

THE ALCHEMIST
Screenplay Adaptation

by
Robb Edward Morris

Adapted from the book

by
Paulo Coelho

WGA#: 1885752

Robbedwardmorris@gmail.com
+1 (213) 810-4556

FADE IN:

EXT. SAHARA DESERT - DAY

A distant desert horizon.

An ORANGE HAZE dampens the sun.

A CHILD, (8 yrs/female), scurries over the sands.

She stops and looks behind.

CHILD
Come, we're almost there.

SANTIAGO, (17 yrs), follows her. He's lithesome with Mediterranean beauty.

A RUMBLE.

The ground quakes where the Child stands, but she's not frightened.

Behind her, the sands part into a cavernous canyon.

From the trembling earth, the ancient PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT arise and stand in all their majestic glory.

A mystical wind blows.

CHILD (CONT'D)
If you come here, you will find a hidden treasure.

SANTIAGO
Where?

The Child takes Santiago's hand.

CHILD
Close your eyes. And no peeking.

She leads him further across the sand and stops at no distinguishable spot.

CHILD (CONT'D)
Now open them.

Santiago's eyes flicker behind closed eyelids.

When they suddenly spring open, he stares up at an enormous SYCAMORE TREE.

INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - MORNING

Santiago stirs at the foot of a SYCAMORE that has grown through the RUINED ROOF of an abandoned church.

He sits up and stows THE BOOK he used for a pillow inside his SHEPHERD'S POUCH.

Taking up his WALKING STAFF, he ambles through the crusted remains of the sanctuary.

When he opens the front door, he's greeted by A FLOCK OF BLEATING SHEEP.

He pets a LITTLE LAMB.

SANTIAGO
Good morning, Lila.

EXT. ABANDONED CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Santiago submerges himself amongst his sheep and greets them all by name.

EXT. ANDALUSIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Santiago leads his flock over tumbling acres of green fields.

A RAVEN glides above them.

EXT. A VILLAGE STREET - SPAIN - DAY

The Raven swoops toward the ground and MORPHS into the back of the head of a YOUNG ANDALUSIAN GIRL, (14 yrs).

WE FOLLOW HER through the streets of a busy village.

EXT. DRY GOODS SHOP - DAY

Santiago sits on the stairs of a shop reading his book.

ANDALUSIAN GIRL (O.C.)
I didn't know shepherds knew how to read.

Santiago looks up to behold the alluring figure of the Young Andalusian Girl.

Her face is partially obscured by sweeping long black hair.

SANTIAGO
Usually I learn more from my sheep
than from my books.

She sits beside him.

ANDALUSIAN GIRL
But where did you learn to read?

SANTIAGO
Where every one does. In a school.

EXT. SANTIAGO'S VILLAGE - DAY

A slightly younger Santiago, (15 yrs), strolls through his home village dressed in an old, FADED SCHOOL UNIFORM carrying SEVERAL TEXT BOOKS.

INT. SMALL, MODEST HOUSE - DAY

A COUPLE, (Late 40's), attends to chores with weary faces in worn-out clothes.

Santiago stands silhouetted in the front door frame.

SANTIAGO
Papa, mamma, I want to travel.

His MOTHER has been counting and rationing RAW BEANS. The steady CLICK of beans landing in A BOWL stops.

His FATHER suspends his broom.

FATHER
Santiago, our kind cannot afford travel. The only exceptions are the shepherds.

SANTIAGO
Then I will become a shepherd.

Silence ensues as they stare and consider. Then the SOUND of beans landing resumes.

EXT. A STABLE IN TARIFA - DAY

The stables are near the Gates of the city.

Santiago greets the STABLE OWNER, (30's), like an old friend and leaves the sheep in his care.

A GRAND CASTLE stands high on a distant hill.

EXT. TARIFA TOWN PLAZA - DAY

Santiago emerges from a book shop carrying A NEW BOOK.

He meanders through the plaza.

Suddenly he stops and stares ahead - his mind searching.

He looks back over his shoulder at an odd, misplaced establishment. A SIGN says:

GYPSY HOUSE - Readings & Interpretations.

INT. GYPSY HOUSE - DAY

The CANDLELIT ROOM is shadowy.

An OLD GYPSY WOMAN, (Late 40's), leads Santiago through hanging colored beads into a back room.

They sit at a table with two chairs.

The SACRED HEART OF JESUS adorns a wall.

The Gypsy Woman grabs Santiago's hands and launches into a strange prayer.

She stops and studies his hands with mocked intensity.

GYPSY WOMAN
Very interesting.

Santiago's hands tremble. He snatches them from her.

SANTIAGO
I did not come here to have my
palms read.

GYPSY WOMAN
You came to learn about your
dreams.

Santiago nods.

GYPSY WOMAN (CONT'D)
Dreams are the language of God.
When He speaks in that language, I
can interpret it.
(MORE)

GYPSY WOMAN (CONT'D)

But if he speaks in the language of the soul, only you can understand. But whichever it is, I will charge you.

SANTIAGO

Twice, I dreamed I was following a child through the desert, when suddenly the Egyptian pyramids rose from the earth. Do you know the pyramids?

GYPSY WOMAN

Never heard of them, but if a child showed them to you, then they exist. Go on.

SANTIAGO

She said to me, "if you come here, you will find a hidden treasure". But just before she showed me, I woke up. Both times.

The woman grabs his hands and searches his palms frantically.

Santiago grows nervous.

She closes her eyes and launches another prayer with more intensity. Santiago pulls his hands back.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

You're scaring me.

GYPSY WOMAN

I changed my mind. I won't charge you. But I want one-tenth of the treasure.

SANTIAGO

What treasure?

GYPSY WOMAN

First, swear to me! Swear that you will give me one-tenth of your treasure in exchange for what I am about to tell you.

SANTIAGO

I swear.

GYPSY WOMAN

Swear it again while looking at the Sacred Heart of Jesus!

He looks at the image.

SANTIAGO

You can have one-tenth of the
treasure.

GYPSY WOMAN

OK. It is a dream in the language
of the world. The interpretation is
very difficult. Only I can
interpret it. Pay attention! Here
it comes.

She closes her eyes and goes into a semi-meditative state.

GYPSY WOMAN (CONT'D)

(mysterious-like)

You must go to the Pyramids in
Egypt. And THERE! You will find a
hidden treasure.

She expels a ceremonious breath and instantly returns to
normal.

A pause.

SANTIAGO

That's it?

GYPSY WOMAN

That's it.

SANTIAGO

But I already knew that.

GYPSY WOMAN

Your session is up. Out of my
house. Come back after you've found
the treasure.

SANTIAGO

How do I get to Egypt?

She ushers him through the colored beads.

GYPSY WOMAN

I do interpretations. Not travel
arrangements. Now go. Out! Out!

EXT. GYPSY HOUSE / TOWN PLAZA - CONTINUOUS

Santiago emerges visibly irritated.

A WINE MERCHANT pushing A CART passes him.

Santiago stops him and buys a BOTTLE.

He sits on a bench, pulls the cork out with his teeth, and samples the libation.

After a swig, he takes out his new book and begins to read.

An old man, MELCHIZEDEK, (50's), with a distinguished face, dressed in DILAPIDATED GARMENTS, sits beside him.

MELCHIZEDEK

What are they doing?

He points to the PEOPLE in the plaza. Santiago is not interested in conversation.

SANTIAGO

(dryly)

Working.

MELCHIZEDEK

It's very hot today.

Santiago nods without taking his eyes away from his book.

MELCHIZEDEK (CONT'D)

What is that you read? A book?

SANTIAGO

Yes. A book.

He holds the book out close to Melchizedek's face, almost like a shield. Melchizedek takes it.

MELCHIZEDEK

Ah, and a very important one at that.

SANTIAGO

(surprised)

You read it?

MELCHIZEDEK

Why of course. But I found it to be irritating.

SANTIAGO

How so?

MELCHIZEDEK

Oh, it's just like most of the other books.

(MORE)

MELCHIZEDEK (CONT'D)

In the end, it says that everyone
believes the world's greatest lie.

Santiago is intrigued.

SANTIAGO

What is the world's greatest lie?

MELCHIZEDEK

Mind if I have a sip of your wine?

Santiago hands him his bottle. Melchizedek takes a long drawn
out drink.

He hands the bottle back and suddenly becomes imbued with a
mysterious sense of authority.

MELCHIZEDEK (CONT'D)

It is this: at a certain point in
our lives, we lose control of what
is happening to us. Our lives
become controlled by fate. That is
the world's greatest lie.

SANTIAGO

That didn't happen to me. My
parents wanted me to be a priest,
but I decided to become a shepherd.

MELCHIZEDEK

Good for you. Because you like to
travel. How many sheep do you have?

SANTIAGO

Enough.

MELCHIZEDEK

Well then, I'm afraid I can't help
you if you have enough.

SANTIAGO

I didn't ask for help.

MELCHIZEDEK

Of course you did.

SANTIAGO

What's your name?

MELCHIZEDEK

I am Melchizedek, the king of
Salem.

SANTIAGO

Forgive me king Melchizedek. I must be going. May I have my book back?

MELCHIZEDEK

Give me one-tenth of your sheep and I will show you how to find the treasure.

SANTIAGO

You sound like a Gypsy woman I know.

Melchizedek leans over, picks up A STICK, and writes in the sand.

SOMETHING BRIGHT reflects from his chest. It's so intense that Santiago is momentarily blinded.

With a movement too quick for his age, Melchizedek covers it with his CAPE.

When Santiago's vision returns to normal, he reads what Melchizedek wrote.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Those are the names of my parents. And that's the name of the school I attended. But who is Sylvia Liaño?

MELCHIZEDEK

The girl in the village with the raven hair.

SANTIAGO

I never knew her name. Who are you?

MELCHIZEDEK

I am Melchizedek, the king of Salem.

SANTIAGO

Why does a king talk to a shepherd?

MELCHIZEDEK

Because you're trying to realize your destiny. And you're at the point where you're about to give it all up.

SANTIAGO

Is that when you usually appear?

MELCHIZEDEK

In one way or another. Sometimes
I'm a solution, or a good idea.

SANTIAGO

I don't understand.

MELCHIZEDEK

When you want something, all the
universe conspires in helping you
to achieve it.

SANTIAGO

So you'll help me find the
treasure?

MELCHIZEDEK

If you want to learn about your
treasure, you must give me one-
tenth of your flock.

SANTIAGO

What about one-tenth of the
treasure?

MELCHIZEDEK

Ah, but if you start out by
promising what you do not have yet,
you will lose your desire to work
towards getting it.

SANTIAGO

(embarrassed)

I already promised one-tenth to a
gypsy.

MELCHIZEDEK

Yes, I know. She's good at that.
Tomorrow, bring me one tenth of
your flock and I will tell you how
to find the hidden treasure.

Melchizedek returns the book and disappears around the corner
of the plaza.

Santiago tries to read again but he can't concentrate.

EXT. TARIFA TOWN VILLAGE - DAY

MONTAGE: Santiago wanders through the town and the fields.

INT. SMALL TICKET BUREAU - DAY

TWO ATTENDANTS, (40's/50's), observe Santiago tentatively approach the purchasing window.

ATTENDANT ONE

Can I help you?

SANTIAGO

Maybe tomorrow.

Santiago drifts away.

ATTENDANT TWO

Another dreamer.

EXT. THE CITY CASTLE - DAY

Santiago climbs a STONE RAMP that leads to the top of the wall surrounding the Castle.

From there he can see the entire city of Tarifa and the ocean beyond.

The wind wisps around him as he ponders.

EXT. TARIFA TOWN PLAZA - DAY

Melchizedek is waiting for Santiago by the bench when he arrives with six sheep.

SANTIAGO

My friend bought all the other sheep. He said he always dreamed of being a shepherd.

MELCHIZEDEK

The principle of favorability. When you play cards the first time, you are almost sure to win.

SANTIAGO

Why is that?

MELCHIZEDEK

There is a force that wants you to realize your destiny. It whets your appetite with a taste of success.

Melchizedek stoops and begins inspecting the sheep.

SANTIAGO
So where's the treasure?

MELCHIZEDEK
(casually)
It's in Egypt, near the Pyramids.

SANTIAGO
Oh no, that's twice now.

MELCHIZEDEK
In order to find the treasure, you
must follow the omens.

A BUTTERFLY APPEARS FROM THIN AIR and flutters between
Santiago and Melchizedek.

SANTIAGO
My grandfather once told me that
butterflies are good omens.

MELCHIZEDEK
Your grandfather was right.

Melchizedek opens his cape to reveal A BREASTPLATE OF HEAVY
GOLD COVERED WITH PRECIOUS STONES.

SANTIAGO
You really are a king.

Melchizedek removes a WHITE STONE and a BLACK STONE from the
center of his breastplate and holds them out for Santiago.

MELCHIZEDEK
Take these. They are Urim and
Thummim. The black signifies "yes".
The white, "no". When you are
unable to read the omens, they will
help you. Always ask an objective
question. But if you can, try to
make your own decisions.

SANTIAGO
Urim and Thummim.

Santiago puts the stones into his pouch.

MELCHIZEDEK
Remember, to realize one's destiny
is a person's only real obligation.
All things were written by the same
hand.

Melchizedek clasps his hands together and makes several strange gestures over Santiago's head.

Then he takes his sheep and walks away.

EXT. THE HIGHEST POINT IN TARIFA - DAY

In the distance, a SMALL SHIP pulls away from the CITY PORT.

Melchizedek, surrounded by his new flock, watches the ship inch its way out to sea.

He finally turns and saunters off. The sheep follow him.

MELCHIZEDEK

Lila, tell your brothers to keep
up.

EXT. BUSY STREET IN TANGIER - DAY

The streets bustle with life.

Men walk hand in hand. Others smoke from gigantic hookah pipes. Women pass with covered faces.

Strange music accompanies the exotic cacophony.

Santiago wanders the streets in fascination.

INT. CAFE BAR - DAY

Santiago enters and sits at a table that a WAITER, (Late 40's), is wiping down.

The Waiter speaks to him in Arabic. Santiago points to a drink at another table.

The Waiter claps.

A SERVER brings the drink.

Santiago takes a sip and immediately spits it back into the CUP.

HASSAN, an Arabian Teen, (17 yrs), sitting at the next table, chuckles.

HASSAN

You get used to the taste.

SANTIAGO

What is this?

HASSAN

Bitter tea. Very common in this region.

SANTIAGO

If I spoke your language, I would have ordered wine.

HASSAN

There is no wine in this country. The religion here forbids it.

SANTIAGO

I just arrived.

Hassan moves to his table.

HASSAN

What are you doing here?

SANTIAGO

I'm going to the Pyramids. I need a guide. I can pay for one.

