

The Dark Wind Study Guide

The Dark Wind by Tony Hillerman

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

The Dark Wind Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Sections 1 - 4.....	5
Sections 5 - 7.....	8
Sections 8 - 10.....	10
Sections 11 - 13.....	12
Sections 14 - 15.....	13
Sections 16 - 18.....	14
Section 19.....	16
Sections 20 - 21.....	18
Sections 22 - 25.....	20
Sections 26 - 28.....	23
Sections 29 - 30.....	25
Characters.....	29
Objects/Places.....	34
Themes.....	38
Style.....	41
Quotes.....	44
Topics for Discussion.....	46



Plot Summary

The *Dark Wind* by Tony Hillerman is a story of narcotic traffickers operating in the Hopi Reservation area of central Arizona. The story unfolds with a covert drug delivery by a light aircraft to a remote dry wash in the Black Mesa area. The airplane crashes just near a vandalized windmill being staked out by Navajo Tribal Policemen, Jim Chee, who inevitably becomes involved in the Federal investigation into the missing cocaine. Chee has also been assigned cases involving the identity of a mutilated corpse of an unknown Navajo and the recovery of some pawned silver from the Burnt Water Trading Post. The trail of his unraveling of these seemingly unrelated cases takes him from interviews with traditional Hopi elders through the maze of the arroyos in the mesa country and to the Santa Fe State Penitentiary. The dramatic resolution of all the puzzles occurs in a violent thunderstorm during the secret rituals in a traditional Hopi pueblo.

The story begins with the discovery of the corpse of a dead Navajo by a party of three Hopis making preparations for their ceremony of the Niman Kachina. They delay reporting their find until after they have completed their ceremony. In the meantime, a Cessna aircraft crashes at night in Wepo Wash where Navajo Tribal Policeman Jim Chee is staking out a windmill, which is being repeatedly vandalized by persons unknown.

The plane is part of a cocaine delivery by drug traffickers. Besides the dead pilot and his passenger there is also another man at the scene who has been shot in the back. All traces of the drug shipment have vanished and Chee reports hearing a vehicle leaving the crash site. The DEA agent in charge of the investigation believes Chee is covering up his role in the operation and tries strong-arm tactics on Chee.

Along with his other assignments, such as reports of witchcraft on Black Mesa and the recovery of missing pawn silver from the Burnt Water Trading Post, Chee now has to contend with the suspicions of the unscrupulous and ruthless DEA agent and the fact that his suite of seemingly unrelated cases seem to be inextricably bound up together.

Fortunately for Chee, he has made friends with Cowboy Dashee, a Deputy Sheriff from Coconino County, who is also an adherent to the traditional Hopi ways. Together they gain the cooperation of Hopi elders, one who actually found the unidentified corpse, and the other who was in Wepo Wash on the night of the crash. Chee supplements the information from the Hopi elders with the results of a visit to the Santa Fe State Penitentiary and eventually comes to the conclusion that he understands the sequence of events that binds all these puzzles together. He unearths the missing cocaine and goes to where he has learned the hijacked shipment will be returned to the dealers.

In a dramatic sequence of actions, during the secret Hopi rituals in a village below the rim of the mesa, Chee confronts the murderer of the unidentified Navajo, the instigator of the plane crash, and the hijacker of the cocaine. They are all the same man, Jake West, the operator of the Trading Post, and his motivation is to avenge the murder of his



son in the Santa Fe prison. Before Chee can arrest him, the DEA agent intervenes and tries to make off with the cocaine shipment. He plans on shooting Chee in the process. He is forestalled by Jake West who, despite being shot by the DEA agent, manages to propel him into the torrential waters of the flooding river. Chee is told the final answers to the mystery by the dying West and then, still handcuffed, Chee pushes the cocaine shipment into the flood waters. He thus gets rid of any evidence that he was ever involved in the Federal investigation.



Sections 1 - 4

Sections 1 - 4 Summary

The Dark Wind by Tony Hillerman is a story of narcotic traffickers operating in the Hopi Reservation area of central Arizona. The story unfolds with a covert drug delivery by a light aircraft to a remote dry wash in the Black Mesa area. The airplane crashes just near a vandalized windmill being staked out by Navajo Tribal Policeman, Jim Chee, who inevitably becomes involved in the Federal investigation into the missing cocaine. Chee has also been assigned cases involving the identity of a mutilated corpse of an unknown Navajo and the recovery of some pawned silver from the Burnt Water Trading Post. His unraveling these seemingly unrelated cases takes him from interviews with traditional Hopi elders through the maze of the arroyos in the mesa country and to the Santa Fe State Penitentiary.

Three Hopis are crossing the Wepo Wash on their way to celebrate the Niman Kachina rain ceremony. The men discover the body of a young Navajo man with a bullet hole above his right eye. Lomatewa is shocked to see that the skin has been removed from the hands and feet.

A Cessna is flying through the night, without lights, below the rim of the mesas, shielded from the radar at Albuquerque and Salt Lake City. The pilot has picked up two suitcases at a landing strip in Chihuahua, and the shipment is being accompanied by a man he does not know. He has been told that there will be another man called Jansen at the designated landing spot in Wepo Wash. The pilot sees the signal to land and the line of low voltage lights, which show him where to set down. He tells himself that one must have trust, but when he lowers the nose to complete the landing he realizes to his horror that this is a terrible mistake.

Jim Chee is staking out Windmill Number 6 erected by the Office of Hopi Partitioned Land to provide water for the Hopi families. It is being vandalized on a regular basis and Jim has been assigned by his chief Captain Largo, to catch the perpetrators. The vandalized windmill is not the only case which requires his attention. There is the case of Priscilla Bisti, who the authorities are convinced is running a bootleg operation; the unsolved burglary of pawn jewelry at the Burnt Water Trading Post; and the identity of the decomposed corpse found on Black Mesa.

In the predawn darkness, Chee has heard something beyond the windmill and believes he is about to catch the vandals. A little earlier he heard an automobile stop about a mile away in Wepo Wash, and now he is being distracted by the sound of an airplane flying. Chee thinks that it is probably a narcotics operation but knows that his jurisdiction does not encompass narcotics so he continues to concentrate on the windmill.

