**Reading Extract**

Read the passage below in detail. If you print it out, make sure you gloss over the text to add details related to characterization, plot, setting, theme and importance devices such as symbolist, simile, metaphors, etc.

If you choose to do this online, use the “Ctrl + Alt + M” command prompt on the keyboard to add your comments.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask me or e-mail me at [mr.heidarbozorg@gmail.com](mailto:mr.heidarbozorg@gmail.com)

**The Alchemist – Paulo Coelho**

The horizon was tinged with red, and suddenly the sun appeared. The boy thought back to that conversation with his father, and felt happy; he had already seen many castles and met many women (but none the equal of the one who awaited him several days hence). He owned a jacket, a book that he could trade for another, and a flock of sheep. But, most important, he was able every day to live out his dream. If he were to tire of the Andalusian fields, he could sell his sheep and go to sea.

By the time he had had enough of the sea, he would already have known other cities, other women, and other chances to be happy. I couldn't have found God in the seminary, he thought, as he looked at the sunrise. Whenever he could, he sought out a new road to travel. He had never been to that ruined church before, in spite of having traveled through those parts many times. The world was huge and inexhaustible; he had only to allow his sheep to set the route for a while, and he would discover other interesting things. The problem is that they don't even realize that they're walking a new road every day. They don't see that the fields are new and the seasons change.

All they think about is food and water. Maybe we're all that way, the boy mused. Even me—I haven't thought of other women since I met the merchant's daughter. Looking at the sun, he calculated that he would reach Tarifa before midday. There, he could exchange his book for a thicker one, fill his wine bottle, shave, and have a haircut; he had to prepare himself for his meeting with the girl, and he didn't want to think about the possibility that some other shepherd, with a larger flock of sheep, had arrived there before him and asked for her hand.

It's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting, he thought, as he looked again at the position of the sun, and hurried his pace. He had suddenly remembered that, in Tarifa, there was an old woman who interpreted dreams.

The old woman led the boy to a room at the back of her house; it was separated from her living room by a curtain of colored beads. The room's furnishings consisted of a table, an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and two chairs. The woman sat down, and told him to be seated as well. Then she took both of his hands in hers, and began quietly to pray. It sounded like a Gypsy prayer.

The boy had already had experience on the road with Gypsies; they also traveled, but they had no flocks of sheep. People said that Gypsies spent their lives tricking others. It was also said that they had a pact with the devil, and that they kidnapped children and, taking them away to their mysterious camps, made them their slaves. As a child, the boy had always been frightened to death that he would be captured by Gypsies, and this childhood fear returned when the old woman took his hands in hers.

But she has the Sacred Heart of Jesus there, he thought, trying to reassure himself. He didn't want his hand to begin trembling, showing the old woman that he was fearful. He recited an ‘Our Father’ silently

**Key Questions**

**Once you are done with the reading, answer the questions below. Make sure each answer is in paragraph format and that you use specific examples to support each response.**

1. Research what an alchemist is. Do alchemists exist in our current world? What would an alchemist be able to do?
2. Research Gypsies and what they did hundreds of years ago. Who were they and what did they do?
3. Explain the quote: “It's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting, he thought, as he looked again at the position of the sun, and hurried his pace.” What is the meaning behind this quote?
4. Research the background of the novel and the author. Explain how the biography of the author and the era it was written, may have influenced different aspects.
5. Make a couple intertextual connections between the text and either another book (passage), scene from a TV show or movie, or from your personal life / news.