

THE ALCHEMIST
Screenplay Adaptation
Act 3 Sample

by
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Adapted from the book

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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 shutters.

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

From where I am - and I am a long
way from earth - I learned how to
love.

(MORE)

SUN (CONT'D)

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.