

Name: _____ Date _____ Per: _____

The Two Drops of Oil Paulo Coelho

Directions: As you read the parable below, make annotations in the right hand box.

A merchant sent his son to learn the Secret of Happiness from the wisest of men. The young man wandered through the desert for forty days until he reached a beautiful castle at the top of a mountain. There lived the sage that the young man was looking for.

However, instead of finding a holy man, our hero entered a room and saw a great deal of activity; merchants coming and going, people chatting in the corners, a small orchestra playing sweet melodies, and there was a table laden with the most delectable dishes of that part of the world. The wise man talked to everybody, and the young man had to wait for two hours until it was time for his audience.

The Sage listened attentively to the reason for the boy's visit, but told him that at that moment he did not have the time to explain to him the Secret of Happiness.

He suggested that the young man take a stroll around his palace and come back in two hours' time.

"However, I want to ask you a favor," he added, handing the boy a teaspoon, in which he poured two drops of oil. "While you walk, carry this spoon and don't let the oil spill."

The young man began to climb up and down the palace staircases, always keeping his eyes fixed on the spoon. At the end of two hours he returned to the presence of the wise man.

"So," asked the sage, "did you see the Persian tapestries hanging in my dining room? Did you see the garden that the Master of Gardeners took ten years to create? Did you notice the beautiful parchments in my library?"

Embarrassed, the young man confessed that he had seen nothing. His only concern was not to spill the drops of oil that the wise man had entrusted to him.

"So, go back and see the wonders of my world," said the wise man. "You can't trust a man if you don't know his house."

Now more at ease, the young man took the spoon and strolled again

