

Contents INTRODUCTION I remember receiving a letter from the American publisher Harper Collins...Walking alone down a street in Miami, I heard a girl telling her mother: "You must read The Alchemist!" The book has been translated into fifty-six languages, has sold more than twenty million copies, and people are beginning to ask: What's the secret behind such a huge success? The only honest response is: I don't know. All I know is that, like Santiago the shepherd boy, we all need to be aware of our personal calling. What is a personal calling? It is God's blessing, it is the path that God chose for you here on Earth. Whenever we do something that fills us with enthusiasm, we are following our legend. However, we don't all have the courage to confront our own dream. Why? There are four obstacles. First: we are told from childhood onward that everything we want to do is impossible. We grow up with this idea, and as the years accumulate, so too do the layers of prejudice, fear, and guilt. There comes a time when our personal calling is so deeply buried in our soul as to be invisible. But it's still there. If we have the courage to disinter dream, we are then faced by the second obstacle: love. We know what we want to do, but are afraid of hurting those around us by abandoning everything in order to pursue our dream. We do not realize that love is just a further impetus, not something that will prevent us going forward. We do not realize that those who genuinely wish us well want us to be happy and are prepared to accompany us on that journey. Once we have accepted that love is a stimulus, we come up against the third obstacle: fear of the defeats we will meet on the path. We who fight for our dream, suffer far more when it doesn't work out, because we cannot fall back on the old excuse: "Oh, well, I didn't really want it anyway."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM BOOKS BY PAULO COELHO CREDITS COVER COPYRIGHT ABOUT THE PUBLISHER TEN YEARS ON I REMEMBER RECEIVING A LETTER FROM THE AMERICAN publisher Harper Collins that said that: "reading The Alchemist was like getting up at dawn and seeing the sun rise while the rest of the world still slept." I went outside, looked up at the sky, and thought to myself: "So, the book is going to be published in English!" One day, a Brazilian journalist phoned to say that President Clinton had been photographed reading the book. Some time later, when I was in Turkey, I opened the magazine Vanity Fair and there was Julia Roberts declaring that she adored the book. Intense, unexpected suffering passes more quickly than suffering that is apparently bearable; the latter goes on for years and, without our noticing, eats away at our soul, until, one day, we are no longer able to free ourselves from the bitterness and it stays with us for the rest of our lives. "Ah, it is no surprise that you weep for Narcissus," they said, "for though we always pursued him in the forest, you alone could contemplate his beauty close at hand." Because, once we have overcome the defeats--and we always do--we are filled by a greater sense of euphoria and confidence. Having disinterred our dream, having used the power of love to nurture it and spent many years living with the scars, we suddenly notice that what we always wanted is there, waiting for us, perhaps the very next day. "I weep for Narcissus," the lake replied.

PROLOGUE The alchemist picked up a book that someone in the...ONE The boy's name was Santiago.