A sound reaches Chee from where the car stopped in the wash, about a mile away. The plane is still circling and approaches him again, sinking down out of the moonlight about



two hundred yards away, and then the engine seems to cut off. The next thing Chee hears is a gunshot.

Chee makes his way to the place from where the sounds originated and hears a vehicle moving off down the wash and then sounds of someone climbing up the cliff out of the wash. He manages to get the dead pilot out of the plane and sees another corpse of a well-dressed man. Chee thinks to himself that this is a federal case, none of it will be his business.

Sections 1 - 4 Analysis

The novel "Dark Wind" begins with two apparently unrelated incidents. The first section plunges the reader into the world of Hopi culture and the details of their ceremonial procedures. It also places the reader in the desert near the Third Mesa in the desert described from the point of view of Albert Lomatewa, the Messenger. The discovery of a bizarrely mutilated body leads to an exposition of some of the key legends of Hopi beliefs and the decision to delay reporting the discovery of the body. Lomatewa identifies the corpse (because of the flaying of the feet and hands) as that of a Navajo, but no explanation is given to the reader as to why this should be so, and the reader is left in suspense as to the significance of the discovery.

The next section puts the reader in the cockpit of a low flying aircraft which is making an illegal nighttime drug shipment in the desert from the point of view of the pilot. The desert location is described as Wepo Wash, which will become a major location in the story; however, again, the reader is left uninformed as to the final outcome of the landing. The tension induced in the reader is considerable and the next section begins to offer some explanation of what the reader begins to realize is a flash forward.

Section three introduces the main character of the story, Jim Chee, Navajo Tribal Policeman, and the exposition, via a flashback to his interview with his boss Captain Largo, as to the reason for his presence in the nighttime desert. The flashback includes details of the current suite of cases at the Tuba City sub agency, the underlying situation of the eviction of nine thousand Navajo's to make room for Hopi families in the Joint Use Tribal lands and a brief introduction to Cowboy Dashee, Chee's Hopi counterpart from the Arizona Sheriff's department.

The sound, unimportant to Chee, of a low flying aircraft leads the reader to an awareness of the significance of the flash forward in the previous section and the prediction as to the forthcoming events. The description of the crash site and the details are given dramatic emphasis by the limited scope of view provided by Chee's flashlight. This section and the rest of the story is from the point of view of Jim Chee, and the reader is given full access to his innermost thoughts and feelings.

The use of almost cinematic techniques to describe the components of the story are very successful in ensuring the continued attention of the reader as section four draws to a close.

All the main components of the story are swiftly and dramatically presented to the reader in the first four sections, and it is difficult to imagine that he or she will not continue to pursue the story.



Sections 5 - 7

Sections 5 - 7 Summary

Chee is in Captain Largo's office being questioned by a man named Johnson from the DEA. They have examined the footprints and agree someone climbed out of the wash and that all the other tracks, at some stage, cross the others. The implication is that Chee was on the scene at the same time as the others.

From what Largo has gathered from Johnson, the pilot was known to the DEA as a regular drug smuggling pilot, the man in the suit was a lawyer from Houston named Jerry Johnson, known to have narcotic connections. Largo and Chee agree that the DEA has suspicions that Chee was involved in the delivery of the drugs and that the DEA is convinced the shipment is somewhere in the area of the plane wreck.

Chee visits Jake West, the owner and operator of the Burnt Water Store. Chee wants to talk to West about the rumors he might have heard about the vandalizing of the Number 6 Windmill. As West explains to Chee, the obvious suspects are the Navajo who are being evicted from Wepo Wash. For many years they have had to haul in water for themselves and their livestock, but now that the US government is turning the land over to the Hopi, water wells are being drilled for their convenience. When West asks Chee if any of his stolen silver has turned up, Chee has to admit that none has, which is another mystery. Then West questions Chee about the plane crash and missing dope shipment. He has received all his information from the local news stations and seems to be remarkably well informed. Chee thinks West's informant might be Cowboy Dashee, the deputy Sheriff with whom he brought in the corpse from Black Mesa.

Chee is back at the windmill at dawn and fixes a breakfast of hot coffee and bologna sandwiches. He ponders the disappearance of Joseph Musket, whom West fired two days after he and Dashee brought in the John Doe corpse. Is there a connection between the murder of the dead Navajo and the burglary? In the dirt around the vandalized windmill, Chee finds the tracks left by the vandals and also by the Hopi who had discovered it. The path along the arroyo disappears into a clump of thick vegetation where Chee finds a Hopi shrine. .

Sections 5 - 7 Analysis

The story continues to unfold with Chee being questioned about his role in the crash of the narcotic delivery plane, and Chee's boss, Captain Largo, and a DEA agent named Johnson are introduced. The basic principle of not involving the Navajo Tribal Police in Federal affairs is made clear, and the normal investigations of vandalized windmills, unidentified corpses, and the burglary of pawned jewelry are enlarged. Chee's visit to the Burnt Water Trading Post leads to the introduction of the character Jake West, his



continued practice of magician tricks, the fact that he is well versed in Navajo and Hopi culture.

The investigation by the DEA at the crash site leads to Chee forming a low opinion of their agents' tracking abilities. When Chee visits the site of the windmill, the reader is treated to a detailed account of how a real tracker works and how observations of the behavior of birds in the wash enable Chee to deduce someone is following him. An important discovery by Chee, in the course of his examination of the area, is of a Hopi shrine in a water seep in a cavity in the gray shale. Chee's strong foundation in Navajo culture is also depicted with his traditional greeting to the "Dawn Boy", following the teachings of Changing Woman.



Sections 8 - 10

Sections 8 - 10 Summary

While inspecting the aircraft, Chee is approached by a man and a woman who introduce themselves as Gail Pauling, the sister of the dead pilot, and the man says he was the pilot's attorney. Chee shows them both what he has found, the line of small indentations where the battery operated lanterns had been placed in the sand and where the sand told him that the plane had landed in the wash on at least one previous occasion and, finally, where the wheels touched down on the night of the crash. The implications of the placement of the lanterns dawn on Gail Pauling and she now knows that her brother had not stood a chance of surviving the crash and that he had been deliberately tricked into crashing.

