

Champion of English Division
Junior Division

Name of Winner: Hung Kaden Siu Hong

Name of School: Pui Ching Middle School

Book Title: The Alchemist

Author: Paulo Coelho

Publisher: Harper One

Summary:

The Alchemist, originally written in Portuguese, is an exhilarating book that has influenced millions worldwide through its breathtaking adventures and ethical morals.

The story begins with a little boy from Andalusia named Santiago. He is a shepherd who sleeps under a sycamore tree present in the ruins of a church. Every night, Santiago has a recurring dream about a child who holds Santiago's

hands and teleports him to the pyramids of Egypt, where he tells him a treasure is near. As the child begins to tip off the exact location, the baffling dream is cut off by Santiago's awakening. Santiago is bewildered by the illusion and confronts a gipsy woman along with a self-proclaimed king, who advise him to pursue his legend and head off toward the pyramids.

Santiago is indoctrinated and starts travelling. On his way, a thief purloins all of Santiago's property. To recover, he worked for a crystal merchant and is taught to embrace his past and move forward with a better purpose. Following his counsel, he moves along after saving enough money. Santiago witnesses an omen that presages a bombard on a nearby tribe, which was competent for the tribe to defend against the assault. Because of this incident, an alchemist

finds him and teaches him about the language of the world and how to listen to omens that guide him.

The alchemist accompanies him on his journey. At first, everything seemed to go as smoothly as silk, but an Arab tribe ambushed them and necessitated them to disburse all their valuables. In spite of the circumstance, the alchemist remained tranquil and told the soldiers that Santiago would turn into the wind in just three days. Santiago was unassertive, but after foraging the desert for clues, he uses his knowledge of alchemy to turn into the wind and emancipates himself and the alchemist. Santiago begins scavenging the pyramids but is informed that the treasure was at the church. He returns to Andalusia, where he finds the treasure and realizes that the true treasure was the journey itself. He reflects on the lessons he learned along

the way and the people he met, and he understands that he had to undertake this journey to fulfil his personal legend and find his true purpose in life.

Comment:

I loved this book because it provides an out-of-the-world experience for the readers. As there are omens and preternatural powers involved throughout the book, the story revolves around a very magical and mysterious theme, making the plot hard to predict whenever you turn a page. I adore the ending, as it encourages the reader to pause and contemplate the abounding journey along with the morals it comes with: The main moral of the book is to have a purpose-driven life. Santiago was a dull and monotonous shepherd before he set off on his journey to Egypt. Do you

relate to this former Santiago? If you do, you ought to start seeking your true meaning in life. Finding a purpose is the first big step in succeeding, as you'll always be motivated and filled with energy, giving you big opportunities to strive for. On the other hand, if you still live your daily life without a motive, time will be squandered day after day, wasting all your potential. Find a hobby, make a new friend. Until then, you will realize how important a purpose-driven life is.

The secondary moral of the book is to never let obstacles stop you from accomplishing your dreams. Santiago encountered several thieves and was captured numerous times but didn't give in to failure. Instead, he contemplated solutions and fled out of sticky situations. As inventor

Thomas Edison once said, “Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.” Meeting obstacles is part of the road to success, but persevering and overcoming them is the only way to get closer to the finish line. Giving up might feel tempting, but once you recollect what you’re aiming for, all of these obstacles will seem worth it in the long run.

Last but not least, *The Alchemist* teaches you how to view the world. Throughout the story, Santiago is told that people deceive themselves about the world and how it works. Take the “half-full half-empty” metaphor for example, some would be grateful, while others would be whiny about it. However, you view the world is your

choice, but taking every failure as an opportunity is of definite importance to your success.

Overall, "The Alchemist" is a tale of self-discovery, personal growth, and the importance of following one's dreams. Combined with elite story-telling, it is one of the most iconic books of all time.