
Part Two (Pages 51 – 167)

Study Section: To the Pyramids (Pages 123 – 163)

Vocabulary

abraded – scratched and cut

Coptic – an ancient Egyptian sect of Christians who believe that Christ was completely divine, not partly human and partly divine

luminous – glowing

scarab – a beetle used in Egyptian art as a symbol of the after-life or of God; among Egyptians, scarabs are seen as lucky charms or omens

simun – a wind-borne sand storm

sirocco – a wind that blows from the oceans over the land, bearing moisture

1. What does the alchemist say about the existence of the natural world? Why is the desert important? What can a single grain of sand symbolize?

2. What advice does the alchemist give about listening to one's heart?

3. How does the reader know that more trouble awaits Santiago?

4. What did the Arabs find when they searched the alchemist? Why did they allow the alchemist to keep these treasures?

5. Using the technique of understatement, the author has the alchemist impart an important lesson to Santiago in telling the Arabs about his treasures. What was the lesson?

6. What does the alchemist reveal to Santiago about the quest for gold?

7. What happens when the alchemist and the boy are taken to the military camp?

8. Why would the alchemist set up such a test for Santiago?

9. Does the alchemist think he could die if Santiago fails the test?

10. What conversation does Santiago have when he begins to turn himself into wind?

11. In addition to the sands of the desert, what other natural forces help Santiago?

12. Critics apply the term *pathetic fallacy* to instances in which human characteristics (such as the ability to reason and speak) are given to parts of the natural world. Name three parts of the natural world that are personified in this way during Santiago's efforts to turn himself into the wind?

13. Describe Santiago's experience of communion with God.

14. Two people were smiling after Santiago turned himself into the wind. Who were they, and why was each smiling?

15. What did the alchemist do at the Coptic monastery?

16. How did the alchemist distribute the gold he created?

17. Why did the alchemist think Santiago would need additional gold later?

18. What is the point of the alchemist's story about the sons of the Roman emperor Tiberius?

19. What advice did the boy's heart give him as he approached the Pyramids?

20. What did the boy do when he saw the Pyramids?

21. What does he see as he looks down at his feet?

22. Who approaches Santiago as he digs in the sand, and what did they do?

23. What story does one attacker tell Santiago?

24. After the attackers leave, Santiago gets up from the sand and begins to laugh. Why?

Epilogue (Pages 165 – 167)

Vocabulary

conquistador – Spanish soldier, so named because they conquered their enemies

1. Where do we next see Santiago?

2. Who is “the old sorcerer” that Santiago talks with?

3. Is Santiago bitter that he went halfway across the world when the treasure was right at home?

4. Why does the boy plan to return to Tarifa?

5. What scent does Santiago detect on the levanter?
