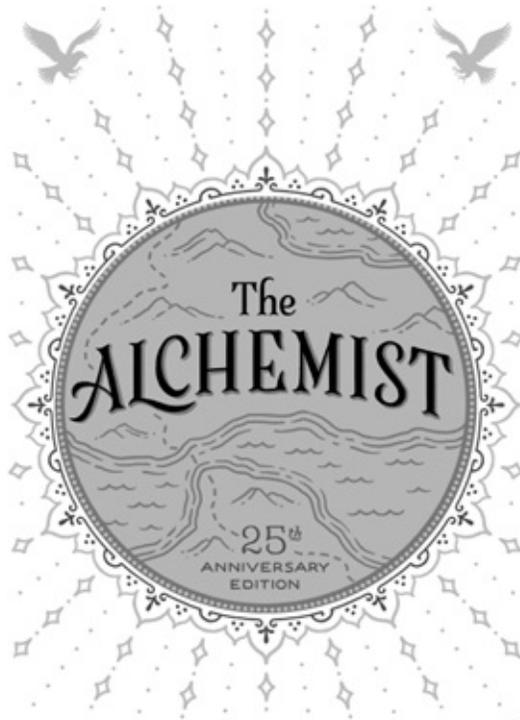


The
ALCHEMIST

25th
ANNIVERSARY
EDITION

 **PAULO COELHO** 



▲ PAULO COELHO ▲

TRANSLATED BY ALAN R. CLARKE



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International Acclaim for Paulo Coelho's

THE ALCHEMIST

“The story has the comic charm, dramatic tension, and psychological intensity of a fairy tale, but it’s full of specific wisdom as well. . . . A sweetly exotic tale for young and old alike.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Beneath this novel’s compelling story and the shimmering elegance with which it’s told lies a bedrock of wisdom about following one’s heart.”

—*Booklist*

“As memorable and meaningful as Saint-Exupéry’s *The Little Prince*.”

—*Austin American-Statesman*

“A touching, inspiring fable.”

—*Indianapolis Star*

“A little poke in the ribs from on high.”

—*Detroit Free Press*

“*The Alchemist* is a fabulous success.”

—*Der Spiegel* (Germany)

“A remarkable tale about the most magical of all journeys: the quest to fulfill one’s destiny. I recommend *The Alchemist* to anyone who is passionately committed to claiming the life of their dreams—today.”

—Anthony Robbins, author of *Awaken the Giant Within*

“An entrepreneurial tale of universal wisdom we can apply to the business of our own lives.”

—Spencer Johnson, M.D., author of *Who Moved My Cheese*

“An adventure story full of magic and wisdom.”

—Rudolfo Anaya, author of *Bless Me, Ultima*

“*The Alchemist* is a beautiful book about magic, dreams, and the treasures we seek elsewhere and then find at our doorstep.”

—Madonna in *Sonntag Aktuell* (Germany)

“*The Alchemist* is an unabashed delight and inspirational wonder. This fable is a roseate amalgam of spiritual quest, existential puzzle, lovely sensitivity, and deep strength.”

—Malcolm Boyd, author of *Are You Running with Me, Jesus?*

“Paulo Coelho knows the secret of literary alchemy.”

—Kenzaburo Oé, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature

“A most tender and gentle story. It is a rare gem of a book, and will most certainly touch the very core of every heart earnestly seeking its own destiny on the journey of life.”

—Gerald G. Jampolsky, M.D., coauthor of *Change Your Mind, Change Your Life and Love Is Letting Go of Fear*

“Rarely do I come across a story with the directness and simplicity of Coelho’s *The Alchemist*. It lifts the reader out of time and focuses through a believably unlikely story on a young dreamer looking for himself. A beautiful story with a pointed message for every reader.”

—Joseph Girzone, author of *Joshua*

“This is the type of book that makes you understand more about yourself and about life. It has philosophy and is spiced with colors, flavors, and subjects, like a fairy tale. A lovely book.”

—*Yedi’ot Aharonot* (Israel)

“A boy named Santiago joins the ranks of Candide and Pinocchio by taking us on a very excellent adventure.”

—Paul Zindel, author of the Pulitzer Prize–winning play *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*

“The mystic quality in the odd adventures of the boy, Santiago, may bring not only him but others who read this fine book closer to recognizing and reaching their own inner destinies.”

—Charlotte Zolotow, author of *If You Listen*

“Paulo Coelho gives you the inspiration to follow your own dreams by seeing the world through your own eyes and not someone else’s.”

—Lynn Andrews, author of the Medicine Woman series

“Nothing is impossible, such is Coelho’s message, as long as you wish it with all your heart. No other book bears so much hope; small wonder its author became a guru among all those in search of the meaning of life.”

—*Focus* (Germany)

“*The Alchemist* is a truly poetic book.”

