
Part Two (Pages 51 – 167)

Study Section: The Englishman (Pages 51 – 86)

Vocabulary

alchemy – a medieval philosophy and science with the goal of changing common metals into gold, finding a universal cure for illness, and discovering methods of halting the aging process to prolong life

archaeological – relating to the discovery and preservation of evidence of earlier cultures, frequently through the excavation of buried artifacts

Bedouins – nomadic Arab people

capricious – given to whimsical decisions, unpredictable

divination – telling the future

elemental – basic, raw

Esperanto – an artificial language developed to be universal; a combination of the main European languages

hookah – a water pipe used extensively in Muslim communities; it is not drug-related but is a shared activity

immersion – complete dedication or absorption; being put under water or into a new subject

incredulous – those who do not believe

intuitively – emotionally, or without conscious thought or analysis

Koran – the holy book of the Islamic faith, the book that teaches Muslims about Allah and his servant, Mohammed, the founder of Islam

manifestation – physical form

Mecca – the holy city of Islam, where faithful Muslims go in pilgrimage; it is the birthplace of the prophet Mohammed and is located in modern Saudi Arabia

nocturnal – relating to or active during the night

nostalgia – longing for the past

obscure – with hidden meanings, unclear, mysterious

purification – making clean or holy

Ramadan – a month of prayer and fasting observed by Muslims

sentinel – guard

surveillance – studying an area for people or danger

1. What job did Santiago find, and how did he feel about it?

2. The merchant is a Muslim, or a follower of Allah. How does he describe the five duties of a faithful Muslim?

3. Why does the crystal merchant refuse to travel to Mecca?

4. Why does the author include the merchant in the story?

5. Give an example of Santiago's lively approach to business and the crystal merchant's caution.

6. What does *maktub* mean?

7. A leitmotif is a repeated element in a story. What does Santiago ask for when he says good-bye to the merchant? Why is this request important in the structure of the story?

8. Thinking of Melchizedek, Santiago feels that it was “almost as if he had been here and left his mark...he always appeared to help those who are trying to realize their Personal Legend.” What makes Santiago think the old king has been with him during the year he spent in the crystal shop? Why does this constitute a turning point in the story?

9. What do we learn about the Englishman?

10. What motivates the Englishman's decision to befriend Santiago?

11. The author describes the caravan as making detours, stopping and starting, and unloading and reloading. In this way, the caravan becomes a metaphor for a journey to a destination. The Englishman, however, is unaware of this. Why does he not understand this, and what does his lack of awareness imply for his larger journey?

12. What wisdom did the camel driver share with Santiago?

13. Who are the Bedouins, and what is their role in the story?

14. When Santiago advises the Englishman to study the caravan more, the Englishman uses a simile comparing books and the caravan. What is he telling Santiago?

15. According to the Englishman, what is the Soul of the World?

16. The Englishman and his books give Santiago a seminar on alchemy. What does the reader learn about alchemy?

Part Two (Pages 51 – 167)

Study Section: The Oasis (Pages 86 – 123)

Vocabulary

astride – mounted on a horse or other animal
genies – spirits or supernatural beings capable of taking on human forms
habituated – accustomed to
imperceptibly – unable to be perceived
melancholy – sad
prognostications – predictions; statements telling of the future
Santiago Matamoros – patron saint of Spain, famous for killing Moors (in Spanish, mata = kill, moros = Moors) to eject them from Spain; a famous statue depicts the saint as described, with cowering Moors beneath the hooves of his horse
scabbard – case for a sword
scimitars – very sharp knives with curved blades
seer – one who can see the future
traitorous – able to commit treason
venom – poison

1. Why is the alchemist watching people as they enter the oasis from the caravan?

2. Describe the oasis.

3. What is the law of hospitality in the oasis?

4. What does it mean when a woman is dressed in black in the oasis, a Muslim society?

5. What is the Language of the World, and how does Santiago learn it?

6. What power does Santiago's love for Fatima give him?

7. What agreement do Santiago and Fatima come to?

8. Santiago sees two hawks as an omen. What do they signify, and what do they say about Santiago?

9. What happens when Santiago visits the tribal chieftains to tell them about his vision?

10. What test do the chieftains outline for Santiago?

11. Describe the arrival of the alchemist.

12. Why does the author have Santiago talk about Allah instead of God?

13. What advice does the horseman give Santiago?

14. Why did Santiago find the horseman's advice so powerful?

15. Describe the battle at the oasis of Al-Fayoum.

16. What was Santiago's reward for saving the oasis?

17. After the battle, Santiago goes to the alchemist's tent. What advice does the alchemist give him now?

18. Why does the author have the alchemist say, "Remember that wherever your heart is, there you will find your treasure."

19. What might make the reader classify the Englishman as a static character, as opposed to Santiago, who is a dramatic character?