The attorney, Ben Gaines, asks Chee questions about the shot that he heard after the plane crashed. Gaines wants to hire Chee to try and find the vehicle which drove away from the scene after the crash and that he does not think it would be a good idea for the Tribal Policeman to check with his captain. Then Gaines says that he and Gail Pauling are staying at the Hopi Run hotel on Second Mesa.

That evening Chee calls on Jake West to ask about the shrine he has found in Wepo Wash. Cowboy Dashee turns up with a photograph of someone whom the authorities think is connected to the plane crash. He shows West and Chee a police mug shot of a man called Dick Palanzer who is a known associate of narcotics traffickers. Dashee and Chee discuss the likelihood of the BIA workers getting the windmill fixed even though they have started repairing it again. Chee tells Cowboy about Ben Gaines and Paula Fielding and says he does not think he will be staking out the windmill with all this interest in the plane crash site. Cowboy Dashee and Chee are in Dashee's patrol car tracking down the source of the gossip about a witch killing the corpse they have come to call John Doe. Eventually, the trail leads to Dashee's own village of Shipaulovi where the man who found the body lives.

At the house of Albert Lomatewa, Deputy Sheriff Dashee explains who Chee is and that it is their job to find out about the man who has been killed on Black Mesa. Lomatewa then recounts how he found the body of a Navajo when he and his companions had come down from Kisigi Spring at dawn on the fourth day before the Niman Kachina. Chee says when they got the body there wasn't much left of it.

Sections 8 - 10 Analysis

Chee's skills at tracking are again illustrated when he deduces how the plane came to crash on landing. This is carefully explained when the cast of characters is further enlarged with the arrival at the crash scene of the dead pilot's sister Gail Pauling and the lawyer Ben Gaines.

The next scene, at the Burnt Water Trading Post, enlarges the role of Cowboy Dashee and the developing empathy between the Navajo Police Officer and the Deputy Sheriff from Coconino County. Cowboy Dashee is a deeply traditional Hopi under his deputy sheriff's uniform, and it is the collaboration between the Navajo and the Hopi law enforcement officers, both well versed in their respective people's traditions, which is a critical element in the story.

The role of Cowboy Dashee is immediately demonstrated when he is able to take Chee to the home of Lomatewa, the Hopi who found the unidentified corpse as described in the opening section of the book. The subsequent explanation of the significance of the mutilation of the corpse and the practice of Navajo witches taking corpse powder from bodies leads Chee to the conclusion that the rumors of a witch at work in the area are based on reality, and the mystery deepens.



Sections 11 - 13

Sections 11 - 13 Summary

Chee wakes up to find Johnson and another man sorting through the trailer's overhead compartments. Johnson tells Chee that the other man is Officer Larry Collins and he is his partner on the case. The two agents pin him on the bunk and his hands are cuffed behind him. Johnson tells Collins to keep on looking for the dope and tells Chee that he wants to know all about the meeting he'd had yesterday with Gaines. Johnson is furious and backhands Chee across the face, demanding Chee tell him where the coke and the money are stashed. Johnson threatens Chee with his revolver but Chee does not have the information the men are looking for. Johnson seems to believe him and replaces the revolver in his holster. Chee would know they could not prove he tried to steal the coke and they could not arrest him for killing Jerry Jansen. He explains to Chee that the man killed in the plane was the brother of the principal in the drug deal. Chee tells him that Gaines wanted to know about the car that he had heard driving off. Gaines knew about that because he had read Chee's report by claiming he was the pilot's lawyer.

Chee explains the encounter to Captain Largo. Chee tells Largo that Joseph Musket had not been at work the day John Doe was killed and asks Largo to set up a visit for him at the state pen so he can find out more about Musket. Largo says he will send off a letter immediately but that Chee is now on vacation and should remember that the drug case does not concern Chee.

Chee calls Miss Pauling and asks her if she knows whether the car that Gaines wants him to look for has turned up. When she says she does not think so, he tells her to tell Gaines that he is looking into the matter. Chee asks her how long she has known Gaines and whether she trusts him. She tells him that he had called and offered to help and that Gaines had known her brother. After the phone call, Chee goes home, gathers provisions and goes back to the highway, towards Wepo Wash and the empty canyon country where a car might or might not have been hidden by a man named Richard Palanzer.

Sections 11 - 13 Analysis

These sections describe the revelation of the ruthlessness and violent behavior of Johnson the DEA agent and his unwarranted belief that Chee is involved in the missing narcotic shipment. The reader is as shocked as Chee at the way Johnson treats him and his impunity from official reprimand. The crux of the matter is the vehicle, which left the scene of the plane crash, and his treatment by Johnson is sufficient motivation for Chee to bend the rules and apply all his tracking skills to locating the vehicle.

Sections 14 - 15

Sections 14 - 15 Summary

A little before dawn Chee is awakened by the presence of someone nearby. Chee waits for an hour before he moves. He surmises that people interested in the area had seen his lights and sent someone to investigate. Then he goes down to the pickup, puts his pistol in his belt, and examines the tracks left by the person who had been hunting him last night. Chee finds the vehicle at sundown. It has been driven into a narrow gully in a tangle of mountain mahogany and salt brush. Chee checks the area thoroughly for tracks left behind by whomever had driven the carryall but does not find any. Then he focuses his attention on the vehicle. It is locked and the windows are all fogged up. There is a body on the back seat, which Chee recognizes as being Richard Palanzer. Chee searches the vehicle but there are no signs of drugs or money in it. Chee leaves the vehicle exactly as he found it except for where he was forced to jimmy the vent, but he thinks that will scarcely be noticeable.

He walks back down the arroyo in the increasing dark. His thoughts are now on Joseph Musket, Ironfingers, the only remaining suspect, after four men are dead and a fortune in narcotics missing.

