

The Old Alchemist

An old man had a beautiful daughter he loved greatly. She was married to a man who dreamed of turning dirt into gold. In those days, people who could do this were called alchemists. His dream however was not bringing in money to buy food. Finally the young couple was destitute. The young wife went to her father to seek his advice. Her father asked for a meeting with the young man. After listening to what the young man had been doing, the father-in-law exclaimed. "That is it! That is exactly what I did when I was young. You are close to making an important discovery. You need one more ingredient that I have only recently discovered myself. I am too old to pursue this anymore, it takes too much work." The young man said with great excitement, "I can do it!" The father-in-law looked thoughtfully at him and slowly agreed, "Perhaps you can." Then lowering his voice, he told his son-in-law, "You need two pounds of powder from the leaves of banana trees. You must plant the bananas yourself, and cast a spell on the seeds. Then when the plants grow, the powder on the leaves will be magical." Eager to begin the young man accepted a loan from his father-in-law to begin the project. After learning the magic spells the young man went directly about the business of plants in the seeds. Each day he visited the fields and cultivated the young plants. When the plants sprouted leaves, he collected powder from the leaves. With great disappointment the young man saw that he had only a very small amount from the leaves. Not even close to the two pounds required. So he purchased more land, cleared it and planted more bananas. The young man collected the dust from banana leaves for several years before he finally had two pounds of the magic dust. With growing excitement he ran to his father-in-law's house with a sack of dust. His father-in-law asked that his daughter join them. He asked his daughter, "While your husband has been collecting banana powder, what did you do with the bananas?" "Why, I sold the bananas so that we could make a living" she said. "Let me see the money you saved." She hurried home and came back with several sacks filled with gold. Her father took a handful of dirt and poured it on to the floor next to the gold coins. "Look at that" said the father-in-law, "you have turned dirt into gold."