HASSAN

Do you have any idea how to get there? You have to cross the entire desert. You have enough money to do that?

SANTIAGO

I think so.

After a beat.

HASSAN

I am Hassan. I will be your guide. But first you have to show me that you have enough money.

Santiago takes his money from his pouch and shows it to his new friend.

The Waiter that served Santiago races over to the table.

He exchanges harsh words with Hassan in Arabic.

HASSAN (CONT'D)

He wants us to leave.

Santiago stands.

The Waiter grabs Santiago and speaks to him in an angry tone.

Hassan pushes the Waiter away and pulls Santiago outside with him.

EXT. CAFE BAR - CONTINUOUS

HASSAN

He wanted your money. Tangier is not like the rest of Africa. This is a port. Every port has its thieves.

SANTIAGO

Thanks for your help.

HASSAN

Come, we can get to the Pyramids by tomorrow.

He takes the money from Santiago.

HASSAN (CONT'D)

But first I must buy two camels for the journey.

EXT. STREETS OF TANGIER - DAY

The two teens walk together through the narrow city streets.

Without being obvious, Santiago keeps an eye on Hassan, and the money he's holding.

EXT. PLAZA MARKETPLACE - DAY

They reach the center of a LARGE PLAZA with CROWDS OF PEOPLE BARTERING, BUYING, AND SELLING a variety of goods.

Santiago stops to admire an EXQUISITELY CRAFTED SWORD hanging in one of the stalls.

It's magnificent with meticulous detail.

Santiago is enthralled by the beautiful craftsmanship.

SANTIAGO

Ask the owner of the stall the price of the sword.

A sudden realization washes over his face.

He's been distracted!

He stares at the sword a little longer before turning to face what he already knows.

Into the masses, Hassan has vanished.

Dazed by betrayal, he wades through the throng.

An ARABIC CHANT booms from the bullhorn of a HOLY MAN in a nearby tower.

Everyone around Santiago falls to their knees, places their forehead on the ground, and joins the Holy Man in prayer.

Santiago is the only one standing.

He looks around him at a sea of men kneeling to a God that just betrayed him.

Sorrow envelops him. Alone in a foreign land with no money.

Santiago weeps.

DISSOLVE TO:

EARLY NEXT MORNING.

The marketplace is quiet. Devoid of stalls.

Santiago sleeps.

He awakes with a jolt and looks around confused.

After a moment he remembers.

As he stands, he hears something rolling around inside his pouch.

He reaches in and pulls out the two stones, Urim and Thummim.

He runs his fingers over them, scrutinizing their surfaces.

He puts them back inside and gives the pouch a shake.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Always ask an objective question.
Is the old man's blessing still
with me?

He reaches in and pulls out the black one.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Yes! Black means yes.

He puts it back in and shakes again.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)
Am I going to find my treasure?

This time when he reaches inside, both stones fall through a hole in the pouch and land on the ground.

Surprised, Santiago looks at the tiny hole.

He picks up the stones and puts them in his pocket.

STALL OWNERS, (Various ages/genders), begin to arrive and assemble their stalls.

The plaza rapidly comes to life.

Santiago marches over to a CANDY MERCHANT, (40's), and begins helping him assemble his stall without asking permission.

The Candy Merchant allows it and offers Santiago a piece of candy.

EXT. CRYSTAL SHOP - STREET - DAY

The shop is at the top of a hilly street with just a few SHOPS, and fewer SHOPPERS.

Santiago climbs the hill, casually looking into windows.

INT. CRYSTAL SHOP - DAY

There are no customers present.

A CRYSTAL MERCHANT, (early 50's, fatherly), observes the appearance of a boy in the window who stares at the dusty display.

Santiago enters hesitantly.

SANTIAGO
I can clean those glasses in the window. The way they look now, no one will buy them.

The Crystal Merchant looks at him without speaking.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)
In exchange, you could give me something to eat.

Still no response.

Santiago removes A HANDKERCHIEF from his pouch, shakes it out, and begins cleaning one of the glasses.

EXT. CRYSTAL SHOP - DAY

An AUSTRIAN SOLDIER passes the display just as Santiago replaces the newly CLEANED GLASS.

INT. CRYSTAL SHOP - DAY

The Austrian Soldier enters with purpose.

The Crystal Merchant perks up.

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER
Grüss Ghott.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT
Good day, sir. How may I be of service to you?

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER
(heavy accent)
Vat is tze cost for tze glass in tze vindow?

The Merchant points to a table.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT
I have them right here. I can make you a very special offer.

AUSTRIAN SOLDIER
Tze price, bitte?

EXT/INT. CRYSTAL SHOP - DAY

Santiago replaces the final glass into a display full of SHINNY GLASSES.

Another SMILING CUSTOMER exits the shop with A PURCHASE.

The Crystal Merchant hangs A SIGN on the door and holds it open for Santiago.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT
Let's go have some lunch.

EXT. CRYSTAL SHOP STREET / CAFE - DAY

Santiago and the Crystal Merchant walk in silence and seat themselves at the only OUTDOOR TABLE of a nearby CAFE.

The Crystal Merchant breaks the silence.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT

You didn't have to do any cleaning.
The Quran requires me to feed a
hungry person.

SANTIAGO

Then why did you let me do it?

CRYSTAL MERCHANT

The crystal was dirty.

A CAFE WAITER, (20's), arrives at the table. The Crystal Merchant places an order in Arabic.

EXT. CAFE - LATER

Remnants of COUSCOUS remain on the Crystal Merchant's PLATE.

Santiago's PLATE is wiped clean.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT

Two customers came in while you
were working. That is a good omen.

SANTIAGO

People talk a lot about omens.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT

Do you want to work for me?

SANTIAGO

I can work for the rest of today
and all night until dawn. I will
clean every piece of crystal in
your shop. In return, I need money
to go to Egypt tomorrow.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT

(laughing)

Even if you cleaned my crystal for
an entire year and earned a good
commission selling every piece, you
would still have to borrow money to
get to Egypt. There are thousands
of kilometers between here and
there.

A profound silence descends over Santiago.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT (CONT'D)
(sympathetic)
I can give you the money to get
back to your country, my son.

Santiago stands and picks up his pouch.

SANTIAGO
I will work for you.

He stares blankly into the distance.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)
I need money to buy sheep.

INT. CRYSTAL SHOP - DAY

ONE MONTH LATER.

The Crystal Merchant and Santiago attend to customers.

The shop is busy!

SANTIAGO
I want to build a display case for
the crystal. We could place it
outside and attract the people that
pass at the bottom of the hill.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT
I've never had one before. People
will bump into it. Pieces will be
broken.

SANTIAGO
When I led my sheep through the
fields, some of them might have
died had we come upon a snake. But
that is the way with sheep and with
shepherds.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT
Business has improved, son. Soon
you'll be able to return to your
sheep. Why ask more out of life?

They're interrupted by a CUSTOMER who wants to pay. When
she's gone, they continue.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT (CONT'D)
Why did you want to go to the
Pyramids?

Reluctant to share.

SANTIAGO
I've always heard about them.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT
I know of no one who would want to
cross the desert to see the
Pyramids. They're just a pile of
stones. You could build one in your
back yard.

SANTIAGO
You never had dreams of travel?

AMERICAN TOURISTS head for the exit.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT
Good bye. Please come back and
visit us again.

They're alone now.

The Crystal Merchant picks up a CRATE FULL OF NEW CRYSTAL and
moves to a large, empty, MULTI-LAYERED WOODEN SHELF.

Santiago brings over a LADDER.

Each PIECE OF CRYSTAL is wrapped in a FINE LINEN.

The Crystal Merchant unwraps them one by one and hands them
up to Santiago on the ladder.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT (CONT'D)
The Prophet gave us the Quran, and
left us five obligations to satisfy
during our lives. The most
important is to believe only in the
one true God.

Santiago places the crystal in a design on the shelf.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT (CONT'D)
The others are to pray five times a
day, fast during Ramadan, and be
charitable to the poor.

He pauses, lost in an unfulfilled dream.

SANTIAGO

What is the fifth?

CRYSTAL MERCHANT

The fifth obligation of every Muslim is a pilgrimage. We are obliged, at least once in our lifetime, to visit the holy city of Mecca.

OPTION: Accompany the following monologue with a corresponding MONTAGE.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT (CONT'D)

When I was young, all I wanted to do was put together enough money to start this shop. I thought I would be rich, and could go to Mecca. I began to make some money, but I could never bring myself to leave someone in charge of the shop. Crystals are delicate things. People were passing my shop all the time, heading for Mecca. Some of them were rich pilgrims travelling in caravans with servants and camels, but most of the people making the pilgrimage were poorer than I. All who went there were happy at having done so. They placed symbols of the pilgrimage on the doors of their houses. One of them, a cobbler who made his living mending boots, said that he had traveled for almost a year through the desert, but he got more tired when he walked through the streets of Tangier buying his leather.

END MONTAGE OPTION.

SANTIAGO

Why not go to Mecca now?

CRYSTAL MERCHANT

It is the thought of Mecca that keeps me alive. I'm afraid that if my dream is realized, I'll have no reason to go on living.

The Crystal Merchant unwraps another piece of sparkling crystal and hands it up to Santiago.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE HILL FROM THE CRYSTAL SHOP - DAY

Santiago puts the finishing touches on a sign that is part of
A NEWLY MOUNTED DISPLAY.

An ENGLISH GENTLEMAN and his WIFE, (50's), pause near
Santiago.

GENTLEMAN

Fancy a cup of tea?

WIFE

Yes, I'd like that. Perhaps there's
something at the top of the hill.

GENTLEMAN

Darling, there's no need to scale a
mountain just for tea.

WIFE

It's hardly a mountain. The
exercise will do you good, old boy.
Besides, I'd like to have a look
inside of that crystal shop.

She points to the display.

GENTLEMAN

Then, it's up and away we go.

EXT. CRYSTAL SHOP - BACK GARDEN - SUNSET

The Crystal Merchant and Santiago share a HOOKAH PIPE.

SANTIAGO

Let's sell tea to the people who
climb the hill.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT

Lots of places sell tea around
here.

SANTIAGO

But not in crystal glasses. The
people would enjoy the tea and want
to buy the glass. I've been told,
beauty is the seducer of men.

The Merchant doesn't respond right away. He puts new coals in
the hookah and inhales deeply. After some thought.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT

Maktub.

SANTIAGO
What does that mean?

CRYSTAL MERCHANT
You would have to have been born an Arab to understand, but in your language it means something like, "It is written".

The Merchant takes another pull and nods affirmative.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT (CONT'D)
Tomorrow, we will begin to sell tea in crystal glasses.

EXT./INT. CRYSTAL SHOP - DAY.

MONTAGE:

The street leading up to the crystal shop gushes with shoppers. New shops are open and doing prosperous business.

The cafe near the crystal shop that only had one table, now has several, filled with DINING CUSTOMERS.

The crystal shop brims over with CHIT-CHATTING PATRONS, browsing and buying, and drinking tea from crystal glasses.

Four times as much inventory stocks the shelves than when Santiago first arrived.

Two new ARAB EMPLOYEES, (20's, Male & Female), assist BUYERS.

A proud, parental smile is pasted on the Crystal Merchant's face as he observes Santiago working, by now an expert in the trade.

INT. BEDROOM UPSTAIRS FROM THE SHOP - EARLY MORNING

Santiago dresses in ARABIAN CLOTHING of white linen.

He puts his head cloth in place and secures it with a ring made from camel skin.

EXT. CRYSTAL SHOP - BACK GARDEN - EARLY MORNING

The city still sleeps.

Santiago sits quietly, looking out over the rooftops of Tangier as he sips tea from a CRYSTAL GLASS.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a large BUNDLE OF MONEY. He flips his thumb over it before putting it back.

The Crystal Merchant arrives and takes a seat beside him.

Santiago pours tea for him into a crystal glass.

They sit in silence for a moment.

SANTIAGO

I'm leaving today. I have money to buy my sheep. You have the money to go to Mecca. Will you give me your blessing?

The Merchant takes a sip from his tea.

CRYSTAL MERCHANT

I'm proud of you, son. You have been a blessing to me. You brought a whole new feeling to my crystal shop. But you know as well as I do, that I am not going to Mecca, and you're not going to buy your sheep.

SANTIAGO

(startled)

Why do you say this?

CRYSTAL MERCHANT

Maktub.

INT. BEDROOM UPSTAIRS FROM THE SHOP - MORNING

Santiago's belongings are packed into three sacks. He throws two over his shoulder and grabs the other.

He stops to take one last look at his room. His forgotten shepherd's pouch is bunched up in a corner.

When he picks it up, Urim and Thummim fall out onto the floor.

As soon as they are in his hand, a strange sensation comes over him.

He looks about the room as if he's suddenly become aware of another presence.

He shakes it off and pockets the stones.

He adds the pouch to his other belongings and leaves.

INT. CRYSTAL SHOP - MORNING

The Crystal Merchant waits on CUSTOMERS. It's quite busy.

Santiago descends the stairs into the shop and looks at his host a final time - his eyes a mix of gratitude and melancholy.

He slips quietly past the Crystal Merchant and out the front door without a word.

The Crystal Merchant pretends not to see, but once Santiago has gone, he stares after him through the window.

After a moment, he goes back to helping customers, and serving tea in crystal glasses.

EXT. STREETS OF TANGIER - DAY

Santiago strolls the now familiar streets in thought.

INT. CAFE BAR - DAY

The cafe from his first day.

Santiago takes a seat at the same fateful table. The same Waiter serves him, but he doesn't recognize Santiago as they converse in Arabic.

Santiago orders tea. The Waiter serves it in A CUP.

Two ADVENTURERS at a nearby table, one FRENCH, one ITALIAN, (30's), get up to pay their bill.

FRENCH ADVENTURER
Come, we must get back to the caravan. It's leaving soon.

ITALIAN ADVENTURER
I don't look forward to two thousand kilometers of desert.

FRENCH ADVENTURER
This was your idea. I don't want to hear complaints.

They head for the door.

SANTIAGO
Excuse me, did you say you were leaving with a caravan?

ITALIAN ADVENTURER
Sì. We travel to Egypt.

SANTIAGO
Where is it leaving from?

FRENCH ADVENTURER
Why do you want to know? Do you
want to search the desert for
hidden treasure?

They laugh and turn to leave. The Italian turns back at the door.

ITALIAN ADVENTURER
We leave from the supply warehouse
near the mosque. In one hour.

Santiago looks tormented by a raging internal dilemma.

EXT. SUPPLY WAREHOUSE - DAY

A MASSIVE CARAVAN prepares for departure.

