

# "the alchemist" analysis



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

While sleeping near a sycamore tree in the sacristy of an abandoned church, Santiago, a shepherd boy from Andalusia, has a recurring dream about a child who tells him that he will find a hidden treasure if he travels to the Egyptian pyramids. Santiago then finds an old gypsy woman who reads his palm and tells him that his dream is prophetic and that he must follow its instructions. After interpreting his dream, the gypsy woman tells Santiago, "I am not going to charge you anything now, but I want one-tenth of the treasure." to which Santiago agrees.

Next Santiago meets a mysterious old man who seems to be able to read his mind. The man introduces himself as Melchizedek, the King of Salem. He tells Santiago about good and bad omens and says that it is the shepherd boy's duty to pursue his Personal Legend. He also tells Santiago, "There is one great truth on this planet: whoever you are, or whatever it is that you do, when you really want something, it's because that desire originated in the soul of the universe. It's your mission on earth." Melchizedek then gives Santiago two stones, Urim and Thummim, with which Santiago can use to interpret omens.

Santiago is unsure whether to pursue his dream or to stay home in Andalusia and remain a shepherd. After some time

Santiago remembers what the King of Salem had told him, which was to pursue his Personal Legend, so he decides to sell all of his sheep and buy a ticket to Tangier in northern Africa to search for his treasure. Shortly after he arrives there, a thief stole all of Santiago's money by tricking him into thinking that he was going to guide Santiago to the Egyptian pyramids. The

shepherd boy is forced to look for work in order for him to get back home. He starts working for a crystal merchant who told him, " I don't want to change anything because I don't know how to deal with change. I'm used to the way I am." He despised change and was unwilling to move to a busier market like the other merchants who wanted their businesses to survive. With Santiago's help, the merchant was able to embrace change, and the business became more successful than ever before.

After almost a year of working in the crystal shop, the shepherd boy was able to earn a lot of money. However, he was unsure of what he should do next, should he return to Andalusia a rich man and buy more sheep? Or should he cross the vast Sahara in pursuit of the hidden treasure of his dreams? He decides to stay loyal to his dream and joins a caravan traveling to Egypt. Santiago meets an Englishman who wants to learn the secret of alchemy, which is turning any metal into gold, from a famous alchemist who lives at an oasis on the way to the pyramids. While traveling, Santiago begins listening to the desert and discovers the Soul of the World. The caravan eventually reaches the oasis, and there Santiago meets an Arab girl named Fatima and falls in love with her instantly. The caravan leader then gathers the travelers together and tells them that tribal warfare prevented them from continuing their journey.

Santiago wanders from the oasis into the desert and gets a vision of an army entering the oasis and attacking. Because attacking an oasis is a violation of the rules of the desert, Santiago shares his vision with the oasis' tribal chieftain. The tribal chieftain arms his men, and they are well-prepared for when the oasis is indeed invaded. Soon afterward, Santiago is confronted by

a black-garbed, veiled stranger with a sword, who sits atop a white horse. It is the alchemist. The alchemist offers to cross the desert with Santiago. Soon the two men enter into an area of intense tribal warfare. Warriors hold the two men captive, but eventually, allow them to continue their journey. The alchemist tells Santiago that he needs to return to the oasis and that the rest of the trip is Santiago's to make alone so that he can claim his Personal Legend.

Santiago arrives at the Egyptian pyramids and begins to dig. He finds nothing buried in the ground. Thieves beat Santiago and rob him of his money. After he tells them of his dream, the leader of the thieves then tells him, " Two years ago, I had a recurring dream, too. I dreamed that I should travel to the fields of Spain and look for a ruined church where shepherds and their sheep slept. In my dream, there was a sycamore growing out of the ruins of the sacristy, and I was told that, if I dug at the roots of the sycamore, I would find a hidden treasure. But I'm not as stupid as to cross an entire desert just because of a recurring dream." Returning back to Andalusia, Santiago goes back to the church where he dreamed of the treasure near the pyramids. He digs where he slept, beneath the sycamore tree, and there, he finds the treasure that he has been searching for.