—*Welt am Sonntag* (Germany)

“Dotted throughout the story and illuminated in a poetic style are metaphors and deep insights that stir our imagination and transport the reader on a fantastic journey of the soul.”

—*Yomiuri Shimbun* (Japan)

“*The Alchemist* brings to mind *The Little Prince* by Saint-Exupéry and *The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran, as well as biblical parables.”

—*Gazeta Wyborcza* (Poland)

“*The Alchemist* is a beautiful and heartwarming story with an exotic flavor. . . . You may or may not agree with Paulo Coelho’s philosophy, but it’s nonetheless a tale that comforts our hearts as much as our souls.”

—*Bergensavisen* (Norway)

“*The Alchemist* is like a modern-day *The Little Prince*. A supreme and simple book.”

—Milorad Pavic, author of *Dictionary of the Khazars*

“Among Latin American writers, only Colombia’s Gabriel Garcia Marquez is more widely read than Brazil’s Paulo Coelho.”

—*The Economist*

Foreword

When *The Alchemist* was first published twenty-five years ago in my native Brazil, no one noticed. A bookseller in the northeast corner of the country told me that only one person purchased a copy the first week of its release. It took another six months for the bookseller to unload a second copy—and that was to the same person who bought the first! And who knows how long it took to sell the third.

By the end of the year, it was clear to everyone that *The Alchemist* wasn't working. My original publisher decided to cut me loose and cancelled our contract. They wiped their hands of the project and let me take the book with me. I was forty-one and desperate.

But I never lost faith in the book or ever wavered in my vision. Why? Because it was me in there, all of me, heart and soul. I was living my own metaphor. A man sets out on a journey, dreaming of a beautiful or magical place, in pursuit of some unknown treasure. At the end of his journey, the man realizes the treasure was with him the entire time. I was following my Personal Legend, and my treasure was my capacity to write. And I wanted to share this treasure with the world.

As I wrote in *The Alchemist*, when you want something, the whole universe conspires to help you. I started knocking on the doors of other publishers. One opened, and the publisher on the other side believed in me and my book and agreed to give *The Alchemist* a second chance. Slowly, through word of mouth, it finally started to sell—three thousand, then six thousand, ten thousand—book by book, gradually throughout the year.

Eight months later, an American visiting Brazil picked up a copy of *The Alchemist* in a local bookstore. He wanted to translate the book and help me find a publisher in the United States. HarperCollins agreed to bring it to an American audience, publishing it with great fanfare: ads in the *New York Times* and influential news magazines, radio and television interviews. But it still took some time to sell, slowly finding its audience in the United States by word of mouth, just as it did in Brazil. And then one day, Bill Clinton was photographed

leaving the White House with a copy. Then Madonna raved about the book to *Vanity Fair*, and people from different walks of life—from Rush Limbaugh and Will Smith to college students and soccer moms—were suddenly talking about it.

The Alchemist became a spontaneous—and organic—Phenomenon. The book hit the *New York Times* bestseller list, an important milestone for any author, and stayed there for more than three hundred weeks. It has since been translated into more than eighty different languages, the most translated book by any living author, and is widely considered one of the ten best books of the twentieth century.

People continue to ask me if I knew *The Alchemist* would be such a huge success. The answer is no. I had no idea. How could I? When I sat down to write *The Alchemist*, all I knew is that I wanted to write about my soul. I wanted to write about my quest to find my treasure. I wanted to follow the omens, because I knew even then that the omens are the language of God.

Though *The Alchemist* is now celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary, it is no relic of the past. The book is still very much alive. Like my heart and like my soul, it continues to live every day, because my heart and soul are in it. And my heart and soul is your heart and soul. I am Santiago the shepherd boy in search of my treasure, just as you are Santiago the shepherd boy in search of your own. The story of one person is the story of everyone, and one man's quest is the quest of all of humanity, which is why I believe *The Alchemist* continues all these years later to resonate with people from different cultures all around the world, touching them emotionally and spiritually, equally, without prejudice.

I re-read *The Alchemist* regularly and every time I do I experience the same sensations I felt when I wrote it. And here is what I feel. I feel happiness, because it is all of me, and all of you simultaneously. I feel happiness, too, because I know I can never be alone. Wherever I go, people understand me. They understand my soul. This continues to give me hope. When I read about clashes around the world—political clashes, economic clashes, cultural clashes—I am reminded that it is within our power to build a bridge to be crossed. Even if my neighbor doesn't understand my religion or understand my politics, he can understand my story. If he can understand my story, then he's never too far from me. It is always within my power to build a bridge. There is always a chance for reconciliation, a chance that one day he and I will sit around a table together and put an end to our history of clashes. And on this day, he will tell me his story and I will tell him mine.