Sections 14 - 15 Analysis

The logical and thorough way in which Chee finally locates the missing vehicle is a masterpiece of tracking technique. The reader might wonder why Chee has to use his pickup lights to examine the Geologic Survey map quads at night when no mention is made of his having simply forgotten his flashlight. The ominous presence of a low flying aircraft near the wash and the presence of an unidentified, armed, stalker during the night greatly magnify the tension of the episode but are not enlarged upon in subsequent events. The identity of the decomposing corpse in the vehicle is based on the photograph obtained by Cowboy Dashee in section nine.



Sections 16 - 18

Sections 16 - 18 Summary

The next day Chee tells Dashee that Largo has warned him to stay completely away from the case, but he thinks he can guess the location of the car the Feds are looking for. At the end of the conversation Dashee, now convinced Chee has found the car but wants nothing to do with it, tells Chee that if he sees any boot marks like Chee's up the arroyo he will brush them out

Chee visits Fannie Musket, the mother of Joseph Musket, and tells her he wants to talk about her son. She says her son did not steal the pawn silver and that he had about six hundred dollars in cash and many smaller bills when he went to Burnt Water. His mother describes Joseph as always being good with sheep and an excellent shearer even when he had had to wear metal splints on his fingers which had been smashed from being thrown from a horse.

Chee sees Miss Pauling at the hotel restaurant and she tells Chee that Gaines has been gone since yesterday and she does not know when he will be back. She asks Chee to tell her all that he knows about who killed her brother. He tells her that her brother was flying narcotics and that, at one stage, the DEA thought a man named Richard Palanzer might have been the killer. Chee believes that Gaines was using her to get involved in the case. Cowboy Dashee enters the restaurant and joins them. He tells Chee that a necklace from the stolen pawn items at Burnt Water turned up when a young woman pawned it after receiving it from a man called Ironfingers. He also announces that his hunch about the missing car turned out to be correct and he found it.

Sections 16 - 18 Analysis

Chee's solution to alerting the proper authorities about his discovery of the car is ingenious and once again involves guiding his friend Cowboy Dashee to the location without admitting his own part in the search. His interview with Joseph Musket's mother elicits information about Musket as being both a conscientious Navajo but also one who expects to get a relatively large sum of money in the future. The reader is also informed, almost casually, as to the origin of the designation "Ironfingers", which earlier had intrigued Chee but is now almost negligently passed over without any comment on his part.

When Chee visits Miss Pauling at the Hopi Cultural Center hotel, he learns that Gaines has been away for some time and tries to persuade Miss Pauling to go home. Her adamant desire for revenge for her brother's death leads to the exposition on the difference between Navajo and Anglo American ideas of insanity and revenge and introduces the reader to the "dark wind" of the book's title.

Later when Dashee turns up at the table where Miss Pauling and Chee are having their meal, the fact that Dashee has found and reported the discovery of the missing vehicle is coupled with the shock, for Chee, in hearing that there was no body in the GMC carryall. This shock is conveyed by the reaction of Pauling and Dashee to Chee's demeanor rather than a description of his internal emotions.



Section 19

Section 19 Summary

Chee arrives at the New Mexico State prison to check information about Musket who is reportedly quiet and got good reports for his work. He also learns that Musket had money in his canteen account that was deposited there by lawyers connected to narcotic trafficking.

Examining the Musket file, Chee finds the police record to be unremarkable, but there had been an arrest for a robbery at a Seven Eleven store in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Musket had waited in the car outside while a Thomas West had gone inside the store with a gun. The two suspects had been caught after they abandoned the getaway car. West had been indicted but Musket had not been positively identified. Musket was finally sent to the Santa Fe penitentiary after a drug bust when eight hundred pounds of marijuana had been off loaded from a light aircraft in the desert south of Alamogordo, New Mexico and the pickup, driven by Musket and Thomas West, had fallen into a DEA trap.

Thomas West's files show that West was stabbed to death by an unknown assailant in the recreation yard earlier in the year. Chee recognizes the face of Thomas West as Jake West's son. The date of West's death was July 6th, two days before the death of John Doe and before Joseph Musket's disappearance after burglarizing the Burnt Water store on July 28th. Chee examines the visitor's log for West. Among the few visits he had had were two by Jerald R. Jansen, attorney at law, Houston, Texas. Chee recalls the vision of Jansen dead by the wrecked plane in Wepo Wash. Jansen had visited West in February and then on May second, long before and then after Musket had been paroled. West had also been visited by T. L. Johnson from the DEA four days before he was stabbed.

Chee asks to talk to any of West's friends and meets a man called Archer in the interview room. Chee asks Archer why West wanted to talk to Johnson from the DEA and is surprised to learn that it was Johnson who had initiated the visit. Archer tells Chee that Johnson deliberately set up West by taking him out of the prison for the interview and keeping him outside the institution to make it appear he was snitching on some deal. West and Archer had decided they would take the risk of West not requesting segregation, but West was very scared of what Johnson had done and had no information to give to the DEA agent. Archer says that West and Musket had been friends before Musket's parole but that Archer, had never trusted him.

Section 19 Analysis

Chee's investigations at the Santa Fe Penitentiary are extremely fruitful. The details of the yard murder of West's son explain the reaction Chee noted when he first visited



West at the Burnt Water Trading Post. He also confirms the role that Johnson played in the death and determines that the narcotic related lawyer Jansen had visited Tom West twice while he was in prison. The fact that both West and Musket had been caught during a narcotic delivery from a small plane in a remote desert location adds another detail to the emerging scenario of the crash in Wepo Wash.



Sctions 20 - 21

Sctions 20 - 21 Summary

Chee phones Cowboy Dashee to ask about the missing dope and Cowboy tells him they are certain it is not hidden near where the GMC was found. Johnson and a couple of agents from the FBI at Flagstaff have been in on the search, they found a few tracks but nothing of significance.

The next afternoon Chee returns to the windmill and continues his methodical examination of the area but finds nothing. He goes down to the shrine and looks at the granite slab under the shale and sees the pattern of dampness has spread. The windmill it is no longer a mystery to Chee so he will stop at the Burnt Water Store to call Cowboy Dashee.

