

The Alchemist

Author: Paulo Coelho

Translator: Alan R. Clarke

Publisher: HarperSanFrancisco

Year of Publication: 1998

Outline of the Story:

It is a personal legend of a boy called Santiago. Santiago was a shepherd. He left his country and decided to sell wool to a merchant in Andalusia. In the journey, he met an old Gypsy woman. She read his dream and told him that he would find a hidden treasure at the Egyptian pyramids. Later on he talked to an old man who claimed himself as the king of Salem. He knew the past of the boy and asked him to go to Egypt as it was the right aspect to his Personal Legend that he should not give up. The boy then was convinced by the king and he sold his herd for the trip to the Pyramids. When he passed the town Tangier, he was robbed and he had to stay there with no other choice. He had worked for a crystal merchant for a year and he stepped back onto his route to Egypt again. He befriended with an Englishman, crossed the Sahara Desert and fell in love with a woman in an oasis. Following an alchemist, he finally discovered his treasure.

My Reflection:

The Alchemist talks about realization of dreams in a short period of time. It touched my heart while I was reading it as I had never thought about my dream nor my personal legend seriously. In the story, the boy had often wanted to give up finding the treasure, because of the omens, friends and courage given by the God, he persisted in living the dream, not concerning about the value of the treasure, but the value of his life. However, most of us are like the crystal merchant whom the boy met, just thought about his own dream and let it be the only reason for him to be alive, regardless of his ability to work it out. We are afraid of failures; we always want to do something safely. We are not willing to invest too much in something which seems not easy to become true. We have forgotten that, we are here to draw up our own beautiful dreams; the feeling of success is only one of the aspects of our dreams. It is the value of our lives that we ought to treasure. God will make his judgement on our effort.

Apart from achieving his goal of getting the treasure in Egypt, I also admired the boy

for his extraordinary strength to communicate with the desert, wind, sun and his heart by using the language of World. It inspires me as I have always believed what we think is what our heart thinks. Now I learn that knowing our heart is a way to understand ourselves better. If we can slow down our steps to pause for a while and pay more attention to the things pass by, we will understand the world more.

I'm going to be an alchemist too, turning my lead-made life into a gold one. I think this is also what the author wants us to do.

Tsang Hiu Ling S.4B

Kwun Tong Government Secondary School