Over two hundred people are present:

WOMEN, CHILDREN, ADVENTURERS, ARCHAEOLOGISTS, and a number of
SENTINELS that wear SWORDS at their belt and RIFLES slung
over their shoulders.

More than FOUR HUNDRED ANIMALS include camels, horses, mules,
and fowl.

A CAMEL SELLER takes money from a CAMEL BUYER and hands him
the reins.

A FAT ARAB MAN, (30's), points Santiago to the warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

The building is part warehouse for VARIOUS GOODS and part
corral for CAGED ANIMALS.

An ENGLISH MAN, (late 40's), kneels on the dusty floor with
three large open TEXT BOOKS in front of him. He leafs through
them studiously, cross checking references and jotting words
down on a NOTEPAD.

SANTIAGO
Hello...are you traveling with the
caravan?

The English Man shushes him with a hand wave.

Santiago sits, takes out Urim and Thummim and begins to play with them.

ENGLISH MAN
(shouting)
Urim and Thummim!

Santiago abruptly puts them back in his pocket.

SANTIAGO
They're not for sale.

ENGLISH MAN
Well they're not worth much.
They're made of rock crystal, and
there are millions of rock crystals
in the earth. But those who know
about such things would know that
those are Urim and Thummim. I
didn't know they had them in this
part of the world.

SANTIAGO
They were given to me as a present
from a king.

The ENGLISH MAN reaches in his pocket and pulls out two stones like Santiago's.

ENGLISH MAN
Did you say a king?

SANTIAGO
You don't believe that a king would
talk to someone like me, a
shepherd?

ENGLISH MAN
On the contrary. In the Bible, it
was shepherds who were the first to
recognize a king that the rest of
the world refused to acknowledge.
It's no surprise that a king would
talk to a shepherd. Maybe this is
an omen.

The Fat Arab Man that the Santiago spoke to earlier comes in.

FAT ARAB
You're in luck, you two. The
caravan leaving to Al-Fayoum will
permit you to travel with it.

SANTIAGO

But I want to go to Egypt.

FAT ARAB

Al-Fayoum is in Egypt. What kind of Arab are you?

He leaves.

The English Man and Santiago gather their things.

ENGLISH MAN

This IS an omen. It's certainly no coincidence that I met you here with Urim and Thummim. If I could, I'd write an entire encyclopedia just about the words luck and coincidence. Why are you going into the desert?

SANTIAGO

I'm looking for a treasure.

ENGLISH MAN

So am I.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

The English Man and Santiago load their belongings onto two separate LARGE CAMELS.

The English man has mostly CASES AND SACKS filled with books.

SANTIAGO

What kind of treasure do you seek?

ENGLISH MAN

There's a universal language, understood by every one, but already forgotten. I'm in search of that language, among other things.

SANTIAGO

What other things?

ENGLISH MAN

An alchemist. He lives at the Al-Fayoum oasis deep within the Egyptian desert. He supposedly possesses extraordinary powers.

SANTIAGO

What's an alchemist?

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

DAGGERS banged against SWORDS by the SENTINELS brings the crowd to a hush.

A dark-eyed, bearded man, the CARAVAN LEADER, (Early 40's), mounted on a MUSCULAR STALLION stands before the MULTITUDE OF TRAVELERS.

CARAVAN LEADER

I am the leader of the Caravan. I hold the power of life and death for every person I take with me. There are a lot of different people here. Each has his own God. The only God I serve is Allah. In his name, I swear that I will do everything possible to once again win out over the desert. I want each and every one of you to swear by the God you believe in that you will follow my orders no matter what. In the desert, disobedience means death.

A murmur rises while each person swears quietly to their God.

Santiago swears to Jesus Christ.

The English Man says nothing.

The Caravan Leader eyes a CAMEL DRIVER, (50's), who's parked near Santiago and the English Man.

The Camel Driver eyes him back and nods.

A long note is sounded on a PRIMITIVE HORN. Everyone mounts up.

Santiago is a bit awkward getting onto his animal.

But not compared to the English Man who clumsily climbs onto his camel and immediately falls off the other side.

The Caravan embarks.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The Caravan is in motion, making slow, steady progress.

Everyone is settled into the desert calm except for the English Man.

He blabs on to Santiago.

ENGLISH MAN

My only endeavor is to ascertain the secrets of alchemy. I've been quite successful at unraveling the truths behind some important questions. I own some of the rarest and most important volumes on the subject. Naturally, when I heard of the alchemist that lives in the desert who is reportedly more than three hundred years old, I dismissed it as no more than a rumor. A tall tale. That is until a friend of mine returning from an archaeological expedition told me that he had actually seen the man. So I cancelled my commitments. And here I am, astride this despicable dromedary.

(to the Camel Driver)

Perhaps you've heard of him, Sir? Surely this isn't your first crossing... Sir? Do you know the man I speak of?

CAMEL DRIVER

I have crossed these sands many times. The desert is so huge. The horizon, so distant, that they make a person feel small, as if he should remain. Silent.

The English Man glares at the Camel Driver indignantly and reaches for one of his rare volumes.

Santiago is amused. He takes his book out, too.

He looks at the English Man with his head buried in his book, and then at the Camel Driver contemplating the desert stretched before them.

He puts his book away.

The sun melts into the horizon behind the silhouetted Caravan.

TIME-LAPSE:

Several days of travel in the desert.

The Caravan arrives at a SALT BED.

The camels balk and stamp.

The Caravan Leader races to the front on his horse and commands everyone to stop.

ENGLISH MAN

What's happening? Why are we stopping?

CAMEL DRIVER

This is a salt bed from a dried up lake. The camels abhor the feeling beneath their hooves.

ENGLISH MAN

Why don't we just go around it?

To the multitude.

CARAVAN LEADER

Every man on a camel, dismount and carry as much as you're able to bear.

They obey.

Santiago watches the English Man struggle.

SANTIAGO

What is an alchemist?

ENGLISH MAN

An alchemist is someone who has discovered the secrets of the Master Work. The Elixir of life, which prevents men from growing old, and the Philosopher's stone.

SANTIAGO

The Philosopher's Stone?

ENGLISH MAN

One sliver from this stone can transform any metal into gold.

SANTIAGO

Do you really believe that?

ENGLISH MAN

After ten years of searching, I have no choice but to believe.

(MORE)

ENGLISH MAN (CONT'D)

It would be a tragedy to have come
all this way, only to discover that
I've been chasing a myth.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DESERT - NIGHT

The animals rest.

Tents have been raised. Fires burn.

The English Man, the Camel Driver, and Santiago relax around
a fire along with the French and Italian Adventurers, and
other CARAVAN TRAVELERS.

CAMEL DRIVER

I used to live near El Cairum.

FRENCH ADVENTURER

Ah! Le Paris d'Egypte.

CAMEL DRIVER

I had my orchard, my family, and a
life that would change not until I
died.

ENGLISH MAN

So why are you here in the desert?

CAMEL DRIVER

One day, the earth trembled and the
Nile overflowed. It was something I
thought could happen only to
others, not to me. Everything I
owned was destroyed. Every one i
loved perished. The land was
ruined. So I found some other way
to make a living.

Two Sentinels join them by the fire.

SENTINEL 1

There are rumors of tribal wars.

The announcement provokes worry.

ENGLISH MAN

Are we in danger? Will we have to
turn back?

SENTINEL 2

Once you go into the desert, there
is no turning back.

(MORE)

SENTINEL 2 (CONT'D)

You have only to worry about the best way of moving forward. The rest is up to Allah.

CAMEL DRIVER

Maktub.

EXT. CAMPSITE - EARLY MORNING

Most of the camp is still asleep. Only a few stir.

Desert stars dot the twilight sky. One of them shines particularly bright.

Santiago lies awake, staring up at the cosmic splendor.

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE DESERT - DAY

The Caravan progresses.

The English Man has his head in a book.

Santiago observes the caravan, the desert horizon, and listens to the wind.

LATER:

The Caravan stands before a massive boulder.

The Caravan Leader signals to follow him around it. They all move as instructed.

Two mysterious hooded men, BEDOUINS, (30's), come racing towards them on black horses.

The Bedouins have a word with the Caravan Leader and then race away as fast as they came.

The Caravan Leader instructs the people to turn around and go the other way around the boulder.

The English Man is annoyed by all the directional changes. It's interrupting his reading!

SANTIAGO

You should pay more attention to the caravan. We make a lot of detours, but we're always heading for the same destination.

ENGLISH MAN

You ought to read more about the world. Books are like caravans in that respect.

The Camel Driver raises an eyebrow to the unexpected wisdom.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The camels are arranged in a circle around the site.

Armed Sentinels stand guard on the circumference.

The Caravan Leader walks around telling everyone to extinguish their fires.

Santiago slips through the cracks and ventures out into the desert.

The English Man sees him and follows.

ENGLISH MAN

What are you doing out here? Have you lost your mind?

SANTIAGO

Just going for a walk.

ENGLISH MAN

You shouldn't be walking out here by yourself. There are treacherous people about. Haven't you heard?

SANTIAGO

Then join me.

ENGLISH MAN

Youth! Fearless and foolish.

They walk in the light of the desert moon.

SANTIAGO

Tell me more about alchemy.

The English Man clears his throat.

ENGLISH MAN

There is a positive force. In alchemy, it is called the Soul of the World.

(MORE)

ENGLISH MAN (CONT'D)
You see, everything on earth is
being continuously transformed
because the earth is alive and has
a soul. We are part of that soul,
but we rarely recognize that it's
working for us.

A SHOOTING STAR darts across the sky.

SANTIAGO
I've seen how the soul of the
caravan speaks to the soul of the
desert.

ENGLISH MAN
Is that so? Then I suppose I *should*
pay more attention to the caravan.

SANTIAGO
And I guess I had better read your
books.

EXT. THE DESERT - DAY

The English Man observes the caravan with disdainful
skepticism.

Santiago reads the English Man's books. He flips through
pages with STRANGE DRAWINGS.

SANTIAGO
The most important text in alchemy
contains only a few lines?

ENGLISH MAN
Correct. All the secrets of alchemy
are inscribed on a single Emerald
Tablet.

SANTIAGO
Then why do we need all these
books?

ENGLISH MAN
So that we understand those few
lines.

MONTAGE:

Dissolving images of different days in the desert. A tapestry
of DRAWINGS from the books. The Caravan moving.

DEPICTIONS OF FAMOUS ALCHEMISTS: HELVETIUS, ELIAS, FULCANELLI, and GERBER in various poses performing feats of alchemy in ancient laboratories.

End Montage.

Santiago and the English Man talk while they ride.

SANTIAGO

Is it not better to just observe
the omens in order to understand
alchemy?

ENGLISH MAN

(irritated)

You have a knack for simplifying
everything. Alchemy is a serious
discipline. Every step must be
adhered to exactly as it was
followed by the masters.

SANTIAGO

When were these books written?

ENGLISH MAN

Many centuries ago.

SANTIAGO

They didn't have the printing press
in those days. Why did they use
such strange language, with so many
drawings?

The English Man is exasperated.

ENGLISH MAN

Your soul is simply too primitive
to understand. I'll be having my
books back now. You can go back to
watching the caravan. That didn't
teach me anything either.

Santiago stares horridly at something on the ground.

The English Man finally notices.

Scattered all about the sand lay SLAIN MEN.

The Caravan Leader leads his people over the freshly
contested battle ground with quiet indifference.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The moon is absent. The stars are endless.

No fires burn. Conversations are few.

The English Man has retired near Santiago, the Camel Driver, and the Adventurers.

A CAMEL GROANS. The English Man springs up in a panic, spitting out an OBSCURE LATIN TEXT.

The French Adventurer laughs at him.

FRENCH ADVENTURER

Go back to sleep English man. It's just a camel groaning.

ENGLISH MAN

Wretched beasts!

He's down again and snoring within seconds.

The Camel Driver eats from a small SACK OF DATES.

He hardly even notices the incident.

SANTIAGO

You don't seem concerned with the wars going on around us.

CAMEL DRIVER

Right now, my only concern is the flavor of these dates. When I eat, that's all I think about. If I'm on the march, I concentrate on marching. If I have to fight, it will be just as good a day to die as any other.

The French Adventurer lets out a load groan - a poor imitation of the camel's.

The English Man leaps up again.

Everyone laughs at him.

ENGLISH MAN

There's nothing amusing here!

Santiago stands and looks out into the star-filled desert night.

SANTIAGO

The horizon seems lower, as if the stars are lying on the desert itself.

CAMEL DRIVER

It's the oasis.

SANTIAGO

(excited)

The oasis! Then why do we not go there now?

CAMEL DRIVER

Because now...

He pauses to look up into the sky, and then back at Santiago.

CAMEL DRIVER (CONT'D)

...now it is time to sleep.

The Camel Driver lays his head down and falls asleep.

EXT. CAMPSITE - EARLY MORNING

The sunrise bathes the desert with soothing hues of orange and yellow.

Santiago awakes and becomes immediately fixated on something in front of him.

In the near distance, an endless row of DATE PALM TREES stretch out across the entire desert.

The English Man comes racing towards him, excited.

ENGLISH MAN

We've done it! We've done it! I've done it. There's much to prepare.

He races off again.

Santiago hardly notices him. He's mesmerized by the scope and the splendor of the oasis.

He looks over at the Camel Driver still slumbering peacefully. He tries to rouse him, but the Camel Driver doesn't respond. He tries again with no success.

Worry registers on his face.

He lowers his cheek close to the Camel Driver's mouth. After a moment, he quickly stands and runs off.

He returns with the Caravan Leader and a few Sentinels.

A SMALL CROWD has gathered around the Camel Driver.

An ELDERLY ARAB MAN, (70's), kneels beside him praying softly.

CARAVAN LEADER

He came to the desert to die. He
will be buried here and become an
eternal part of it.

EXT. DESERT - OASIS - DAY

High above the oasis, a FALCON soars and dives into the date palm trees.

It flies beneath the canopy of trees and lands on the WRIST OF A GLOVED FIST.

P.O.V. FALCON: Through the trees, beyond the boundaries of the oasis, a large caravan approaches.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A HUMP IN THE SAND marks an unmarked grave that winds have begun to disperse.

EXT. AL-FAYOUM OASIS - DAY

The Caravan enters the oasis via a GRAND PATHWAY that has been cut through the date palm trees.

Hundreds of OASIS PEOPLE line the pathway.

EXCITED CHILDREN run alongside the animals singing and shouting.

OASIS MEN high in the trees throw leaves down like confetti upon the arriving guest.

SANTIAGO

So many happy people.

ENGLISH MAN

It looks like The Thousand and One
Nights.

Innumerable COLORED TENTS are spread among the trees.