Cowboy takes Chee to see a man called Taylor Sawkatewa who does not speak English and he will have to translate for Chee but that Sawkatewa is a member of what is left of the Fog Clan. Cowboy speaks at length to the smiling old man and Cowboy turns to Jim and explains what he has just said to the old man. Chee tells Cowboy to tell the old man that it would be a great help if someone had been in the Wash at the time of the crash and had seen what happened and could tell them what he had seen. Sawkatewa tells of a place near the windmill where the earth has blessed the Hopis with water and where the Hopis have repaid the blessing with pahos, but now people have drilled a well in the earth and drained the water away from the sacred place and the spirit of the spring has stopped producing the water and has knocked down the paho offering.

Chee says how difficult it is to break the windmill as each time it is repaired it becomes stronger. Chee continues, if he wanted to help the guardian of the shrine he would buy a sack of cement and leave it at the windmill with a sack of sand and a tub full of water together with a small funnel and drive away. Then the guardian only has to make a thin paste of the cement, sand, and water and pour it little by little through the funnel into the windmill shaft and repeat this until all the cement is in the well and the shaft is sealed as solid as a rock.

Cowboy is incredulous, but Sawkatewa has understood most of what Chee has said and says three words. Chee says he will leave the cement at the windmill two nights from now. The old man says that he did see a man at the Wash putting lanterns in the sand with another man holding a gun on him. In a little while a plane came over very low and the man who placed the lanterns flashed a light at the plane and it landed and crashed. At that point the man with the gun shot the man with the flashlight. Then he took the flashlight and looked around the plane, after which he replaced all the lanterns in the car except for one, which he left out so that he could see. Then the man started taking things out of the airplane and put the body of the man he shot up against the rock and drove away. When Chee questions what the man took out of the plane and what he did with what he removed, Sawkatewa says there were two aluminum suitcases but he



did not put them into the car, but instead disappeared into the dark with them. The man was gone for only a few minutes and he had not been able to see what he looked like.

Sections 20 - 21 Analysis

When Chee finally understands the connection between the water seep at the Hopi shrine and the vandalized windmill, the reader is left in suspense until the interview between Chee and the guardian of the shrine. The interview, arranged by the good graces of Cowboy Dashee who also acts as an interpreter, is a compelling example of Chee's innate diplomacy and gives Chee the crucial facts of what Sawkatewa witnessed the night of the plane crash in Wepo Wash. It is also a tour de force of exposition of the beliefs and myths of the Hopi people, the origin of the Water and Fog clans, and how the Ya Ya ceremonial was added to the Hopi religion. The implementation of Chee's highly irregular but very original final solution to the problem of the windmill is left to the imagination of the reader.

Chee now knows that there were two aluminum suitcases off loaded from the plane but that they were not put into the car.



Sections 22 - 25

Sections 22 - 25 Summary

Chee is on his way to the Wepo Wash when he notices vehicle tracks in the sand dampened by the previous night's rain. Chee knows that the tires are not those of Cowboy Dashee and he drives cautiously in the predawn light. He parks by the windmill and walks to the shrine. There are no tracks around the shrine and he proceeds onwards to where the arroyo drains into Wepo Wash, making frequent stops to listen. From where he is hidden behind some brush he sees a white Chevy Blazer parked by the plane wreckage and two men, one of whom is Collins who had handcuffed him in his trailer, while the other is only vaguely familiar. He also recognizes Johnson, who appears to be looking up the arroyo. Johnson calls out to Collins to ask him if he has found anything and Collins replies that they have found nothing. After a discussion under the wing of the aircraft they all get in the Blazer and drive off.

Last night's rain has swept the sand in the wash clean and it is easy for Chee to verify where Johnson and the others had been searching. Johnson must have found out what they had learned from the old Hopi the night before from Dashee's report, which he must have filed last night when he returned to Flagstaff. Chee goes back to his pickup and returns with the jack handle. He uses the sharpened end, which is used to pry off the hubcaps. After about twenty minutes, just behind the basalt rock, he strikes metal and uncovers the two suitcases, their handles no more than six inches below the surface. He replaces the sand he has disturbed and spends the next hour obliterating his tracks in Wepo Wash.

Chee receives a dispatch asking him to call Miss Pauling at the Hopi Cultural Center motel. At the hotel Miss Pauling tells Chee that someone has left a message for Gaines saying they will call back at four pm. They discuss the various ways of intercepting the call and in desperation they decide that Chee will cause a diversion at four pm and get the desk clerk away from the switchboard. Then Miss Pauling will take the call at the switchboard and listen in.

After the call comes in, Miss Pauling tells Chee that the caller asked Gaines if he wanted the suitcases back, and when Gaines said yes the man told him it could be arranged but the payment was to be five hundred thousand dollars. He insisted that The Boss himself must deliver it and the trade would be at nine pm Friday night. At one point, Gaines said "Palanzer I don't know why you are doing this" but the caller simply laughed. The reason for insistence on The Boss himself bringing the money was that this would be insurance against anyone trying anything funny. But the main point was the caller did not specify the place where the trade was to take place.

Back at his office there is nothing but a note from Johnson saying he wants to see him and a report on the necklace recovered from the stolen goods from the Burnt Water burglary. Chee senses something wrong about the report and calls the trading post at



Teec Nos Pos. to find out about Graywoman Nezzie's clan. The clerk tells him she is "born to" Standing Rock and "born for" Bitter Water. He recalls his visit to Joseph Musket's mother. She had told him she was "born to" Standing Rock Dinee and "born for" Mud Clan. Now he realizes what has been bothering him. The man who gave the necklace to Edna Nezzie could not have been Joseph Musket. For a Navajo male to dance and have relations with a Navajo female of the same maternal clan would have been such heinous incest that it would have been virtually impossible.

Chee leaves a note for Largo and heads for Cameron where he buys a sack of cement and the other items he promised Sawkatewa, then returns to the Burnt Water Trading Post after leaving the cement and other purchases under a tarpaulin at the windmill. Chee can dig up the suitcases, hide them somewhere else and leave a note for Musket forcing him to come to him, but this will just lead him into trouble with the drug dealers who are already probably looking for him.

