

The Alchemist's Letter by Sofia

Many years ago there lived an intelligent and powerful alchemist. He travelled over many mysterious lands always searching for something more. He had a family but, in his thirst for fortune and power, he abandoned them, making the machine his first priority.

Now a full grown man, Verideon ventured down the road towards the old cottage he once knew as his childhood home. He had bark coloured, wavy hair and a long bushy beard, his dull blue suit standing out on the beautiful summer's day. What used to be his family home now seemed like an overgrown mess as ivy scaled up the walls and the once vibrant flowers drooped dolefully in their beds.

Flashbacks of his childhood flooded his mind like a running river: playing out in the garden with his dad, his father giving him the pocket watch, his father rarely ever being home, sitting by the fireplace with his mother, watching out the window. Waiting. Waiting. Waiting.

He sighed hesitantly as he lifted up the skeletal, rusty key to the door, his hands shaking as he slid it into the keyhole. Anxiously turning it, he watched for it to click open, revealing what lay waiting for him. He nervously pushed open the door, slowly walking forward, taking in his surroundings. The wooden floor barely visible under all of the dust and mud, the corners of the room filled with shimmering cobwebs and dead flies. But as he walked further inside, he saw a colossal object hidden away under a red stained sheet.

As he cautiously crept towards it, he could barely see the outline of something similar to pipeworks and glass bottles. He stood for a minute pondering what it might be. Gingerly, he pulled the cover off, revealing an intricate and delicate machine. Pipes and tubes ran round and round, up and down, through numerous glass bottles and the like. In the centre lay a letter, propped up on the silver pocket watch his father had gifted him as a present when he was a child.

As he reached out to pick up the letter, the machine started to whirr and tick. Instantly Verideon stepped back as the machine came to life, golden liquid slowly dripping down the pipework. After staring for a while he carefully opened up the letter so as not to rip or crumple it.

*To my dear son,
By the time you're reading this I will no longer be here, so for you I have left my most precious memories behind; memories of your mother and you Verideon. I know you must despise me for leaving you and your mother but I feared the monster I was becoming. As you read this letter you witness the work of my miraculous machine I have finally created, allowing the possessor to turn any metal they desire into pure gold only by the power of their memories. I understand why you grew to hate me but I hope in time you may learn to forgive the past.
Sincerely your father, Nicholas*

As Verideon stood pondering the letter, he glanced up at the machine now in its greatest moment. The golden liquid began to rush down the glass pipes like a cascade of water. Images of his mother and father holding a baby whizzed by, an image of his father handing him the pocket watch rushed past. Hundreds of memories gushed

further down the intricate workings; memories of his mother, memories of the monster his father was, trickling their way into a glass bottle showing him as a young boy sitting by a tree throwing away the gifted pocket watch. As the image faded the liquid swiftly sloshed down a pipe, slowly descending for a few moments before splashing upon the pocket watch.

Verideon stared in awe as the shiny metal melted away transforming into solid gold, dozens of coins bursting into existence as it did so. Veriduim stood for a moment, the golden light reflecting into his shocked face, amazed by the magical machine. Slowly he picked up the golden pocket watch, turning it over numerous times in his palm. He sighed, turning his back on the fortune, dismally walking towards the door.

Taking one look back he closed the door behind him walking back down the dusty road. That night, Verideon returned home, telling his daughter about everything he had read in the alchemist's letter and gifting her the golden pocket watch.