

The Alchemist

By Paulo Coelho

Reading Assignment #2 – through page 71 or up to the quote:

“I don’t even know what alchemy is,” the boy was saying, when the warehouse boss called to them to come outside.”

Vocabulary:

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| 1. capricious | 7. Mecca |
| 2. regret | 8. hookah |
| 3. divination | 9. incessantly |
| 4. caravan | 10. <i>Maktub</i> |
| 5. myth | 11. regard |
| 6. elixir | 12. Koran |

Characters:

Crystal Merchant

The Englishman

The Bartender

Questions:

1. Where did Santiago first find himself when he awakes and what does he do?
2. How does Santiago’s attitude shift throughout the first events of the morning and his subsequent decisions?
3. What does Santiago barter for his lunch after helping the Candy Seller in the morning?
4. Why does the Crystal Merchant tell Santiago that he need not have done all that work?
5. Over the course of his work with the Crystal Merchant, many things change. Name and describe three changes that Santiago experiences/learns, three changes in the Crystal Merchant and three changes in the Crystal Shop.
6. According to Santiago, what is the “language of enthusiasm”? Do you believe such a thing exists? What personal experience do you have that relates to this idea? Please explain.
7. Why does the Crystal Merchant want to go to Mecca?
8. What are the 5 obligations given to followers of Islam from the Prophet in the Koran? (These are otherwise known as the “5 Pillars of Islam”.)
9. Why doesn’t the Crystal Merchant go to Mecca? Please explain.
10. Do you believe in luck or coincidence? Please explain and support your answer with personal anecdote or rationale/explanation.
11. Do you think the Englishman will be successful in relating with the Alchemist he seeks? Why or why not?
12. What kind of assumptions did the Englishman have about Santiago when he first met him?

Quotations:

1. *“All things are one,” the old man had said.*
2. *“Sometimes there is just no way to hold back the river.”*