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Johnston Public Library Book Discussion Questions

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

Summary

Paulo Coelho's enchanting novel has inspired a devoted following around the world. This story, dazzling in its powerful simplicity and soul-stirring wisdom, is about an Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago who travels from his homeland in Spain to the Egyptian desert in search of a treasure buried near the Pyramids. Along the way he meets a Gypsy woman, a man who calls himself king, and an alchemist, all of whom point Santiago in the direction of his quest. No one knows what the treasure is, or if Santiago will be able to surmount the obstacles in his path. But what starts out as a journey to find worldly goods turns into a discovery of the treasure found within. Lush, evocative, and deeply humane, the story of Santiago is an eternal testament to the transforming power of our dreams and the importance of listening to our hearts.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe why Santiago was at the church. Did you think he abandoned his initial reason after his dream? Explain.
2. Who did Santiago visit to analyze his dream? Do you believe in dream analysis? Why or why not?
3. Define Personal Legend as mentioned in *The Alchemist*. While we are not necessarily in search of a Personal Legend, discuss how we define our future hopes and goals.
4. Describe at least three challenges Santiago faced as he searched for the treasure. Which of these challenges was the greatest? Why?
5. The alchemist predicts that Santiago will become something that frightens the warriors and scares them away. Why do you think he made this prediction?
6. What did the alchemist give Santiago before he visited the pyramid? What was the significance of this gift?
7. Where does Santiago eventually find the treasure? Was the treasure worth the journey? Why or why not?

8. After Santiago finds the treasure, he's in search of something else. What is it?

Summary from Goodreads.com
Discussion Questions from Study.com