EXT. CENTER OF THE OASIS - DAY

The Caravan arrives at the CENTER OF THE OASIS - a large clearing that functions as a VILLAGE PLAZA.

A MASSIVE WHITE TENT is the main quarters of the TRIBAL CHIEFTAINS, (Various ages). They emerge with the arrival of the visitors.

The Oasis People coalesce with the Caravan People, talking incessantly, laughing and shouting.

Some help them unload the animals.

The Tribal Chieftains greet the Caravan Leader and the Sentinels.

WOMEN OF THE OASIS converge onto MERCHANTS for NEW CLOTHES, SPICES, and PRECIOUS STONES.

Daggers CLANGING against swords once again brings everyone to order.

The MAIN TRIBAL CHIEF, (60's), stands atop a TREE STUMP-one of many in the plaza that serve as benches and podiums. He addresses the multitude.

MAIN TRIBAL CHIEF
Welcome to the Al-Fayoum oasis.

A cheerful roar erupts from all.

MAIN TRIBAL CHIEF (CONT'D)
You are invited to remain here until the conflicts between the tribes are over. As our special guests, you will be given the best accommodations and share living quarters with our residents. We are honored to be your host.

More applause.

MAIN TRIBAL CHIEF (CONT'D)
I must ask that everyone surrender their arms. The rules of desert warfare dictate that oases may not shelter armies or troops. We abide by these rules.

APPOINTED MEN walk through the crowd collecting WEAPONS.

The English Man pulls a CHROME PLATED REVOLVER from his bag and hands it over.

SANTIAGO
Why the revolver?

ENGLISH MAN
It helps me to trust in people.

MAIN TRIBAL CHIEF
Tonight we celebrate your arrival
with a Festival of Fire!

EXT. CENTER OF THE OASIS - NIGHT

TRIBAL DRUMMERS pound out rhythms on traditional drums.

TRIBAL PERFORMERS dance in TRADITIONAL GARMENTS around a large fire.

Men share HOOKAH PIPES. Women serve DELICATE DESSERTS.

It is a grand festival.

The night fades into morning.

INT. A COLORED TENT - DAY

Santiago is assigned a tent with FIVE other YOUNG MEN. He regales them with tales of life as a shepherd.

SANTIAGO
Each one had a name that I gave
them according to personality. Lila
was a little lamb...

The English Man rushes in without warning or invitation.

ENGLISH MAN
There you are. I've been looking
for you all morning. Come with me!

He grabs Santiago and leads him to the entrance.

ENGLISH MAN (CONT'D)
(to the Young Men)
Sorry for the intrusion. Good day.

EXT. COLORED TENT - DAY

ENGLISH MAN
I need you to help me find the
alchemist.

MONTAGE: Different locations of the oasis as the two of them search.

EXT. NEAR A WELL IN THE OASIS - DAY

Santiago and the English Man rest after a futile search. The English Man is agitated.

ENGLISH MAN

We've wasted nearly the entire day.

SANTIAGO

Maybe we should try asking someone.

ENGLISH MAN

I've avoided that because I don't want the villagers to know why I'm here. But it seems we have no choice.

A WOMAN DRESSED IN BLACK arrives at the well and begins filling A GOATSKIN with water.

ENGLISH MAN (CONT'D)

You look more indigenous than I do.
You do the talking.

He gives Santiago a shove before he can protest.

SANTIAGO

Excuse me. I wish to know where the alchemist lives in the oasis.

WOMAN IN BLACK

You should never attempt to talk with women dressed in black. We are married. You must respect tradition. I have never heard of an alchemist.

She hurries off with her goatskin.

The English Man is disappointed.

ENGLISH MAN

I've come all this way for nothing.

SANTIAGO

I never heard of an alchemist before. Maybe no one here has either.

ENGLISH MAN

That's it! Perhaps no one here knows what an alchemist is! Find out who's the one that cures the people's illnesses.

ANOTHER WOMAN DRESSED IN BLACK, (Late 30's), comes to the well for water.

The two of them stand there grinning at her. She finds them to be a curious looking pair.

She heads off as a MAN WITH A POINTY NOSE, (40's), approaches.

SANTIAGO

Do you know someone who cures the people's illnesses?

The Man is clearly frightened of the strangers.

MAN WITH A POINTY NOSE

Allah cures our illnesses. You are looking for witch doctors?

He recites some verses from the Quran and moves on.

An ELDERLY VILLAGE MAN, (late 60's), walking nearby overhears the conversation.

ELDERLY VILLAGE MAN

Why do you want to find that sort of person?

SANTIAGO

My friend here has traveled for many months in order to meet with him.

ELDERLY VILLAGE MAN

If such a man is here at the oasis, he must be the very powerful one. Not even the tribal chieftains can see him when they want to. Only when he consents.

He pauses to appraise them.

ELDERLY VILLAGE MAN (CONT'D)

Wait for the end of the war. Then leave with the caravan. Do not try to enter into the life of the oasis.

The Elderly Village Man hobbles away.

ENGLISH MAN

Splendid! We're hot on the trail
now! There's another. And she's not
wearing black.

A YOUNG WOMAN, FATIMA, (17), approaches adorned in a pale
LAVENDER GOWN. She carries A VESSEL on her shoulder that
hides her face.

Santiago walks toward her.

She lowers the vessel and reveals her unveiled face.

Santiago's stride slows to a stop. He can only stand and
stare.

Her beauty is peerless. Santiago is enchanted by it.

Dazzling sunlight transforms her light brown eyes into
transparent windows. Her lips are poised between a laugh and
silence.

The Young Woman smiles at Santiago. He smiles back without
even realizing.

The English Man shakes Santiago from his trance.

ENGLISH MAN (CONT'D)

Go on, ask her!

Santiago moves closer to the Young Woman.

SANTIAGO

What is your name?

FATIMA

Fatima.

SANTIAGO

That is what some women in my
country are called.

FATIMA

It is the name of the Prophet's
daughter. The invaders carried the
name everywhere.

The English Man clears his throat conspicuously.

SANTIAGO

Do you know where we can find the
man who cures the people's
illnesses?

FATIMA

That is he who knows all the
secrets of the world, and
communicates with the genies of the
desert. He lives near the southern
edge of the oasis.

She points to the south. Then she fills her vessel with water
and leaves.

Santiago turns around only to realize that he's alone. The
English Man has dashed off.

He sits down by the well in an utter daze and stares at the
space where the girl just stood.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WELL - NEXT DAY

The English Man is there. He stares out into the desert.

Santiago approaches.

ENGLISH MAN

I waited. He finally appeared with
the first starlight. He ask me if I
had ever transformed lead into
gold. I told him that was what I
had come here to learn. He told me
I should "Go and try." That was all
he said.

Santiago ponders a moment.

SANTIAGO

Then go and try.

ENGLISH MAN

Yes. That's exactly what I'll do.
I'm going to start right now.

He marches away.

Fatima arrives and begins filling her vessel.

Santiago goes to her.

SANTIAGO

Fatima, I came to tell you just one thing. I want you to be my wife. I love you.

She drops the container. Water spills out onto the dry earth.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

I will wait for you here every day. I have crossed the desert in search of a treasure that's somewhere near the Pyramids. For me, the war was a curse. But now it's a blessing because it has brought me here to you.

FATIMA

The war will end someday.

Santiago looks around him at the date palm trees.

SANTIAGO

I could spend the rest of my life here with you.

FATIMA

The tribesmen are always in search of treasure. The women of the desert are proud of their tribesmen.

She refills her vessel and leaves.

MONTAGE: different days of their courtship. Santiago waits for her arrivals. On different days, he gestures broadly as he tells her stories. Fatima listens with fascination and admiration in her eyes.

EXT. CENTER OF THE OASIS - DAY

The Caravan Leader addresses his people.

CARAVAN LEADER

We don't know when the war will end so we cannot continue our journey.

A murmur from the crowd, each person having varied reactions to the news.

CARAVAN LEADER (CONT'D)

The battles may last for a long time, perhaps years. It's not a battle of good against evil.

(MORE)

CARAVAN LEADER (CONT'D)

It is a war between forces that are fighting for the balance of power. When that type of battle begins, it lasts longer than others because Allah is on both sides.

A CLOTH MERCHANT, (40's), protests.

CLOTH MERCHANT

But my family, my business, they count on my timely return.

CARAVAN LEADER

I cannot risk the lives of many for the interest of one.

The people disperse.

EXT. THE ENGLISH MAN'S TENT - DAY

The English Man has built A STRANGE FURNACE outside of his tent. A TRANSPARENT FLASK heats above the flame.

He's chopping FIRE WOOD when Santiago arrives.

SANTIAGO

You missed the meeting today.

ENGLISH MAN

I already knew what he'd say. We can't continue. I have no intentions of leaving.

The English Man puts some wood on the fire.

SANTIAGO

What are you doing?

ENGLISH MAN

(excited)

This is the first phase. I have to separate the sulfur. To do that, I must have no fear of failure. It was fear that first kept me from attempting the Master Work. Now, I'm beginning what I could have started ten years ago. But I'm happy at least that I didn't wait for twenty.

He strikes another log with his AX. His swing is inept, but determined.

EXT. WELL - DAY

Fatima holds her container of water. Santiago idly plays with a palm leaf.

FATIMA

Ever since I was a child, I have dreamed that the desert would bring me a wonderful present. Now my present has arrived. The day after we met, you told me that you loved me. You taught me something of the universal language and the Soul of the World. Because of that, I have become a part of you, a part of your destiny. That is why I want you to continue toward your goal. If you have to wait until the war is over, then wait. But if you must go before then, then go. The dunes are changed by the wind, but the desert never changes. That is the way it will be with my love. If it is written, you will come back to me.

SANTIAGO

But doesn't love require people to be with the ones they love?

FATIMA

The desert takes our men from us. Some never return. Those who do not, become a part of the clouds, a part of the animals that hide in the ravines, and the water that comes from the earth. They become a part of...

SANTIAGO

The Soul of the World.

FATIMA

... the Soul of the World. But some do come back. And then the other women are so happy because they believe that their men may one day return. I used to look at those women and envy them. Now, I too will be a woman who waits.

SANTIAGO

When I set out to find my treasure,
I thought I could find it in a
week, or even less. It's been
nearly two years. I know not what
the desert holds for me. I could be
gone a long time.

FATIMA

The waiting is a part of my love
for you. I am a desert woman and I
am proud of that. I want my husband
to wander as free as the Wind. If I
have to, I will accept the fact
that he has become an eternal part
of the desert.

EXT. OUTER EDGE OF THE OASIS - DAY

Santiago wanders out over the sand. PEBBLES CRUNCH beneath
his feet. The wind wisps around his face.

He looks back. The date palms have shrunk with distance.

He sits on A STONE and looks out over the horizon. The desert
turns pink in the setting sun.

TWO HAWKS flying high in the sky drift on a wind current.

Santiago follows the movement of the birds. Watching them
glide has a near hypnotic effect on him.

His eyelids become heavy.

Suddenly one of the Hawks makes a flashing dive and attacks
the other. As it does, A FLEETING IMAGE of an ARMY WITH
SWORDS AT THE READY riding into the oasis appears on the
desert.

The vision vanishes immediately.

Santiago leaps up from the stone, shaken by the image. He
races back toward the oasis.

EXT. OASIS - IN THE FOREST - DUSK

Santiago plows through the trees at breakneck speed.

The French and Italian Adventures are play-fencing when
Santiago races past them.

ITALIAN ADVENTURER
Slow down, Santiago!

The French Adventurer trips the distracted Italian and pins him to the ground with his SWORD.

ITALIAN ADVENTURER (CONT'D)
Touche' signore.

EXT. CENTER OF THE OASIS - DUSK

Santiago is out of breath when he approaches the TENT GUARD, (mid 30's), in front of the Massive White Tent.

SANTIAGO
I wish to see the chieftains. I
bring omens from the desert.

Without a word, the Guard enters the tent.

Fatima passes by with her MOTHER, (late 30's). Santiago and Fatima look at each other without speaking.

The Guard emerges from the tent with a YOUNG ARAB DRESSED IN WHITE AND GOLD.

YOUNG ARAB
What omens have you to tell?

SANTIAGO
An army is coming. I had a vision.

YOUNG ARAB
(smiling)
The desert fills men's hearts with
visions. It was just a mirage.

SANTIAGO
Mirages appear when a man is
desperate for water or relief from
the desert. This was no mirage.

YOUNG ARAB
Wait here.

The Young Arab goes back inside. The Tent Guard glares down at Santiago.

Suddenly two ADDITIONAL GUARDS burst from the tent and run in separate directions. Santiago is startled and starting to become nervous.

MONTAGE: Santiago waits as an assortment of FIGHTING MEN and MERCHANTS enter and exit the tent.

Night falls. One by one, fires are extinguished at the oasis. Only the lights in the massive tent remain.

Finally the Tent Guard emerges and grunts, bidding Santiago to enter.

INT. MASSIVE WHITE TENT - NIGHT

The interior of the tent is exquisitely adorned with EXOTIC CARPETS and GOLDEN CANDLELIT CHANDELIERS.

Eight Tribal Chieftains are seated at the back of the tent in a semicircle.

SERVANTS come and go with SILVER TRAYS LADEN WITH SPICES AND TEA while others maintain the FIRES IN THE HOOKAH PIPES.

The Main Tribal Chief is DRESSED IN WHITE AND GOLD. He sits at the center of the others. The Young Arab that Santiago spoke to earlier is by his side.

Santiago is brought before them.

A CHIEFTAIN WITH A PURPLE HEAD CLOTH, (50's), is the first to address him.

HEAD CLOTH CHIEFTAIN

Who is this stranger that speaks of omens?

SANTIAGO

It is I. A traveler.

A BLIND CHIEFTAIN, (80's).

BLIND CHIEFTAIN

Why would the desert reveal such things to a stranger when it knows that we've been here for generations?

SANTIAGO

My eyes are not yet accustomed to the desert. I see things that eyes habituated to the desert do not.

A THIRD CHIEFTAIN, (60's), WITH AN ORNAMENTAL STAFF speaks.

THIRD CHIEFTAIN

The oasis is neutral ground because the majority of the inhabitants are women and children. No one attacks an oasis.

SANTIAGO

I can only tell you what I saw. It was my humble duty. What happens next is at the discretion of your wisdom.

All but the Main Tribal Chief fall into an animated discussion in an Arabic dialect.

The Main Tribal Chief stares coldly at Santiago who cowers under his penetrating gaze.

Santiago turns to leave but the Tent Guard stops him. Fear begins to swell in Santiago. He looks regretful.

Suddenly, the Main Tribal Chief smiles almost imperceptibly and Santiago relaxes a little.

The discussion ends.