Chee now theorizes that West had simply used him to falsely identify Joseph Musket the day Chee had first gone to the Burnt Water Trading Post. Musket had been killed and West did not want the drug dealers to change their plans, so he had disposed of Musket's body by leaving it to be found by the Hopis, knowing they would not report it until they had finished their ceremony. He also mutilated the body in the fashion of a Navajo witch to avoid leaving any identification. Somehow West had got wind of the planned drug shipment and did not want the drug dealers to know that their local man had been killed, so the death and the body had to be concealed. No one would have thought of checking the dental records of a corpse with those of a person, Joseph Musket, who was officially alive. After a little more thought, Chee comes to the conclusion that West disposed of the body of Richard Palanzer for the same reason, to further confuse the drug dealers.

When Chee returns home, he smells coffee and runs toward his truck as he hears the trailer door bang open and the sound of running feet. Chee starts the pickup and snaps on the headlights, illuminating the two men running towards him. One of them is the man who was with Johnson at the crash site and the other is the younger man who had been watching him at the Hopi Cultural Center, and now has a pistol in his hand. Chee roars backwards down the track and does not turn his headlights on again until he is back on the asphalt.

Sections 22 - 25 Analysis

The realization that Dashee's reports are being relayed to Johnson comes as a shock to Chee but explains why the DEA agent and his men are already looking for the suitcases when he arrives at the crash site before dawn. The equally clear conclusion that they are aware that he also knows does not become apparent to Chee until he just barely avoids being apprehended by the DEA agents at his trailer at the end of Section 25. Chee's actions when he successfully locates the missing narcotic shipment are governed by the restrictions placed on him by both his boss Captain Largo and the DEA agents.



The description of the interception by Miss Pauling of the phone call to Ben Gaines and the diversion caused by Chee at the Hopi Cultural Center seem a little contrived but serve the purpose of alerting Chee to the exact time, but not the location, of the proposed payoff. When Chee uses his unique Navajo knowledge of clan etiquette to uncover the deception about Musket, the house of cards tumbles down and he also sees the answer to the puzzles of the jewelry burglary and the identity of the unknown corpse.



Sections 26 - 28

Sections 26 - 28 Summary

Chee drives his pickup along a sand bottomed cul-de-sac off Moenkopi Wash, making sure he is not being followed, then unrolls his blanket and makes himself comfortable. He examines the fact that two armed men were waiting for him in his trailer. Johnson warned him that the narcotics dealers would be looking for him, and he has not returned Johnson's telephone call.

He reconsiders what he learned from the telephone call to Gaines. Tomorrow night the exchange will be made. Five hundred thousand dollars for two suitcases filled with cocaine. He is beginning to believe the caller was West, but wonders why the payoff is delayed and why tomorrow is different from any other night.

Chee wakes feeling stiff and sore. He assumes the men waiting for him in his trailer will be long gone but he takes no chances and drives south to Cameron at sunrise and goes into the roadside diner for breakfast and to call Dashee. When Chee describes the call Miss Pauling intercepted at the Hopi Cultural Center, Dashee accuses him of nearly burning down the Center; however, when Chee explains why he thinks the payoff is delayed to Friday night, Dashee reluctantly tells Chee the details of the Hopi ceremonial that will take place in Sityakti.

Chee kills time over his breakfast until he judges it a good time to call Captain Largo. He tells Largo about the two men who were waiting for him in his trailer. He also tells him that Miss Pauling overheard a telephone call to Gaines telling him he could have the cocaine back for five hundred thousand dollars at nine pm on Friday. Largo says he is going to do something about the DEA but adds that he is officially warning Chee to not get involved in Federal affairs, if he does he will be fired. Chee points out that he is working on the vandalized windmill, solving the Burnt Water burglary, finding Joseph Musket, and identifying John Doe. He then suggests to a mollified Largo that they check any dental records of Musket's teeth with the x-rays that were taken of the unidentified corpse, John Doe.

When Largo asks for paperwork on all this information Chee tells him he is down in Cameron and will file it all tomorrow. Right now he is going to spend the day catching the Burnt Water burglar.

By mid afternoon Chee is waiting at a place from which he has a good view of where the suitcases of cocaine are buried. If either Musket or West comes to pick up the cocaine, Chee will be waiting for them. The air is humid and thunderheads are boiling up to the west. Chee feels clear headed and sharp. As he waits he reviews all he knows about the affair, how West distorts reality with illusion, and wonders why West is only asking for five hundred thousand dollars when the shipment, according to the DEA, is worth many millions. Slowly Chee begins to realize a possible white man's reason. He is



now sure that West will not be coming for the cocaine. He goes back to his patrol car and drives it to the crash site. His shovel is in his pickup truck but he easily unearths the two suitcases with his bare hands and loads them into the trunk of his patrol car. He writes a note which says, "I have the suitcases. Hang around Burnt Water and remember the number of letters in this message". He wipes his fingerprints off an empty aspirin bottle, puts the note in it, and drops it in the hole where the suitcases had been.

Sections 26 - 28 Analysis

The Navajo-Hopi connection is again used when Chee manages to importune the nightshift-working Cowboy Dashee to divulge the details of the Hopi ceremony which is due to take place in the village where West used to live with his Hopi wife. Chee guesses that this is when the payoff will take place. He also squares away Captain Largo by pointing out the cases of windmill vandalism, unidentified corpses, and Trading Post burglary with which he is dealing. He suggests they check the dental records of the unidentified corpse with those of Joseph Musket, which are probably available either at the Penitentiary or in Flagstaff.

The story now includes a digression in the form of Chee's sweat lodge ritual, being that of a Navajo hunting ceremony. These depictions of the myths and rituals of the Hopi and Navajo peoples form integral and unique elements in the book and the different songs and chants of the Navajo ritual provide a fascinating backdrop to Chee's preparation to finally solve all the puzzling elements of the case—preparations which are now focused on Jake West.

