

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho – part 1 of 2 (pages 1-86) for January 15 discussion

Prologue

1. According to legend, a flower grows where Narcissus falls into the lake. What happens in the book found by the alchemist? Why the tears?

Part I

2. How does Santiago spend his days?
3. How does Santiago meet the girl? How does meeting her change him?
4. How did Santiago learn to read? Why doesn't he want to follow his parents' plan for him?
5. What was Santiago's dream? How did the gypsy interpret it? What did she charge for her service?
6. What did the old man and Santiago talk about?
7. What offer did the old man make? What makes Santiago trust him?
8. What is a "Personal Legend"? How does the old man help people find them?
9. What decision must the boy make? What did he decide?
10. What is the principle of favorability? How did it appear in Santiago's plans?
11. What help did the old man give Santiago for finding the treasure?
12. Explain the story about finding happiness.
13. How did the boy lose his money on his first day in Africa?
14. What did the boy tell himself as encouragement?
15. What happened when the boy visited the crystal shop?

Part Two

16. What does the boy want to do for the crystal merchant? How does the merchant respond?
17. What is the merchant's dream? Why hasn't he achieved it?
18. What made the merchant feel depressed?
19. What is the boy's next suggestion for improving the merchant's business? How does it work out?
20. What did the sheep teach the boy?
21. After leaving the crystal shop, who does the boy seek out? What is that man's dream?
22. What happened when the boy took the stones from his pocket?
23. What was the coincidence between the boy and the Englishman?
24. How did they cross the desert?
25. What did the camel driver learn from the flood that ruined his orchard?
26. After being warned about the tribal wars, the boy and the Englishman advise each other about how to stay safe. What does each tell the other to pay attention to?
27. When are you closest to "the Soul of the World"?
28. What idea kept repeating in the Englishman's books? What was the most important alchemy text inscribed on?
29. What property of "the Philosopher's Stone" increased the boy's interest in alchemy?
30. What does the camel driver say makes you happy?
31. The boy thinks "the world speaks many languages." What do you think that means?