MAIN TRIBAL CHIEF

Two thousand years ago, a man that could interpret dreams rescued Egypt from famine. His name was Joseph. He too was a stranger in a strange land, as you are, and probably about your age. Tomorrow we will break the agreement that no one at the oasis may bear arms. Throughout the entire day we will be on the lookout for our enemies. When the sun sets, the men will once again surrender their arms to me. For every ten dead men among our enemies, you will receive a piece of gold. But be warned. Arms must not be drawn unless they go into battle. If at least one of them has not been used by the end of the day tomorrow, one of them will be used on you.

One of the Chieftains claps his hands, indicating the final word has been spoken.

The Servants distinguish the hookahs and help the more elderly chieftains rise from their sitting position.

EXT. THE FOREST OF THE OASIS - NIGHT

A full moon illuminates a path in the forest.

Santiago saunters through the trees.

Suddenly, there is a TREMENDOUS THUNDERING SOUND.

Santiago is thrown to the ground by a forceful wind.

The area swirls with a blinding DUST CLOUD.

An ENORMOUS WHITE HORSE rears with a SCREAM.

Santiago stands as the dust dissolves. He trembles at what he sees.

Astride the animal is a HORSEMAN DRESSED IN BLACK with a FALCON perched on his shoulder.

He wears a TURBAN. A BLACK KERCHIEF covers his face.

Only his eyes are seen.

The Horseman draws an enormous SWORD from a SCABBARD mounted on his steed.

The steel blade glistens in the moonlight.

His voice RUMBLES vociferously.

HORSEMAN

Who dares to read the flight of the
hawks?

Santiago lowers his head.

SANTIAGO

It is I who dares. So that lives
may be saved.

The Horseman swings. It seems a fatal blow, but the swing is stopped as swiftly as it swung.

The point of the sword touches Santiago's forehead, drawing a single DROPLET OF BLOOD.

HORSEMAN

Why have you spoken this ominous
omen?

SANTIAGO

I told what the birds wanted me to
tell.

HORSEMAN

Who are you to change what Allah
has willed?

SANTIAGO

Allah created the armies. He also
created the hawks. Allah taught me
the languages of the birds. All
things were written by the same
hand.

The Horseman withdraws his sword.

HORSEMAN

When something is written, there is
no way to change it.

SANTIAGO

All I saw was an army, I didn't see
the outcome of the battle.

HORSEMAN

What is a stranger doing in this
land?

SANTIAGO

Following my destiny.

The Horseman returns his sword to the scabbard.

HORSEMAN

I had to test your courage. Courage
is the quality most essential to
understanding the Language of the
World.

Santiago raises his head.

HORSEMAN (CONT'D)

You must not let up, even after
having come so far. If the warriors
come here and your head is still on
your shoulders at sunset, come find
me.

The Horseman brandishes and CRACKS A WHIP.

The horse rears again, raising a cloud of dust and takes to
the trees.

Santiago shouts after them.

SANTIAGO

Where do you live?

The hand with the whip points to the south before it disappears into THE MIST.

The Horseman is THE ALCHEMIST, (400 years old).

EXT. DESERT - NEAR THE OASIS - DAY

FIVE HUNDRED TRIBESMEN MOUNTED ON HORSES fill the horizon and slowly approach the Grand Pathway of the Oasis.

EXT. OASIS - GRAND PATHWAY - DAY

There is no welcoming fanfare. A LITTLE OLD OASIS WOMAN, (70's), shuffles across the Pathway as fast as she can.

The Tribesmen ride down the pathway. They look battle weary, but appear to be carrying no weapons.

They smile and greet the Old Woman. She ignores them.

It is unusually quiet.

A TRIBESMAN WITH A SCARRED FACE, (30's), addresses the COMMANDER, (40's).

SCAR FACE

Usually people are here to greet visitors.

COMMANDER

They're not expecting us.

EXT. CENTER OF THE OASIS - MASSIVE WHITE TENT - DAY

The Tribesmen arrive and dismount their horses.

The Scar Face Tribesman withdraws a RIFLE from beneath his robe.

COMMANDER

No guns. Only swords. They're not armed.

A SYMPATHETIC TRIBESMAN, (50's), pleads with him.

SYMPATHETIC TRIBESMAN

We don't have to do this.

COMMANDER

Silence! Do as I command. The war awaits us. Maktub.

SYMPATHETIC TRIBESMAN
(prayerfully)
Maktub.

The Tribesmen withdraw their swords and surround the tent.

On the Commander's battle cry, they attack.

They rip through all sides of the tent with the slice of their swords and rush in screaming.

The screaming dies down almost immediately. The men emerge looking a little confused.

The Commander is the first one to clue up. His eyes search the area suspiciously.

COMMANDER
Something's wrong.

A DEAFENING BARRAGE OF BULLETS comes hailing down from the surrounding trees.

The Tribesmen drop rapidly. Those not hit, race for the trees to take cover.

The Oasis Men emerge from the forest like angry locusts. They outnumber the Tribesmen three-to-one.

SWORDS CLASH!

TRIBESMEN PERISH.

The French and Italian Adventures are in on the action.

They fight gallantly side by side like swashbuckling Musketeers, pouncing from tree stump to tree stump skillfully striking down enemy Tribesmen.

EXT. OASIS - FOREST - DAY

A SNEAKY TRIBESMAN, (Late 20's), slips past the fighting Men and runs away from the battle.

The English Man is perched in a palm tree with his revolver trained on the escapee.

ENGLISH MAN
Oh no you don't.

BANG! Sneaky Tribesman goes down.

The English Man rolls his revolver on his finger, catches it like a cowboy, and blows the tip. It's a snazzy display until the gun fires off as he returns it to the holster.

The shot breaks the branch he sits on and sends him plummeting to the ground.

As he pulls himself out of the bush that broke his fall, the Scar Face Tribesman comes charging at him with a raised SCIMITAR SWORD.

BANG!

Scar Face crumples right on top of the English Man.

A short distance away, the Caravan Leader has just fired a SMOKING RIFLE.

Scar face and the English Man fall back into the bushes.

ENGLISH MAN (CONT'D)
(struggling)
Get off of me you bloody scoundrel!

EXT. CENTER OF OASIS - DAY

The Oasis Men put down the final few of the fighting Tribesmen.

The last man standing is the Commander. Just as he is about to receive a fatal blow, the Tent Guard stops his OPPONENT and spares his life.

A great ROAR ERUPTS from the triumphant Oasis Men. All around them lay dead enemy Tribesmen.

INT. MASSIVE WHITE TENT - DAY

Servants repair the tent.

The Commander is dragged in by the Tent Guard and made to kneel before the Chieftains.

MAIN TRIBAL CHIEF
Why have you violated the
tradition?

COMMANDER
My men were starving and thirsty,
exhausted from many days of battle.
(MORE)

COMMANDER (CONT'D)

We decided to take the oasis so
that we would be able to return to
war.

MAIN TRIBAL CHIEF

Tradition is sacred! I condemn you
to death without honor.

He's dragged from the tent grunting and pleading.

MAIN TRIBAL CHIEF (CONT'D)

Bring me the stranger.

EXT. THE FOREST - NEAR THE EDGE OF THE OASIS - DUSK

The Commander hangs by a noose around his neck from the
branch of an OMINOUSLY CROOKED TREE. His lifeless body twirls
slowly in the wind.

INT. MASSIVE WHITE TENT - NIGHT.

The Main Tribal Chief stands behind a TABLE COVERED WITH
PURPLE VELVET.

Santiago stands before him.

MAIN TRIBAL CHIEF

Five hundred enemy tribesmen
perished today. Fifty pieces of
gold is your reward. You are
invited to become the counselor of
the oasis. What is your name?

SANTIAGO

Santiago.

The Main Tribal Chief pours a BAG OF GOLD COINS onto the
table. They spread out glittering over the purple velvet.

EXT. - OASIS FORREST - NIGHT

Santiago strolls through the woods.

He comes upon a SINGLE TENT. He stops and peers at it
curiously.

A GROUP OF ARABS passing near him shout a warning.

GROUP (O.C.)

Don't go near there! It's inhabited
by genies!

Santiago sits in front of the tent and waits.

TIME-LAPSE:

The moon is high and bright.

The Alchemist, (The 400-year old Horseman from before), has the appearance of a man in his 40's.

He rides on a path beneath the moon in an open field that leads to his tent.

He slows his horse to a trot before he stops. TWO DEAD HAWKS are slung over his shoulder.

Santiago stands.

ALCHEMIST

Is it your destiny that brings you here?

SANTIAGO

With the wars between the tribes, it's impossible to cross the desert. So I've come here.

The Alchemist dismounts his horse and signals Santiago to enter the tent with him.

INT. ALCHEMIST TENT - NIGHT

It's like any other tent at the oasis. No strange ovens or alchemy apparatus.

Just a PILE OF BOOKS, A SMALL COOKING STOVE, and A COUPLE OF CARPETS COVERED WITH MYSTERIOUS DESIGNS.

ALCHEMIST

Sit. We'll have something to drink and eat these hawks.

The Alchemist lights a fire and begins preparing them.

SANTIAGO

Why did you want to see me?

ALCHEMIST

The wind told me you were coming and that you would need help.

SANTIAGO

I'm not the one the wind spoke of.
It's the other foreigner, the
English Man. It's he that seeks
you.

ALCHEMIST

He has other things to do first.
But he's on the right path. He's
begun to try to understand the
desert.

SANTIAGO

And I?

ALCHEMIST

When a person truly desires
something, the entire universe
conspires to help them realize
their dream.

SANTIAGO

You will instruct me?

ALCHEMIST

You already know all you need to
know. I'm only going to point you
in the direction of your treasure.

SANTIAGO

But there are tribal wars.

ALCHEMIST

I know what's happening in the
desert.

SANTIAGO

I've already found my treasure. I
have a camel. I have my money from
the crystal shop. I have fifty gold
pieces. In my own country, I'm a
rich man.

ALCHEMIST

But none of that is from the
Pyramids. That is your destiny.

SANTIAGO

I also have Fatima. She's a
treasure greater than anything else
I've won.

ALCHEMIST
Neither was she, found at the
Pyramids.

LATER:

The Alchemist places food before him.
The two of them eat in silence.
Santiago seems intimidated in the presence of the Alchemist.
The Alchemist pours some WINE into the Santiago's CUP.

SANTIAGO
I thought wine was prohibited.

ALCHEMIST
It's not what enters a man's mouth
that's evil. It's what comes out.
Drink and enjoy yourself.

Santiago takes a sip and relaxes a bit.

EXT. ALCHEMIST TENT - NIGHT

Santiago and the Alchemist sit and sip wine, looking out into
the moon-lit sky.

ALCHEMIST (V.O.)
Rest well tonight, as if you were a
warrior preparing for combat.

EXT. ANIMAL STABLE - OASIS - DAY

CAMELS, HORSES, and A VARIETY OF OTHER ANIMALS are present.

Santiago leads his camel to the STABLE KEEPER.

ALCHEMIST (V.O.)
Tomorrow, sell your camel and buy a
horse. Camels are traitorous. They
walk thousands of paces and never
seem to tire. Then suddenly they
kneel and die.

The Stable Keeper shows Santiago a selection of stallions.
Santiago approaches one.

ALCHEMIST (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But horses tire bit by bit. You
always know how much you can ask of
them.

EXT. FOREST - OASIS - DUSK

Santiago races his NEW HORSE as the trees whiz past his face.

EXT. ALCHEMIST TENT - NIGHT

Santiago arrives on his new stallion just as the Alchemist
mounts his own. The Alchemist places a Falcon, (the one from
before), on his left shoulder.

ALCHEMIST
Show me where there's life in the
desert. Only those who can see such
signs are able to find treasure.

They gallop off into the night.

EXT. EDGE OF THE OASIS - NIGHT

Santiago and the Alchemist emerge slowly from the forest atop
their steeds. They stop at the edge of the desert.

For a moment, Santiago looks puzzled, but then proceeds
forward.

They ride out over the sands. The moon lights their way.

They come to the rocky place where Santiago saw the hawks.

SANTIAGO
I know there's life out here, but I
don't know where to look.

ALCHEMIST
Life attracts life.

Santiago looks down at his horse and suddenly realizes. He
loosens the reins and lets the horse gallop forward over the
rocks and sand.

The palm trees grow smaller and smaller until they disappear.

The Alchemist follows.

STONES on the desert floor reflect silver moonlight.

The horses slow to a stop.

SANTIAGO
There's life here.

They dismount.

The Alchemist advances quietly among the stones, searching.

He stops abruptly and shoves his arm into a hole in the earth.

He appears to be battling with something.

With a snap motion, he withdraws his arm and leaps to his feet.

He holds the tail of a COBRA, HISSING and fighting frantically, shattering the silence of the desert.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)
Watch out for his venom!

The Alchemist withdraws the scimitar sword strapped to his horse and draws a CIRCLE IN THE SAND with the blade.

He places the snake inside of it. The serpent relaxes immediately.

ALCHEMIST
He won't leave the circle. You found life in the desert. That was the omen I needed.

SANTIAGO
Why was that so important?

ALCHEMIST
The Pyramids are surrounded by the desert. I'm going to be your guide.

SANTIAGO
I want to stay at the oasis with Fatima.

ALCHEMIST
Fatima is a woman of the desert. She knows that men must go away in order to return.

SANTIAGO
But what if I never come back? Or I do, and her love for me has died in my absence.

ALCHEMIST
Love never keeps a man from
pursuing his dreams.

The Alchemist erases the circle in the sand. The snake
slithers away.

ALCHEMIST (CONT'D)
Do you want to spend the rest of
your days knowing that you didn't
follow your destiny through to its
conclusion?

SANTIAGO
No.

They mount their horses.

ALCHEMIST
We leave tomorrow. Before sunrise.

They take off over the sands. This time the Alchemist leads.

INT. SANTIAGO'S COLORED TENT - EARLY MORNING

Santiago lies on the floor, staring up at the ceiling.

Several other YOUNG ARAB MALES lay sleeping around him.

Santiago rises and awakens a SLEEPING YOUNG ARAB BOY, (12
years old).

SANTIAGO
(whispering)
Show me where Fatima lives.

EXT. FOREST - OASIS - MORNING TWILIGHT

The Young Arab Boy leads Santiago through the forest to the
SINGING SOUNDS of early birds frolicking.

EXT. FATIMA'S COLORED TENT - EARLY MORNING

Santiago and the Young Arab Boy approach the tent and stop at
the entrance.

SANTIAGO
Go in and wake her. Tell her that I
wait outside.

The boy does as instructed.

After a moment, he returns.

YOUNG ARAB BOY

She comes.

Santiago places A PIECE OF GOLD in his hand.

SANTIAGO

Leave us.

