

The Weinstein Company to Bring the International Best-Selling Novel 'The Alchemist' to the Big Screen

CANNES, France, May 18 /PRNewswire/ -- The Weinstein Company announced today at the Cannes Film Festival that Harvey Weinstein will produce Paulo Coelho's international best-selling novel "The Alchemist" and that The Weinstein Company will hold exclusive world-wide motion picture and television rights for the film.

Glen Basner, President of The Weinstein Company International, will handle global sales. "The Alchemist" was packaged by the Paradigm Motion Picture Finance Group and represents Laurence Fishburne, the star, director and producer of the project, along with manager Helen Sugland, and attorneys Nina Shaw and Jeff Finkelstein.

Today's announcement builds on the Weinstein's success of adapting beloved literary classics including "The English Patient," "Cider House Rules," "The Talented Mr. Ripley" and "Cold Mountain" to film. Since its debut in Brazil in 1988, Paulo Coelho's "The Alchemist" has captured the hearts and minds of millions of readers across the world selling over 30 million copies and reaching first place on best-seller lists in 18 countries. The book has also captivated a new generation of readers and has appeared on The New York Times bestseller list for 34 weeks, placing at #6 on this week's paperback trade fiction list.

The Weinstein Company is currently in negotiations with an Academy Award(R) winning screenwriter to adapt the novel into a screenplay, which will be announced shortly. Production teams from past Weinstein produced films, such as "Gangs of New York," "Cold Mountain," "The English Patient," and "The Aviator," will be brought on board to work on the film. As producer, Harvey Weinstein has already begun to scout locations all over the world.

Various locations in Europe, as well as the Middle East, including Jordan, Abu Dhabi and Northern Africa will serve as backdrops for this global shoot. To join Fishburne in the cast, a search in Spain and Latin America for the role of Santiago will start shortly and other stars are expected to be announced to round out the cast.

Harvey Weinstein, co-chairman of The Weinstein Company stated: "Personally producing a project is rare for me, but bringing 'The Alchemist' to the screen has been my dream. It is a spiritual and moving story and I am thrilled to be working side by side with Laurence. The pieces are now in place to jump start this project and we are eager to get going."

Paulo Coelho stated: "I am very happy that my book will be filmed in the way I intended it to be and I hope the spirit and simplicity of my work will be preserved. I am excited my friend Laurence Fishburne and Harvey Weinstein will be working together."

In addition to Weinstein, as previously announced, Laurence Fishburne ("Akeelah and the Bee," "The Matrix," "What's Love Got To Do With It?") will direct, star and produce the adaptation along with his producing partner Helen Sugland ("Akeelah and the Bee," "Once in the Life," "Five Fingers") and their production company Cinema Gypsy. Paula Weinstein ("Blood Diamond," "The Perfect Storm," "Analyze This") and Kathy Morgan are serving as executive producers, along with Steven Markoff

("Alpha Dog," "Timber Falls") and Bruce McNall ("Timber Falls," Weekend at Bernie's") from A-Mark Entertainment.

Said Laurence Fishburne: "This is a special project that now has a special team behind it to ensure that its path to the big screen is handled with the proper care it deserves. I am looking forward to directing it, acting in it, and collaborating with Harvey Weinstein to produce a beautiful film that will do justice to Paulo's enormously successful novel."

"We are so pleased we were able to assist our client and friend Laurence Fishburne get his passion project, this beautiful book and story made into a film with Harvey Weinstein and The Weinstein Company, who understand how to make and market material as rare and exceptional as this," stated Sam Gores, Chairman of Paradigm.

"The Alchemist" is the magical story of Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who yearns to travel in search of a worldly treasure as extravagant as any ever found. From his home in Spain he journeys to the markets of Tangiers and across the Egyptian desert to a fateful encounter with the alchemist. The story of the treasures Santiago finds along the way teaches us, as only a few stories have done, about the essential wisdom of listening to our hearts, learning to read the omens strewn along life's path, and, above all, following our dreams.

Paulo Coelho is one of the most successful authors of all time. His books have sold over 100 million copies, have been translated into 67 languages and released in more than 150 countries.

"The Alchemist" joins TWC's diverse slate of adaptations of best-selling novels including "Youth in Revolt," "The Reader," and "Wolf Boy."

About The Weinstein Company

The Weinstein Company (TWC) was created by Bob and Harvey Weinstein, the brothers who founded Miramax Films Corporation in 1979. TWC is a multi-media company that officially launched on October 1, 2005. Dimension Films, the genre label that was founded in 1993 by Bob Weinstein, is also included under the TWC banner.

During the Weinstains' tenure at Miramax Films the company released some of the most critically acclaimed and commercially successful independent feature films which received 249 Academy Award(R) nominations and won 60 Oscars(R), have generated billions of dollars in worldwide box office receipts and billions more in home video sales. In its history, Dimension Films has released some of the most successful franchises including "Scream," "Spy Kids" and "Scary Movie."

SOURCE The Weinstein Company