

The Alchemist's Letter

Questions to ask:

Watch the opening 45 seconds (up until we see 'The Alchemist's Letter')

- What have we learned up to now?
- What do Alchemist's do? (share a dictionary definition)
- Why does the film maker include this section before the titles?
- What is the film going to be about?

Pause the film after 54 seconds when the man looks at the key and sighs.

- When is the story set? How do we know?
- How is the man feeling?

Pause the film after the phrase, 'The more powerful the machine.'

- What relationship between the narrator and the man we can see?
- What is the man's name?
- What has his father left behind?
- Where is his father?
- Why do you think he has left it behind?
- Do you think Veridion has seen his father recently?

Pause the film at 1 min 35 seconds where we see two people sitting by a waterfall.

- What are your most precious memories?
- What do you think the narrators most precious memories could be?
- What does the word precious mean?

Pause the film at 2 min 15 seconds after the phrase, 'She died alone.'

- What are the narrator's most precious memories?
- Why do you think this is?
- Why do you think Veridion's mother died alone?

Pause at 2 mins 43 When the young Veridion throws away the pocket watch. You may want to rewatch that section.

- What does the narrator mean when he says, "because of the creature I was becoming?" We see a visual metaphor of the minotaur. Does the author actually mean he was physically changing?
- Who is sat under the tree with the pink leaves?
- What do you think he is thinking before he throws the watch?
- Why does he throw the watch away?

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Questions continued:

Pause the film after the phrase, "Just as I abandoned you." 3 mins.

- Why was Veridion abandoned?
- Why might his father think Veridion will abandon his daughter?

Pause the film after the word Nicholas at 3 mins 22 secs.

- What is the narrator's name?
- What things matter the most?
- What is the thing that matters the most?
- What is interesting about the way the last section of the letter is written? "Now I understand what matters the most. Love. Your father Nicholas" or "Now I understand what matters the most. Love your father, Nicholas."

Pause the film at 3 mins 30 secs when the machine explodes.

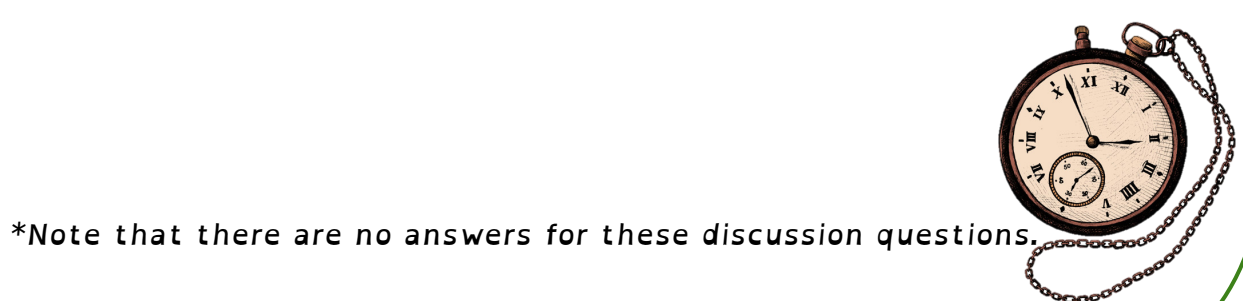
- What has created the gold watch?
- Why do you think machine has exploded?
- Do you think Nicholas ever succeeded in creating gold?

Pause the film at 3min 45 secs when Veridion is looking at the watch.

- What do you think he is thinking now?
- What do you think will happen next?
- What has happened to the machine? Why?

At the end of the film

- Why doesn't Veridion take any of the coins with him?
- Does he take anything with him?
- Why has the laughter been included in the closing credits? What does it show?



**Note that there are no answers for these discussion questions.*