The Young Arab boy bows and backs away.

YOUNG ARAB BOY

Thank you, counselor.

Fatima emerges from her colored tent. Even in this sleepy state, her beauty is breathtaking.

They do not greet each other with words. Only with their eyes.

A slight head gesture is Santiago's indication that she should follow him.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

The two walk side by side in silence before Santiago finally speaks.

SANTIAGO

I'm going away. I want you to know that I will come back. I love you because...

FATIMA

Say nothing. One is loved because one is loved. No reason is needed for loving.

SANTIAGO

I had a dream. I met a king. I sold crystal and crossed the desert. Because the tribes declared war, I came to the oasis. I went to the well seeking the alchemist. I love you because the entire universe conspired to help me find you.

Fatima turns away from him.

FATIMA

Before this, I always looked to the desert with longing.

(MORE)

FATIMA (CONT'D)
Now it will be with hope. My father
went away one day, but he returned
to my mother, and he has always
come back since then.

She starts to cry.

SANTIAGO
I will return to you, just as your
father returned to your mother.

Santiago pauses to listen to her sobs.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)
You cry.

Fatima turns back to him. Tears stream down her face.

FATIMA
I am a woman of the desert. But
above all, I am a woman.

EXT. FATIMA'S COLORED TENT - MORNING

Santiago watches as Fatima approaches her tent.

She stops before entering and turns back to face him.

They stare at each other with sadness and longing. It could
be their last look.

They do not say goodbye with words. Only with their eyes.

EXT. THE DESERT - DAY

Two Horsemen dot the horizon that stretches into a perceived
eternity.

ALCHEMIST (V.O.)
Do not think about what you've left
behind. Everything is written in
the Soul of the World, and there it
will stay forever.

EXT. THE OASIS/WELL - DAY

Fatima saunters slowly through palm trees carrying her water
container.

ALCHEMIST (V.O.)
(over above action)
If what one finds is made of pure
matter, it will never spoil.

She arrives at the well and fills her vessel.

ALCHEMIST (V.O.) (CONT'D)
If what you had found was only a
moment of light, like the explosion
of a star, you would find nothing
on your return.

She stands and looks beyond the trees, out into the desert
that has taken the man she loves.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Santiago and the Alchemist ride slowly in tandem over
perpetual sands.

Santiago peers curiously at the figure in front of him with
the bird on his shoulder.

Without prompting, the Falcon takes to the sky.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

TWO BIRDS roast on a fire dug into the earth.

Santiago prepares his SLEEPING GEAR while The Alchemist feeds
his Falcon.

Santiago shivers in the cold night air and wraps himself in a
BLANKET.

EXT. THE DESERT - DAY

Their journey continues.

Far ahead of them, in the distance they can barely make out
the ACTIVITY OF TRIBESMEN.

The Alchemist makes a gesture to go right in an effort to
circumvent them.

The FAINT SOUND OF WEAPONS CLASHING AND ANGRY MEN FIGHTING is
heard beneath the WHISTLE OF THE WIND.

EXT. DESERT - EVENING

The Alchemist prepares a fire.

Santiago sits nearby and drinks from a water container.

The Alchemist stands and looks out to the horizon.

SANTIAGO

Why are you called the alchemist?

ALCHEMIST

That's what I am.

SANTIAGO

What went wrong when other
alchemists tried to make gold and
were unable to do so?

ALCHEMIST

They were looking only for gold.
They were seeking treasure without
wanting to live the destiny that
leads to it.

Suddenly, the Falcon comes swooping from the sky and lands on the Alchemist's wrist. He clutches A SNAKE in his beak.

The Alchemist takes the snake and strokes the hunter for a job well done.

Then he removes A DAGGER from his robe and begins skinning the snake.

ALCHEMIST (CONT'D)

I learned the science of alchemy
from my grandfather, who learned it
from his father, and so on back to
the creation of the world. In those
times, the Master work could be
written simply on an emerald
tablet.

SANTIAGO

What is written on the Emerald
Tablet?

The Alchemist draws in the sand with his dagger.

Santiago regards his mentor with a nostalgic gaze.

The DRAWING is obscure and cryptic.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Is it a code?

ALCHEMIST

It's like the flight of those two hawks. It cannot be understood by reason alone. The Emerald Tablet is a direct passage to the Soul of the World. This natural world is only an image and a copy of paradise.

SANTIAGO

Should I understand the Emerald Tablet?

ALCHEMIST

Perhaps, if you were in a laboratory of alchemy you could try. But you're in the desert. Immerse yourself. All you have to do is contemplate a simple grain of sand and you'll see in it all the marvels of creation.

Santiago scoops a fist full of sand and lets it slide down between his fingers.

SANTIAGO

How do I do that?

ALCHEMIST

Listen to your heart.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The pilgrims progress.

TIME LAPSE:

Two suns set as they cross in silence.

The desert air is still.

SANTIAGO

My heart is agitated. It becomes passionate over a woman. It keeps me from sleeping at night.

ALCHEMIST

(laughing)

That's good. Your heart is alive.

SANTIAGO

But my heart is a traitor. It does not want me to go on.

ALCHEMIST

Naturally it's afraid that in pursuing your dream, you might lose everything.

SANTIAGO

So then why should I listen to it?

ALCHEMIST

Because you will never again be able to keep it quiet.

DISSOLVE TO:

Distant silhouettes of the two horsemen slowly move past the massive orange disc of the desert sun.

SANTIAGO(V.O.)

My heart is afraid it will suffer.

ALCHEMIST (V.O.)

No heart ever suffers when it goes in search of its dreams. Every second of the search is an encounter with God. An encounter with eternity.

EXT. DESERT - CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Santiago and the Alchemist sit and eat by a fire.

The Falcon watches them.

SANTIAGO

What should I do now?

ALCHEMIST

Continue to follow the omens.

SANTIAGO

Is that all that I need to know?

ALCHEMIST

There's still one last thing.

The Alchemist takes another bite of his meat and savors it.

The Falcon looks as though he already knows.

SANTIAGO

Are you going to tell me or shall I
suffocate on suspense?

ALCHEMIST

(smiling)

What you still need to know is
this: before a dream is realized,
the Soul of the World tests
everything that was learned. It
does this not because it's evil,
but so that we can, in addition to
realizing our dreams, master the
lessons. That's when most people
give up. It is the point at which,
as we say in the language of the
desert, "one dies of thirst just
when the palm trees have appeared
on the horizon".

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Three ARMED TRIBESMEN, (20's/30's), approach Santiago and the
Alchemist.

The Armed Tribesman in the middle is the most AUTHORITATIVE.

AUTHORITATIVE TRIBESMAN

Why are you here?

ALCHEMIST

I'm hunting with my falcon.

AUTHORITATIVE TRIBESMAN

Get down. We will search you to see
if you are armed.

The Alchemist and Santiago obey.

The other two Armed Tribesmen rummage through their
belongings.

The TALLEST of the Armed Tribesmen finds Santiago's earnings
from the crystal shop.

TALL ARMED TRIBESMAN

Captain.

AUTHORITATIVE TRIBESMAN

Why are you carrying money?

SANTIAGO

I need it to get to the Pyramids.

The SMALLEST of the Armed men finds a SMALL CRYSTAL FLASK FILLED WITH A LIQUID, and a YELLOW GLASS EGG that is slightly larger than a chicken's egg among the Alchemist's possessions.

SMALL ARMED TRIBESMAN
What are these things?

ALCHEMIST
That's the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life. It's the Master Work of the alchemists. Whoever swallows that elixir will never be sick again, and a fragment from that stone turns any metal into gold.

They all look to the Authoritative Tribesman for a judgment call.

After a moment, he laughs. The other men join in.

The Alchemist laughs, too.

A curious group of men laughing at each other in the desert.

Their belongings are returned.

AUTHORITATIVE TRIBESMAN
Proceed on your journey. May Allah see you safely to your destination.

The three Tribesmen leave the travelers as they climb back onto their horses.

SANTIAGO
Why did you do that?

ALCHEMIST
To show you one of life's simple lessons. When you possess great treasures within you, and you try to tell others about them, seldom are you believed.

EXT. DESERT MOUNTAIN RANGE - HIGH NOON

The two Horsemen crawl over the mountain range until the land once again flattens.

EXT. DESERT - NEAR AN ENCAMPMENT - AFTERNOON

The Alchemist and Santiago pass an ENCAMPMENT of TRIBE SOLDIERS.

At each corner of the camp are Arabs garbed in BEAUTIFUL WHITE ROBES with arms at the ready.

The men smoke HOOKAHS, spar with SCIMITAR SWORDS, and trade stories from the battlefield.

A GROUP OF FOUR Tribe Soldiers are having an animated conversation. Even though they're too far away to distinguish their faces, ONE OF THEM appears less animated than the others.

P.O.V. From within the encampment: Someone tracks the movements of the strangers roaming past.

The Alchemist and Santiago pass the encampment without incident.

SANTIAGO

I know those tribesmen were soldiers. I know that they are dangerous. But in my heart, I felt no danger.

The Alchemist snaps at him.

ALCHEMIST

Listen to me! Trust in your heart, but never forget that you're in the desert.

Suddenly, TWO TRIBE SOLDIERS ride up behind them.

TRIBE SOLDIER

You cannot go any further. The tribes are at war.

The Alchemist looks straight into the eyes of the Soldiers.

His words flow hypnotically.

ALCHEMIST

I am not going very far.

The Soldiers are silent for a moment, but then give their consent.

TRIBE SOLDIER

Alright then. Move along.

The Tribe Soldiers turn and leave.

Santiago is fascinated.

SANTIAGO

You dominated those horsemen with
the way you looked at them.

ALCHEMIST

Your eyes show the strength of your
soul.

Santiago thinks a moment.

SANTIAGO

There was a man back at the
encampment. I couldn't see his
face, but I was sure that he was
watching us.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The travelers arrive at a rocky place in the land with small
STREAMS OF MURKY WATER.

ALCHEMIST

The horses need rest.

They dismount and lead the horses to the water.

The Alchemist removes a BRUSH from his belongings and grooms
his steed.

ALCHEMIST (CONT'D)

We're only two days from the
Pyramids.

Santiago washes his hands and feet in the stream.

SANTIAGO

If we're going our separate ways
soon, then teach me about alchemy.

ALCHEMIST

You already know about alchemy.
It's about penetrating the Soul of
the World and discovering the
treasure that's been reserved for
you.

SANTIAGO

No, no, that's not what I meant.
Teach me the part about turning
lead into gold.

The Alchemist chuckles.

ALCHEMIST

I admire your enthusiasm, son.

EXT. DESERT - VALLEY OF DUNES - SUNSET

Santiago and the Alchemist tread softly through a valley
surrounded by GIGANTIC DUNES.

An eerie calm blankets the desert. The wind is completely
still.

For no apparent reason, Santiago suddenly becomes besieged by
panic. He scans the dunes.

Nothing there.

He looks at the Alchemist. Lost in thought.

Santiago sighs. Somewhat relieved.

A few paces later, high on the dunes, TWO horsemen, SENTINEL
SOLDIERS DRESSED IN BLUE WITH BLACK RINGS SURROUNDING THEIR
TURBANS, ride into view and wait.

Before Santiago can say anything, the two horsemen become
TEN, and then A HUNDRED.

Suddenly they're EVERYWHERE, surrounding the Alchemist and
Santiago, who have stopped dead in the valley.

Even from a distance, their eyes convey the strength of their
souls.

Their eyes bespeak death.

EXT. A NEARBY MILITARY CAMP - EVENING

There is no playful banter here. The Sentinel Soldiers are
dutiful, attending to military chores, preparing for the next
battle.

INT. MILITARY CAMP - HEADQUARTERS TENT - EVENING

The GENERAL, (Mid 40's), meets with his MILITARY STAFF.

Santiago and the Alchemist are shoved into the tent by a
FORCEFUL SENTINEL SOLDIER, (Late 20's).

FORCEFUL SENTINEL
These are the spies.

ALCHEMIST
We are just travelers.

A MILITARY STAFF MEMBER, (Mid 30's), moves toward them.

MILITARY MEMBER
You were seen at the enemy camp
three days ago. You spoke with one
of the troops.

ALCHEMIST
I am just a man that wanders the
desert and knows the stars. I have
no information about troops or the
movement of tribes. I am simply
acting as a guide for my friend.

The General is arrogant and foreboding.

GENERAL
Who is your friend?

ALCHEMIST
An alchemist. He understands the
forces of nature. He wishes to show
you his extraordinary powers.

Santiago listens quietly and fearfully.

The SENTINEL COMMANDER, (50's), is second in command.

SENTINEL COMMANDER
What is a foreigner doing here?

ALCHEMIST
He's brought money to give to your
tribe.

Before he can protest, the Alchemist reaches into Santiago's
garment and seizes his BAG OF GOLD.

He hands it to the General, who immediately passes it to one
of his Staff without so much as a glance.

GENERAL
What is an alchemist?

ALCHEMIST

It's a man who understands nature
and the world. If he wanted to, he
could destroy this entire camp just
with the force of the wind.

The Soldiers laugh. For some it's a nervous laugh and they
back away from Santiago.

GENERAL

I want to see him do it.

ALCHEMIST

He needs three days. He's going to
transform himself into the wind
just to demonstrate his powers. If
he cannot, we humbly offer our
lives for the honor of your tribe.

GENERAL

You cannot offer me what is already
mine. You have three days.

EXT. MILITARY CAMP - HEADQUARTERS TENT - EVENING

Santiago is absolutely beside himself with fear. He can't
control his body from shaking as the Alchemist helps him out
of the tent.

ALCHEMIST

Don't let them see that you're
afraid. They are brave men. They
despise cowards.

They stumble through the camp and stop near A TENT.

SANTIAGO

You gave them everything I had.

ALCHEMIST

What good would it be to you if you
had to die? Your money saved us for
three days. It's not often that
money saves a person's life.

The Alchemist sits him down and props him up against the
tent. Santiago shudders.

ALCHEMIST (CONT'D)

Wait here.

He goes inside the tent.

Some distance away, TWO CURIOUS SENTINELS, (20's), observe Santiago. One of them points and comments to his comrade.

The Alchemist emerges from the tent with a CUP OF TEA.

He pours some over Santiago's wrists and mutters some ancient, obscure words.

A wave of relief washes over Santiago.

The Alchemist speaks to him in a strangely gentle voice.

ALCHEMIST (CONT'D)

Don't give in to your fears. If you do, you will be unable to talk to your heart.

SANTIAGO

I have no idea how to turn into the wind.

ALCHEMIST

If a person is living out his destiny, he knows everything he needs to know.

EXT. MILITARY CAMP - EVENING

(DAY ONE)

Santiago wanders aimlessly. He broods.