When Chee finally arrives at the plane crash site to apprehend whomever comes to collect the buried suitcases, he has retrieved his patrol car, from his trailer presumably, but this is not specified, and he has told Largo he is in Cameron. While he waits he comes to the conclusion that, thinking in a white man's way, no one will come to pick them up. He unearths the suitcases and takes them with him to the village of Sityakti.



Sections 29 - 30

Sections 29 - 30 Summary

Chee drives to the rim of the Third Mesa and parks behind a growth of junipers in the wash. He has at least an hour of daylight in which to walk back up the steep climb back to the mesa rim. Chee sees West's jeep parked behind some brush. He checks the vehicle but finds nothing of interest and hurries on. Chee guesses that West had telephoned the location for the transfer and has come early to avoid having a trap set for him. After a while he sees a dark blue Lincoln slowly approach. A man leaves exits the car and goes into a group of junipers along the cliff. The Boss, for that is whom Chee believes this to be, has brought a bodyguard with him. He follows the bodyguard as he skirts the mesa rim until he is lost in the deepening twilight.

The thunder booms in the distance and Chee hears the faint sound of ceremonial drumming. No one is in sight, just some old pickups, no sign of the Lincoln. Lightning flashes beyond the village and Chee skirts the plaza, making himself as unobtrusive as possible. He finds a path between rough stonewalls leading to the lower plaza in the oldest part of the village. The blue Lincoln is parked on the other side of the plaza.

A man is slowly circling the little plaza. He is wearing a ceremonial kirtle and rattles made of tortoise shells are tied just below his knees. On his head he wears a helmet with two great curved horns. He turns and faces Chee and shouts "Haquimi?" directly at him. Chee freezes; the man cannot possibly see him. The walker flourishes his rattles and turns a quarter turn away from him. Again the man shouts "Haquimi?" and again he stands motionless. Chee relaxes. This is one of the members of the Two Horn society giving his kiva the assurance that no one is about unless it is a kachina who will answer, "I am I."

He can see the man in the Lincoln now and Chee moves into an empty house on the left to get a better view. There is a peculiar smell in the empty house, but before he can investigate Chee hears the rattle of another patrolman coming. This patrolman is larger than the other and is peering into the empty houses on either side of the alley. In the dim light of the plaza Chee sees the patrolman-priest of the Two Horn society walking slowly toward the Lincoln. Chee wonders what the man in the Lincoln will do when the watchman asks him what he is doing there. At the Lincoln, the Two Horn priest is moving away from the car window. Chee realizes it must be West but wonders why he is not carrying the two briefcases containing the money. He hesitates, but then sprints towards the Lincoln through a thunderous torrent of rain which descends on the plaza. A tall blond man emerges from a ruined building at the same time Chee dashes into the plaza. He gets to the car a second or two before Chee. He stops Chee and says, "Help him." Chee finds the body of a middle-aged man with a dozen savage blows to the throat and neck. Chee tells the blond man that he cannot help the man in the car, as he is already dead. Chee catches sight of the two briefcases on the floor of the front seat.



West could have simply reached in and taken them but he has not. Chee now knows what West wants. His motive is not money but the "dark wind" of vengeance.

Chee clammers through piñon branches and runs and walks as fast as he can to where West left his jeep. When he pushes aside the brush where the jeep is hidden he finds West already climbing into the jeep. Chee takes out his pistol and snaps on his flashlight. West seems to realize that Chee, who still visualizes the bloody throat of the man in the Lincoln, is very serious. Chee commands West to get out, put his hands on the hood, and spread his legs apart. As he searches him and removes a snub nosed revolver from his hip pocket, he asks him where the knife is and why he did not take the money. West says he wanted the man and not the money because his son was killed. Chee handcuffs West and then tells him he thinks West killed the wrong man.

A beam of light suddenly dazzles Chee and a voice orders him to drop his gun and the flashlight. In the light from the flashlight on the ground Chee sees that it is Johnson. Johnson is impatient to get out of the rain and asks West where he has the coke. Chee realizes he should have known that Johnson would have intercepted West's instructions about the meeting. Chee tells West that he does not think Johnson is going to read him his rights and Johnson tells West that he can keep the five hundred thousand dollars and he will take the coke.

When West does not move, Johnson smashes him in the face with the pistol. Johnson tells Chee that West still thinks he is a regular type of cop but that Chee knows differently. Chee tells Johnson that he has been suspicious about him since he found out that Johnson deliberately set up West's boy in the penitentiary. Chee makes sure that West is listening when he goes on to confirm the details of what Johnson did at the prison.

Chee guesses that Johnson will shoot him at the next thunderclap, and he wants West to see it so that he will cooperate. He tells Johnson that he should not kill him, as he has the cocaine not West. He describes the two aluminum suitcases and how he dug them up from behind the basalt rock. Johnson tells him it is worth about fifteen million dollars. Chee tells Johnson they need to discuss business but Johnson knows where Chee has left his patrol car and he thinks the police radio in it will be useful. The downpour is now intense and the two handcuffed men are almost blinded by the rain as they stumble towards the patrol car under the direction of Johnson's revolver.

Johnson makes Chee extricate his keys and drop them on the ground. As Johnson picks up the keys Chee hears a roaring sound—it is the sound of brush and dislodged boulders from a violent flood as all the drainages in the area send a wall of water down from the Polacca and Wepo towards the Little Colorado River.

Johnson has deduced where Chee has hidden the cocaine shipment. West fumbles with the key in the trunk at the same time as keeping his gun on Chee. Chee sees the look of pure hate in West's eyes as he tries to explain to Johnson that he has replaced the cocaine in the shipment with Pillsbury flour. Johnson manages to fire twice before West's shoulder slams him against the trunk. Chee, with his arms pinned, tries to get



the tire iron to use as a weapon but then grabs the unopened suitcase and swings it at Johnson who is getting back to his feet looking for his pistol. The suitcase misses and bounces past Johnson's legs to tumble down the slope towards the roaring water of Polacca Wash. Johnson scrambles after it and is pulling it to safety when he realizes his mistake and is struck by West's body. He falls backwards downhill into the torrential river.

