The Alchemist: Three Obstacles Santiago Must Overcome On His Journey

Obstacles are crucial setbacks that function to strengthen one's movement toward success. The Alchemist by Paolo Coelho is a fable that chronicles the journey of a hero that measures not by his success but setbacks. Leaving home, Being robbed of his money, and Leaving Fatima are obstacles that function to inspire the hero.

Leaving home is one of many obstacles that Santiago must overcome. Once Santiago begins his journey he is very confident, at times when things go wrong he wants to give up and return home, for instance after he is robbed in Tarifa Santiago feels alone and sad. “But the marketplace was empty, and he was far from home, so he wept.” (Coelho 39). This quote signifies how Santiago misses home because he is unfamiliar with his surroundings and doesn’t speak the language in the area.

Along with the challenge of leaving home, Santiago has to deal with being robbed of his money. Early in his journey, Santiago trusts a man he meets at a bar because he finally encounters someone that speaks the same language as him. “The boy trusted his new friend” (37). Unfortunately, the same person he thinks is his friend betrays him by taking his money. “He was no longer a Shepard, he had nothing, not even the money to return and start everything over.” (39). It is evident that Santiago feels abandoned and defeated after being robbed.

In addition to feeling betrayed and having very little money left, Santiago is left abandoned and lonely after he leaves Fatima. While in the Oasis Santiago meets the woman of his dreams, Fatima. Santiago is just awestruck at how perfect she is, he falls in love with her and wants to marry her. “I want you to be my wife. I love you.” (95). Even though he loves Fatima, Santiago knows he must continue on his personal legend. It is actually Fatima who encourages him to continue. “That’s why I want you to continue on your goal.” (97). This is a very difficult drawback that makes Santiago choose between continuing on his personal legend then returning to Fatima, or staying with Fatima at the Oasis. “If I am really part of your dream, you’ll come back one day. The boy was sad as he left that day.” (97). In this quote, Fatima tells Santiago to go fulfill his personal legend and to go to the pyramids but to come back to her afterward. Santiago listens to Fatima as well as following his heart and leaves her.

Throughout Santiago’s journey, he faces many obstacles such as leaving home, being robbed of his money, and leaving Fatima. He suffers and often feels lonely however, overcomes these obstacles and fulfills his personal legend.

Work Cited

1. Coelho, Paulo. The Alchemist. HarperCollins Publishers, 1998.