He roams near to the edge of the camp.

DEAD SENTINELS lay on the ground, organized in several rows.

Other WOUNDED SENTINELS are cared for.

A distant sun settles into a vast horizon.

A PHILOSOPHICAL SENTINEL, (Mid 30's), laments over his FALLEN COMRADE.

PHILO-SENTINEL

You could have died later. You could have died after peace time. But in any case, you were going to die.

EXT. DESERT NEAR MILITARY CAMP - DAY

(DAY TWO)

Santiago wanders out into the desert where he finds the Alchemist communing with his bird.

SANTIAGO
What are you doing?

ALCHEMIST
Feeding my falcon.

SANTIAGO
If I am not able to turn myself
into the wind, we're going to die.
Why feed your falcon?

ALCHEMIST
You're the one who may die. I know
how to turn myself into the wind.

EXT. A CLIFF NEAR THE MILITARY CAMP - DAY

Santiago arrives at the top of a cliff and looks out over the horizon that stretches far and wide before him.

There are mountains in the distance. DUNES, ROCKS, and PLANTS litter the landscape.

Santiago sits near the edge of the cliff and ponders.

The sun is glorious in its descent.

EXT. MILITARY CAMP - HEADQUARTERS TENT - DAY

(DAY THREE)

A SCORPION creeps past the tent just as a ROARING BURST OF LAUGHTER erupts from inside.

INT. MILITARY CAMP - HEADQUARTERS TENT - DAY

The Alchemist lunches with the General and his Staff. He's been telling them tales and he's really got them going.

ALCHEMIST
And then the old woman waved the
dead fowl at them and they all ran
into the river.

The Men burst into fits of hysterics.

The only Soldier not laughing is the General. He stares fixedly at Santiago, who sits in a corner by himself utterly distraught.

A LAUGHING SENTINEL, (Late 30's), can't get enough.

LAUGHING SENTINEL
Tell us another.

ALCHEMIST
Alright. There was a toothless monk in monastery. He had ten fingers. Four on one hand and six on the other. One day...

BANG!

The General slams his fist down on the table. They all snap to attention.

GENERAL
Enough of your tales. Let's go see the boy turn himself into the wind.

The Alchemist stands enthusiastically, still chewing his food and wiping his mouth.

ALCHEMIST
Let's.

They all look at Santiago.

EXT. THE CLIFF BY THE CAMP - ABOVE AND BELOW - DAY

(INTERCUT ABOVE AND BELOW)

Santiago leads the General, his Staff, several troops, and the Alchemist near to the base of the cliff.

SANTIAGO
Please be seated here. This will take some time.

GENERAL
We are in no hurry. We are men of the desert.

(ABOVE)

Santiago climbs the cliff and sits near the edge again.

Looking out over the horizon, his anxiety recedes. There is a serenity in the solitude above.

A DESERT VOICE speaks to Santiago.

DESERT (O.C.)
What do you want today?

Santiago leaps to his feet. Startled and surprised!

SANTIAGO
Who said that?

He backs away from the edge, searching all about his surroundings. He trips on a rock and falls to the ground.

(BELOW)

To the spectators below out of earshot, it looks as though Santiago is having a fit after having seen a ghost.

They all laugh at him, including the Alchemist.

(ABOVE)

Santiago turns over onto his stomach.

A BALL OF SAND about half the size of his head rolls up to his nose.

The ball of sand immediately MORPHS into a SAND FACE that looks like an ANCIENT EGYPTIAN JESTER, (30's).

He speaks in a whining comedic tenor.

DESERT
Did you not spend enough time
looking at me yesterday?

The face becomes a ball again and speeds away.

Santiago can barely believe what he saw. He stands, searching the ground for the sand ball.

SANTIAGO
Somewhere on your sands you hold
the woman I love. In order for me
to return to her, I must turn
myself into the wind.

The voice is behind him now.

DESERT (O.C.)
What is love?

Santiago turns around.

The Sand Ball has now assumed the FULL IMAGE of a SITTING
CROSSED-LEGGED SAND JESTER suspended in mid air.

Santiago gets only a glimpse before it quickly dissolves into
a SAND CLOUD and whizzes around his head.

Santiago spins around trying to keep up.

SANTIAGO
Love is the falcon's flight over
your sands.

The Sand Cloud becomes a SAND FALCON in flight.

SANTIAGO (O.C.) (CONT'D)
For him, you are a field from which
he always returns with game.

The Sand Falcon dissolves into a SINGLE STREAM OF SAND that
falls to the earth and immediately takes on the shape of a
SLITHERING SAND SNAKE.

DESERT (V.O.)
For years, I care for his game,
sustaining it with what little
water I have.

The Sand Snake swims through a SAND RIVER.

The floating Sand Jester reappears.

DESERT
One day, as I enjoy the fact that
his game thrives on my surface...

The Jester morphs into the falcon diving through the air.

DESERT (V.O.)
The falcon dives out of the sky,
and takes away what I've created.

The Sand Falcon crash lands into the Sand Snake. They both
disappear into a SAND SPLASH.

(BELOW)

The laughter has given way to gaped-mouthed astonishment. To them it looks as though Santiago is magically stirring up the sand.

(ABOVE)

The Jester is back and really fluttering about. Santiago has to twist and turn in order to address him directly.

SANTIAGO

But that's why you created the game, to nourish the falcon. The falcon then nourishes man. And eventually man will nourish your sands where the game will once again flourish.

DESERT

I think I've got it. Love makes the game become the falcon...

The Sand Jester orchestrates his magic with the waving of his hands, causing the Sand Snake to reappear.

The snake springs from the ground and becomes the falcon.

DESERT (CONT'D)

...the falcon becomes the man...

The Sand Falcon MORPHS into the MIRROR IMAGE OF SANTIAGO MADE OF SAND.

DESERT (CONT'D)

...and man, in his turn, the desert.

The Sand Santiago dissipates and splats onto the ground.

SANTIAGO

It's what turns lead into gold, and makes the gold return to the earth.

DESERT

You lost me again.

SANTIAGO

But you can at least understand that somewhere in your sands there's a woman waiting for me.

From the ground, the sands mystically rise and slowly TRANSFORM into the HOLOGRAPHIC SAND IMAGE OF FATIMA.

This image is more detailed than the previous ones.

Her eyes are near life-like. Her garment is the color of lavender. It flutters in the wind.

She bends at the well fetching water. She stands and looks out into the desert.

Her gaze is such that it appears as though she and Santiago stand face to face, looking at each other.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

That is why I must turn myself into
the wind.

The image of Fatima dissolves into a SHIMMERING CRYSTALLIZED SAND CLOUD that slowly disseminates into thin air.

Santiago just stands there, staring at the spot where Fatima stood only seconds before.

DESERT

I'll grant you my sands to help the
wind blow, but that's as far as my
grant will go.

A BREEZE begins to blow, causing Santiago's clothes to ruffle.

(BELOW)

The Sentinels notice the newly arriving current.

The Alchemist observes with a proud and knowing grin.

(ABOVE)

Santiago closes his eyes and inhales broadly.

Suddenly, a TRANSPARENT MAN, (60's), atop a FLOATING TRANSPARENT WINGED UNICORN rapidly descends from the sky.

He resembles the IMAGE OF LEONARDO DA VINCI with frosted flowing hair and the presence of prowess. His weathered whiskers wave wildly in a wind current.

He is the personification of the WIND.

He hovers above Santiago atop the floating unicorn whose wings flap like massive transparent curtains that extend into eternity.

His voice BOOMS with baritone intolerance.

WIND

Who dares to beckon the entity with
no birthplace and no place to die?

SANTIAGO

It is I. It is I who endeavors to
be what you are.

WIND

Who taught you to speak the
language of the desert and the
wind?

SANTIAGO

My heart. It speaks the Language of
the World.

The Wind rears his Unicorn. The flapping of its wings knocks
Santiago off balance.

WIND

I am the wind. You cannot be what I
am!

SANTIAGO

I have inside of me the winds, the
deserts, the oceans, and everything
created in the universe.

WIND

I know what you are. I was the
first breath you took and I shall
be your last. But that does not
make you me.

SANTIAGO

Then teach me to be you, just for a
few moments so that I may reach the
corners of the earth, blow away the
sands that cover my treasure, and
carry the voice of the woman I
love.

The sand around Santiago churns up into a storm as the Wind
rages and rears his Unicorn.

With the flick of his wrist, the Wind bears a swirling BALL
OF WIND in his hand.

He hurls it at the earth.

(BELOW)

Down on the military camp, A TENT TOPPLES, revealing a
STARTLED SENTINEL.

(ABOVE)

The Wind vents!

WIND

I have created deserts, sank ships,
and felled entire forests. I have
blown through cities filled with
music and strange noises. Until
today I had no limits. But now you
stand there...

He points an accusing finger down at Santiago.

WIND (CONT'D)

...a boy, telling me, the mighty
Wind, that there are still things I
should be able to do!

SANTIAGO

When you are loved, you can do
anything in creation. When you are
loved, even men can turn themselves
into the wind. As long as the wind
is willing to help.

WIND

In my travels around the world, I
have often seen people speaking of
love while looking towards heaven.
Perhaps it is there that you should
direct your inquiry.

SANTIAGO

Then help me do that. You have
filled this place with a sand storm
so strong that it blots out the
sun. Create for me a vortex that
leads to heaven, that I may speak
to her directly.

The Wind consents and begins to blow. His cheeks swell with
the effort.

The sand storm swirls around and away from Santiago so that
at the eye of the storm there is calm.

(BELOW)

HORSES CRY OUT in the Military Camp, trying to free themselves and flee the storm.

Sentinels run for shelter as their WEAPONS are filled with sand.

It's increasingly difficult for the Men below the cliff to see Santiago.

SENTINEL COMMANDER
General, we had better end this!

The Forceful Sentinel is scared to death.

FORCEFUL SENTINEL
Please! Stop the boy! He's evil!

GENERAL
Cowards! When this is over I shall remove you from your posts.

He turns his eyes back to the cliff and speaks with reverence.

GENERAL (CONT'D)
I want to witness the greatness of Allah. I want to see a man turn himself into the wind.

(Above)

The wind storm whirls around Santiago but touches him not.

He stands center of a windless vortex that leads to heaven.

At the top of the wind funnel, sweetly smiling down upon Santiago, is the SUN.

SHE HAS THE FACE OF A VIRGIN QUEEN with waving rays of gold and saffron light rays for hair.

Her eyes sparkle with light and serenity.

SANTIAGO
The wind told me that you know about love. If that is so, then you must also know about the Soul of the World. It's made of love.

Her voice is benign and comforting.

SUN

From where I am, I can see the Soul
of the World. It communicates with
my soul, and together we cause the
plants to grow. I give it life and
warmth. It gives me my reason for
being.

A TRANSLUCENT IMAGE OF EARTH AS SEEN FROM OUTER SPACE APPEARS
SUPER-IMPOSED ONTO THE SUN'S FACE AS SHE SPEAKS.

PLANTS AND VEGETATION magically sprout from the earth and
rapidly covers its surface with a brilliant array of COLORFUL
BLOOMS.

SUN (CONT'D)

From where I am - and I am a long
way from earth - I learned how to
love. I know that if I came a
little bit closer, everything there
would perish. The Soul of the World
would no longer exist.

The Image of the Earth seems to grow inside her face as she
speaks of moving closer.

And then it BURNS AND SHRIVELS, scattering ashes, and leaving
only the Sun's face for Santiago to see again.

SANTIAGO

You are wise because you observe
everything from a distance. But you
do not know about love.

SUN

Why do you say such a thing?

SANTIAGO

Because love is not meant to be
static.

Just then, the Desert Sand Jester goes screaming by, wildly
somersaulting like a tumbleweed in a whirlwind.

DESERT

Woh, woh, weeh!

The Wind blows the Sand Jester out of the way.

SANTIAGO

Nor is love meant to roam the world
like the wind.

The Wind glares at Santiago disapprovingly.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

And it is not love to see all
things from a distance, like you
do.

SUN

So what then, is love?

SANTIAGO

Love is the force that transforms
and improves the Soul of the World.
When we love, we strive to become
better than we are.

SUN

What do you want of me?

SANTIAGO

Help me turn myself into the wind.

SUN

Nature knows me as the wisest being
in creation, but this I know not
of.

The Wind is delighted.

WIND

Ha ha! The sun is limited!

He roars with laughter, causing the storm to worsen.

(BELOW)

The Camp is pummeled. Tents are blown from their ties.
Animals break free from their tethers.

The Soldiers near the cliff cling to each other, trying to
keep from blowing away.

(ABOVE)

SANTIAGO

You cannot help me become the wind?

SUN

It is beyond my ability.

SANTIAGO

Then whom shall I ask?

SUN
Speak to the Hand that wrote all.

Suddenly the tunnel closes in on Santiago and he is swallowed by the storm.

In an instant, the Sun, the Sand, the Wind, and Santiago disappear in an EXPLOSION OF WHITE LIGHT.

INT. THE PLANE OF PURE WHITE LIGHT - TIMELESS

There is no ground, no sky, and no horizon.

Only PURE WHITE LIGHT.

Santiago lays in it. He pulls himself up to a standing position and walks through the whiteness.

He seems somewhat confused by what just happened. He looks about his surroundings.

He suddenly becomes aware of a presence.

A faint sound behind him.

To his side.

He searches.

Without warning, he backs into A STAND ALONE WHITE DOOR that wasn't there before.

He turns the doorknob slowly, pushes the door open, and enters a room.

INT. THE ATTIC BEDROOM. DAY

It is the ordinary attic bedroom of a child.

A CHILD, the one from his dream in the beginning, sits at A TABLE coloring a picture.

CHILD
Don't bother closing the door.

Santiago looks behind him. The door is gone.

SANTIAGO
Who are you?

The Child swings her legs playfully in her chair.

CHILD
I am the Hand.

SANTIAGO
But you're a child.

CHILD
What were you expecting? A gigantic hand to appear from the sky and zap you into the wind?

SANTIAGO
Well, yes.

CHILD
It's just terminology. To some I am God, or Allah, or Prana, or Elohim.

SANTIAGO
Am I in heaven?

CHILD
No, silly, this is my bedroom.
(pause) My appearance confuses you.
Maybe this one is better.

The Child MORPHS into a CATHOLIC PRIEST.

PRIEST
Or this one.

The Priest MORPHS into a MUSLIM HOLY MAN, then A RABBI, and finally Melchizedek.

SANTIAGO
Melchizedek!

MELCHIZEDEK
Which do you prefer?

SANTIAGO
I guess it doesn't matter.

Melchizedek turns back into the Child.

CHILD
I choose the appearance of a child because a child represents the purity of love. That's why you are here.

