

<<*The Alchemist*>> by Paulo Coelho

I used to hate DDT but...

The Alchemist is just about 'DDT'.

It's harsh time that I would never forget. Never, never in my life I would. By the time I received my HKCEE result, I was disintegrated. I couldn't remember how my hands trembled to write down that meaningless mark onto the record sheet. I did not listen to others' moaning for me or for themselves. I knew not about what happened to the surge of applaud sucked up that little classroom. I dared not to notice how many 'caring' phone calls I had shut down. But still, still, I managed to gallop down that funny slope of my school and begin what I planned for the worst the previous day.

I had had a dream before ER was filmed. I wanted to be a doctor.

It's simple, sure. It's difficult, of course but I was confident, once, before the mark sheet appeared. At noon on the report-releasing day, I was admitted back to my original school to continue my form six study. You are really lucky, mum said. Lucky, am I?

I am afraid not. That's because I knew, at the very moment I got my report card, I lost something. I lost my dream.

The shepherd in *The Alchemist* chooses to chase after his dream. Dream, to me, it was sacrosanct and unrealistic after I found that it did not happen to come true in my life. To give up a dream was no easy task, especially a longed-after one. So, I decided I had better hated it instead. For this reason, I started feeling regretful. If I couldn't be a doctor, why did I study science at the first place? If I wouldn't be a doctor, why did I not take commerce, a more useful subject, at form six? At least, taking commerce would definitely stop the gabbling of my parents. Many possibilities arose in my mind and these made me a headache. The situation worsened when some of my classmates were early submitted to universities in pursuit of their dreams. This was suffocating. Finally, I could no longer deny the fact— I was jealous.

I have recognized what I wanted myself to be and to do. My goal is clear, just like that of the old crystal merchant's, but I failed to endeavour to approach it. There was one time I was about to give up my dream, resembling what the baker in the book has done, and listened to others' lecture about 'what your life should be....' However, *The*

Alchemist succeeds by one phase to sparkle my mind, written 'in the long run, what people think about shepherds and bakers become more important for them than their own destinies.' These words have awoken me. Why do I bother myself as long as I own my dream? Time flies, life is short. Why shouldn't I pursue my dream but indulge into my impotence, suffer from boundless remorse and repentance? Thanks to the shepherd, my heart starts talking once again after falling in the doldrums and this time, I learn to listen to it.

Follow destiny. It seems to be easy but passive. It's a habit that we blame our poor luck for unfortunate experience. Destiny, to those who have a whole and detailed arrangement of what their lives should be, any obstacles or changes which get into their ways or even crumble their plans would be seen as the culprit of destiny. It turns into a shackle which controls one's life. I, similarly, had fallen into the trap of this misconception. 'God had missed my prayers. God had sent such hopeless result to me. It's all God's fault!' I thought. Thus losing my faith in my dream and accusing my failure with respect to the flippancy of destiny.

Yet, I found these excuses couldn't comfort me a second but discouraged me further. Does this mean that I can do nothing to help myself accomplish my wish? Is my fate fixed already?

No, I was actually fooling myself at this junction. I had prepared too many routes of retreat for myself starting from a very long time ago. My heart was emotional like other people's. It had spoken of failure and forsaking. Parents, relatives and teachers all reminded me to draw the second plan, the third plan, the fourth and so on. The more the better. They are perfectly correct and considerate, generally. The problem lied on me. I had planned too much which then I felt too secure, hence I did not do my utmost best in the exam. To see things either for the first time or the last time is the attitude I should hold and it is what destiny has pushed me for. I did experience frustration, despair and perplexity but more importantly, I learned to be imminent for what I pined for. In other words, destiny is in fact hastening my steps towards my dream. Destiny creates challenges in my smooth life so as to prompt me to prepare for pursuing the ambition. There is only one chance left.

If following destiny to pursue dream is some cliché, I presumed teaching to read omen is more appealing. That's the last topic Paulo has brightened me up. Omen is everywhere and the key is whether I am observant enough to catch it in time. My pave is written on the omen and there is no way I could go wrong. This phase reassured me.

Notwithstanding how many opportunities I had missed or ignored during the past verdant year, I perceive I am going along with my destiny and destiny would lead me to my dream. For me, having able to read this book at this critical moment (promoted to form seven) is already a good omen. It cleanses my negative thoughts and completes my puzzles in heart. It prepares me to face up to the forthcoming public exam with full positive energy. There are tips from the Language of the World. Furthermore, isn't it beginner's luck that I read a good omen?

Alas! I should have read *The Alchemist* earlier then I might be capable of noticing the omen sooner. My road would be free of obstacles but I would learn less, for sure. However, focusing the present is what important because it's the present I am living in. As long as I am willing to change, my future will be different. Any omen overlooked due to reminiscing is not worth. Or chagrin and despair would stuff the rest of my life.

You may argue that I should not think so highly of HKCEE result. The report card is just nothing but a piece of paper. The truth is it is the time I, as a very common student, have ever felt so close to the Hand that has written all. *The Alchemist* is about dream, destiny and teaching of omen. This 'DDT' is not nutritious but it can accumulate inside the body. As soon as I have read about, learnt about and observed them, they can't be excreted (forgotten) or metabolized (exhausted). They are inside my self.

Dream is everything people yearn for to see it happen in their childhood. We are all possible to make dream come true.

To realize one's Destiny is a person's only real obligation. So life is generous to those who pursue their destinies.

As long as we listen to and live according to the Teachings, we are contented and happy. We can lead an interesting and eternal life.

'DDT' is never anything artificial but is human instinct. The Alchemist is encouraging because it speaks: each of us deserves to have a dream...that comes true.