5. camel driver
6. Fatima
7. Englishman
8. crystal merchant
9. guide in Tangiers
10. brigand at Giza

Part II: True/False (20 points)

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. F
5. T
6. T
7. T
8. F
9. F
10. T

Part III: Quotation Identification (20 points)

1. Santiago
2. the alchemist
3. the crystal merchant
4. the merchant's daughter
5. gypsy woman

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

1. C
2. A
3. A
4. D
5. B
6. B
7. B
8. C
9. D
10. D
11. A
12. C
13. D
14. A
15. B

Part II: Completion (20 points)

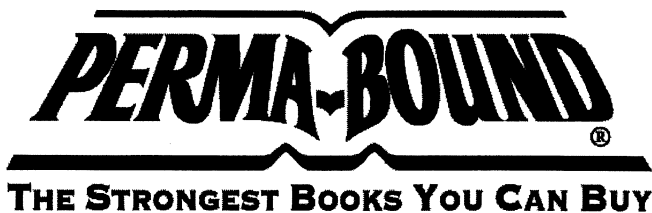
1. Giza
2. Sahara
3. Copt monastery
4. Al-Fayoum Oasis
5. Andalusia
6. Tarifa
7. Mecca
8. Al-Cairum
9. hole in the sand
10. sacristy of a ruined church

Part III: Fill-in (20 points)

1. Melchizedek, emerald
2. stones, omens
3. crystal, tea
4. blessing, caravan
5. alchemy, Englishman

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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