SANTIAGO
Yes, my pure love for Fatima.

CHILD

You wish to be the wind.

SANTIAGO

Only so that I can continue to love
her as long as I can.

CHILD

Love is everlasting. There is no
beginning and no end.

SANTIAGO

Yes, but where I come from our
experiences are finite.

CHILD

I know. Others have been here
before you in search of a miracle
fueled by love. If you have come
this far, it is because your love
is of the purest form.

SANTIAGO

So will you turn me into the wind?

CHILD

Sure I will. But you have to do
something for me first.

SANTIAGO

What is it?

She points her COLORING PENCIL to a PODIUM with a LARGE OPEN
BOOK on it.

CHILD

Sign my guest book.

Santiago goes to the book and looks down at the pages.

The SIGNATURES include: MOSES, ELIJAH MOHAMMED, GANDHI,
MOTHER TERESA, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, GUSTAV KLIMT, NIKOLA
TESLA, among others.

Santiago dips a FEATHER into a CONTAINER OF INK and signs:
Santiago.

CHILD (CONT'D)

Thank you. Are you ready?

SANTIAGO

Yes.

CHILD
Alright then close your eyes, and
no peeking.

He closes his eyes.

The Child begins to giggle.

WE HEAR a FAINT SWIRLING SOUND first.

Santiago looks down at his feet.

A SWIRLING GUST OF WIND has begun to envelop them.

CHILD (CONT'D)
(sing-song)
I said no peeking.

SANTIAGO
Sorry. Thank you.

He closes his eyes again.

The Gust of wind works its way up his body and ENGULFS HIM.

When he is fully immersed, the walls and the ceiling of the room break away, leaving them in...

INT. THE PLANE OF PURE WHITE LIGHT - CONTINUOUS

THE SWIRLING GUST, no longer Santiago, ASCENDS INTO WHITENESS.

Below the Gust, the Child stands now, smiling up at it like an escaping kite.

The wind flaps her hair and dress about.

She blows a kiss upward and sends the Wind on its way.

MONTAGE (P.O.V. OF THE WIND):

THE FLIGHT OF THE WIND is a vivid, colorful flying bird's eye view of the many wonders of the world sweeping beneath and around it - The Great Wall of China, the Pyramids of Egypt, Taj Mahal, icebergs, mountains and valleys, Bryce Canyon, The Chocolate Hills, oceans, rain forests, The Al-Fayoum oasis.

The Santiago Gust of wind touches the face of Fatima carrying water from the well.

Her veil flutters and flaps as she looks out toward the vast desert knowingly.

EXT. DESERT - MILITARY CAMP - DAY

A SIMOOM WIND STORM plunges through the Camp at full throttle.

Suddenly it stops and there is complete calm.

The camp is all but destroyed. The sand battered everything.

Everything but Santiago. He's the only person that's not covered in sand.

Not a singular grain is to be found on his person.

The Sentinels look at the cliff where Santiago was before but he's no longer there.

Santiago stands next to a SAND-COVERED SENTINEL on the other side of the camp.

The Covered Sentinel digs himself out, flapping and spitting sand from his mouth.

When he discovers that Santiago is at his side, he runs away screaming in terror.

The Sentinels put as much distance as possible between themselves and Santiago.

Only the Alchemist and the General approach him.

The General stops and stares at Santiago.

Then he looks at the Alchemist who is busy dusting sand away from his clothing.

ALCHEMIST

Don't look at me, I told you.

EXT. MILITARY CAMP - HEADQUARTERS TENT - DAY

The Alchemist and Santiago mount their steeds.

The General and members of his Staff bid them farewell.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Four horsemen travel over desert terrain.

TWO ESCORTS accompany Santiago and The Alchemist.

EXT. DESERT - NEAR A COPTIC MONASTERY - DAY

The four horsemen pause near the GATES OF A MONASTERY.

The Alchemist tells the Escorts they won't be needed any more.

They bow their heads, turn and leave.

The Alchemist addresses Santiago.

ALCHEMIST

Wait here.

He dismounts and approaches the gates.

Santiago watches as the Sentinels fade into the horizon.

A MONK DRESSED IN BLACK, (50's, Caucasian), comes to the gates of the monastery. He and the Alchemist converse for a moment.

The Soldiers are mere specks now.

The Alchemist returns.

ALCHEMIST (CONT'D)

I asked him to let me use the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN OF THE MONASTERY - DAY

An IRON PAN burns over a flaming stove. A hand places a BALL OF LEAD into it.

Santiago sits at the kitchen table. He stands and moves closer to the Alchemist working over the stove.

The lead begins to melt and spread out over the bottom of the pan.

The Monk enters the kitchen carrying a HAND-HELD CHISEL and places it on the table.

The Alchemist removes the strange yellow egg from his pouch, scrapes from it a sliver as thin as a hair, and lets it fall into the melted lead.

The mixture immediately takes on a deep reddish color.

The Alchemist takes the pan from the fire and sits it on the table to cool.

ALCHEMIST

I think the wars will last a long time.

The subject has been a source of nagging irritation for the Monk.

MONK

The caravans have been stopped at Giza for quite a while now, waiting for them to end. But God's will be done.

ALCHEMIST

Amen, father.

The Alchemist turns his attention back to the pan. He takes a deep breath and blows slowly over the melted concoction.

Within seconds the mixture turns from a red liquid into a hardened disk of SOLID GOLD.

The Monk claps his hands, bedazzled and delighted.

MONK

That's a nifty little trick. And quite convenient.

ALCHEMIST

It's been a while since I've done it. This is only the third time in the last three hundred years.

SANTIAGO

Will I learn to do that?

ALCHEMIST

This is my destiny, not yours. But I wanted to show you that it's possible.

The Alchemist picks up the chisel and brings it down hard center of the pan. The disk splits into FOUR EQUAL PIECES of a golden pie.

MONK

Oh, now you're just showing off.

EXT. THE GATES OF THE MONASTERY - DAY

The three return to the gates.

The Alchemist holds one of the gold pieces out for the monk.

ALCHEMIST

This is for your generosity to the pilgrims.

MONK

But this payment goes well beyond my generosity.

ALCHEMIST

Don't say that. Life might be listening and give you less the next time.

He turns to Santiago and hands him a piece.

ALCHEMIST (CONT'D)

This is for you. To make up for what you gave to the general.

SANTIAGO

But that's much more than...

The Alchemist shoots him a look.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

...Thank you.

ALCHEMIST

And this is for me because I have to return to the desert where there are tribal wars.

He keeps one for himself and hands the last piece to the Monk.

ALCHEMIST (CONT'D)

Give this to Santiago. If he ever needs it.

SANTIAGO

But I am going in search of my treasure. I'm close now.

ALCHEMIST

And I'm certain that you will find it.

SANTIAGO

Then why this?

ALCHEMIST

Because you've lost your savings twice. Once to the thief and once to the general. An old proverb says: everything that happens once can never happen again. But everything that happens twice will surely happen a third time.

A MONASTERY ANIMAL KEEPER, (16 yrs/male), leads Santiago's horse and waits nearby.

SANTIAGO

(to the Monk)

Good bye, father.

MONK

Good bye, my child. God's blessing be upon you.

The Alchemist and Santiago go to Santiago's horse. The Animal Keeper leaves them.

ALCHEMIST

From here on, you'll be on your own. You're only three hours from the Pyramids.

SANTIAGO

Thank you. You taught me the language of the world.

ALCHEMIST

I only invoked what you already knew.

Santiago climbs onto his horse and looks down at the Alchemist.

ALCHEMIST (CONT'D)

This reminds me of the first time met.

SANTIAGO

Will I see you again?

ALCHEMIST

If it is written.

SANTIAGO

Thank you.

ALCHEMIST

You already said that. Just remember, where your treasure is, there also will be your heart. Be especially aware of the place where you are brought to tears.

They look into each other's eyes for a long moment.

SANTIAGO

Good-bye.

Santiago shakes the reigns of his stallion and rides away.

High above him, the Falcon soars with a powerful expanded wingspan. He swoops down out of the sky and breezes past Santiago's face.

The Alchemist waits for his bird by the monastery gates with an outstretched arm.

The Falcon glides to a landing on his wrist. They both watch Santiago shrink into a boundless horizon.

EXT. DESERT - EVENING

Santiago travels alone, at peace with the solitude of the desert.

The sun sets.

The full moon becomes the salient light in the star-filled twilight.

EXT. DESERT DUNES - NIGHT

The moonlight casts shadows through the DUNES, creating the appearance of a rolling sea.

Santiago climbs to the top of the highest dune and suddenly gasps!

There before him, illuminated by the light of the moon and the brightness of the desert, stand the solemn and majestic PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT.

Santiago dismounts his horse and stumbles a few feet forward before his legs succumb to his revelry.

He falls to his knees and weeps.

Santiago looks down at the sand and sees a SCARAB BEETLE SCUTTLING near the spot where some DROPLETS OF HIS TEARS have fallen.

He looks up at the Pyramids, as if to confirm the epiphany of this double omen.

Right there, he begins to dig.

TIME LAPSE:

He digs until his hands are abraded and exhausted, and he is able to stand in a whole well above his waist.

He is attempting to hoist a heavy rock from the excavation when an ALARMING VOICE behind him interrupts his effort.

LEADER (O.C.)

What are you doing there?

Santiago is so startled that he drops the rock on his foot.

He turns around to see SEVERAL OMINOUS OUTLINES OF MEN with their backs to the moonlight. Their eyes and their faces are hidden beneath their silhouettes.

The LEADER, (30's), stands center among them.

LEADER (CONT'D)

We are refugees from the tribal wars. What are you hiding in that hole?

SANTIAGO

Nothing.

He barely finishes the word before a PAIR OF HANDS yanks him up and slings him violently across the sand.

Another REFUGEE WITH A SINISTER VOICE rummages through his bag.

SINISTER REFUGEE

There's gold here! He probably has more hidden in the ground.

At last the face of the Leader emerges into the moonlight. His hardened face bears the eyes of an executioner.

LEADER

Dig. Or you die.

A FOOT connects with Santiago's ribs and kicks him back into the hole.

MONTAGE: Santiago digs. The Refugees wait. The sun rises.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The Pyramids tower glorious and implacable, casting angular shadows on the desert floor.

The morning sun fires down with merciless might.

Santiago still digs, slowed by exhaustion. His hands are swollen and lacerated.

He's raising a pile of sand to the side of the hole when someone grabs his wrists and drags him out. Santiago is too tired to resist.

The Leader stands Santiago up and slaps him hard across the face.

LEADER

We're tired of waiting while you stall.

He shoves Santiago to another Refugee, who promptly throws him to the ground.

LEADER (CONT'D)

This is your last chance. Give us the rest of the gold!

They all start to kick Santiago.

SANTIAGO

(screaming)

Wait! Wait! I'm digging for treasure!

The Refugee Leader stops them.

LEADER

What did you say?

SANTIAGO

I'm digging for treasure. I had a dream that if I came to the Pyramids of Egypt, I would find a hidden treasure here.

The Leader stares at him for a long moment.

LEADER

Leave him. He must have stolen this gold.

The men stumble away mumbling their disappointment.

Only the leader remains, shaking his head and staring down at the bleeding teen who is nearly unconscious.

He removes a WATER CONTAINER from his person and stoops down close to the Santiago. Holding Santiago's head, he helps him to drink.

LEADER (CONT'D)

You are not going to die. You'll live and you'll learn that a man shouldn't be so stupid. Two years ago, right here on this spot, I too had a dream. I dreamt that I should travel to the fields of Spain and look for a ruined church where shepherds and their sheep slept. In my dream there was a sycamore tree growing out of the ruins of the sanctuary. I was told that if I dug at the roots of the sycamore, there I would find a hidden treasure. But I am not so stupid as to cross an entire desert just because of a dream.

The Leader stands and takes a final swig from his water container.

He tosses the container near to Santiago and walks away.

Santiago waits until his assailants have gone some distance before he drags himself up to a sitting position.

He looks at the Pyramids, and then bursts into laughter and tears.

EXT. ANDALUSIAN COUNTRY SIDE - ABANDONED CHURCH - DAY

The Church stands ruined and reverent as it has for centuries, lending ancient elegance to the enchanted countryside.

INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - DAY

Santiago sits on one of the AGED PEWS, staring at the sycamore that he slept under when it all began. A SHOVEL by his side.

He sips WINE FROM A BOTTLE.

Santiago picks up his shovel and begins to dig at the base of the sycamore.

EXT. ABANDONED CHURCH - DAY

A SHEPHERD passes the church leading his SHEEP over the countryside.

INT. ABANDONED CHURCH - DAY

Santiago hits something SOLID with his shovel. He digs and scrapes faster.

After a moment, with some effort, he's able to remove A LARGE CHEST from the ground.

He opens the chest and stares aghast at the contents.

Therein contained are SPANISH GOLD COINS, PRECIOUS STONES, GOLD MASKS ADORNED WITH RED AND WHITE FEATHERS, STONE STATUES EMBEDDED WITH JEWELS, and GOLDEN NECKLACES.

He runs his hands over the treasure, slowly caressing the coins and jewelry.

Then he removes Urim and Thummim from his pouch, places them in the chest and closes the lid.

EXT. TARIFA TOWN PLAZA - DAY

The Gypsy Woman parades through the town wearing several gold necklaces and a gold mask adorned with red and white feathers.

No one pays her any attention. Just another one of her peculiar antics.

EXT. THE DOCKS NEAR TARIFA - DAY

A ship sets sail across the straights, heading for the coast of Africa.

Santiago stands at the Bow and looks out over the foaming waves and the outstretched sea.

EXT. THE DESERT - DAY

A LONE HORSEMAN streaks across the blazing sunset over the vast desert sands. As he gallops, he leaves a WIND-WHIRLING SAND CLOUD in his wake.

EXT. AL-FAYOUM OASIS - BY THE WELL - SUNSET

Fatima has just filled her vessel and is preparing to leave when she sees through the trees a CLOUD OF SAND in the desert advancing towards the oasis.

She drops her container and runs through the forest toward the gradually growing cloud.

The water from her container spills and soaks into the earth.

EXT. DESERT - SUNSET

The Horseman is Santiago. His Spanish hair waves wildly in the wind with every stride of his stallion.

He sees Fatima running towards him with tears in her eyes.

He jumps off of his horse and runs towards her.

They meet in the middle of the setting sun.

Partially silhouetted before the massive CIRCLE OF ORANGE LIGHT behind them, they stand face to face, only inches apart.

The whole desert seems to spin around them.

They do not speak. They do not touch. Their eyes convey the language of their souls.

With the power in his, and the passion in hers, their eyes say, I love you.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END