

THE ALCHEMIST  
Screenplay by  
Zarin Thomson

South Africa

FADE IN:

TITLE

Spain - a few years ago

EXT. DAY - ABANDENED CHURCH

Dusk is falling as a boy SANTIAGO herds his sheep into the church. The roof is fallen in and an enormous sycamore tree has grown where the sacristy once stood. Santiago lays some planks across the gate. He sweeps the floor with his jacket and lays down using a book as a pillow. He closes his eyes.

DREAMING

A girl with black hair plays with Santiago's sheep. She walks up to him and takes his hands. They disappear and reappear at the pyramids in Egypt.

GIRL

If you come here, you will  
find a hidden treasure.

Santiago wakes up and it is still dark. He looks at the stars through the half destroyed roof. He stands up, taking his crook and starts waking up his sheep that are still sleeping.

SANTIAGO

(muttering to himself)  
They are so used to me that they know  
my schedule - or perhaps it is me  
who has become used to them.

He prods those sheep that are sleeping one by one until they are awake.

FLASHBACK

MONTAGE

He walks into a village... buys the book he has been using as a pillow... goes to a general merchants shop... walks in...

INT. DAY - MERCHANTS STORE



SANTIAGO

I need to sell some wool.

MERCHANT

You'll have to wait until this  
afternoon.

SANTIAGO

I will.

Santiago sits on the stairs and takes the book from his bag.

GIRL (V/O)

I didn't know that shepherds  
knew how to read.

SANTIAGO

I usually learn more from my sheep than  
from books.

GIRL

How did you learn to read?

SANTIAGO

Like everybody learns - in  
school.

GIRL

Well, if you know how to read,  
why are you just a shepherd?

MERCHANT (V/O)

I want four sheep to be sheared

MONTAGE

Santiago takes four sheep... shears the first... then the  
second... then the third... then the fourth... merchant pays him...  
he starts off...

MERCHANT

Come back next year!

SANTIAGO

Of course I will!

Santiago urges his sheep towards the sun.