Chee slips and slides down to where West is lying beside the suitcase. He tells West that he got the right man this time and that Johnson is probably drowned by now. The water is rising rapidly and Chee finally gets West up and into the car. Chee tells West that a check on Musket's dental records will confirm that West killed him and that if Chee takes his cuffs off so he can drive it will do him no good to kill him. Chee gives up the idea of West driving and asks him to tell him where he has hidden the jewelry from the fake burglary. He will have to leave West in the vehicle and go and try and get help. West murmurs faintly that the jewelry is hidden in the kitchen under the sink.

Chee manages to get out of the car and falls exhausted to the ground. He becomes aware that West is no longer breathing and realizes that there is no longer any reason to hurry. He thinks about Miss Pauling and how her brother's death is now avenged just as West is avenged for the death of his son.

Chee forces himself to get the second aluminum suitcase out of the trunk with his cuffed hands and eases it down the slope to the water's edge where the river is lapping at the first suitcase. He shoves it hard with his foot and it disappears in the water. He does the same with the second suitcase and it too disappears into the darkness.

Sections 29 - 30 Analysis

These two action packed sections carry the dramatic conclusion of the story and the exposition of many of the details of the case. The portrayal of the challenges of the patrolman priest with the great two-horned headdress in the dark and the reply of the kachina are masterful strokes in an already dramatic scene. The background development of the storm and the ensuing violent flash flood are all elements in the final resolution of the story. West's revelation of his motives and the hiding place of the falsely burglarized jewelry are all necessary for Chee's solution to two of his cases, and Johnson's justly deserved death by drowning as he tries to save his precious narcotics solves the problem of his threat to Chee and any complications arising from Chee's instructions to keep out of the narcotics case. Chee's consignment of the aluminum suitcases to the waters of the raging flood along with Johnson's body would seem to absolve him from any further involvement in the narcotics case.

But, when the reader has digested all the dramatic events of the night, he or she is left with the spectacle of a handcuffed Chee with a dead West in his patrol car. Presumably he can contact his dispatcher on his patrol car phone and the bodyguard will drive away the Lincoln with the corpse of the man in the straw hat and the two briefcases stuffed with notes. Johnson and the dope shipment may or may not emerge downstream in the



Little Colorado River and the same flood that became the Polacci River will have wiped out the hole in Wepo Wash where Chee unearthed the suitcases and left the note in the aspirin bottle. But the reader is still left with Chee in Johnson's handcuffs and West dead from Johnson's bullets.

Chee's "paper work" for Captain Largo will have to be a masterpiece of "economy in the truth" when he reports on the successful recovery of the burglarized pawn silver and the solution to the identity of John Doe.



Characters

Jim Chee

Jim Chee is the main character in *The Dark Wind*. He is a Navajo Tribal Policeman and has been transferred to the Tuba City sub agency from the Crown Point agency in New Mexico. He is single and lives in a trailer, which is parked near to the Tuba City sub agency office, he does not drink alcohol, and, in this account, does not have any romantic interests.

The work involves law enforcement in the Black Mesa area of central Arizona in the Navajo-Hopi Joint Use Tribal lands. Chee is an expert tracker and has been given a slate of cases to solve by his boss, Captain Largo. These cases range from the seemingly trivial, a vandalized water mill, to an unidentified corpse with mutilated hands and feet.

In Navajo parlance Jim Chee's "born to clan" is the Slow Talking Dinee of his mother and his "born for clan", the clan of his father, is the Bitter Water People. Chee is also studying, under the guidance of his aged uncle, Hosteen Nakai, to become a shaman or "singer" of the Slow Talking People. He often spends his free moments memorizing complicated Navajo rituals from tapes he has made of his uncle singing the Night Chant so that he will eventually be able to learn another section of that eight-day ritual.

As a newcomer to the Tuba City sub agency he has become friendly with Cowboy Dashee, a Deputy Sheriff and a Hopi. Dashee and Chee often cooperate in their work, especially when it involves a Navajo Tribal Policeman dealing with traditional Hopi matters.

While staking out the vandalized windmill in Wepo Wash, Jim Chee becomes involved in an aborted nighttime delivery of narcotics when a small plane crashes near the windmill. Officially, not the concern of the Navajo Tribal Police, Jim Chee becomes inexorably involved in tracking down the missing narcotic shipment as it becomes intertwined with the routine cases he has been assigned. His traditional Navajo outlook allows him to ignore the outrageous behavior of the chief DEA agent, who suspects him of being involved in the missing drugs, and to concentrate on unraveling the different elements of the puzzle.

Cowboy Dashee

Albert (Cowboy) Dashee is the young Deputy Sheriff of Coconino County based in Flagstaff. Chee and Dashee first meet on the recovery of the decomposed corpse from Black Mesa when Dashee earns Chee's gratitude by saying that, though Hopis have their hangups, he is aware that Navajos do not like handling dead bodies, and voluntarily takes on the task of putting the corpse into the body bag.



Cowboy Dashee always drives fast and brakes and parks in a cloud of dust at the Burnt Water Trading post. His developing friendship with Chee often takes the form of humorous references to "you Navajos", as when he states that all Navajos look alike and when he jokingly suggests to Miss Pauling that Chee might be pretending to be a Hopi.

Underneath his official uniform, Dashee is a very traditional Hopi, despite having attended Northern Arizona State University. He is known by his Hopi name of "Crow Boy" to his family, belongs to the Side Corn Clan, and is considered to be a valuable member of the Kachina Society in his village of Shipaulovi.

Chee is aware that Dashee is a very strict Hopi and defers to him implicitly in matters involving Hopi religion and beliefs. He manages, however, to prevail on Dashee's good services in gaining access to the Hopi elder, Lomatewa, who originally found the body of the unidentified Navajo while he was engaged in preparation for the Niman Kachina ceremony. In the course of this meeting Dashee learns quite a bit about Chee and the fact that he is undergoing instruction to become a Navajo "singer".

Chee leaks to Dashee the location of the hidden GMC carryall, which he has located using his expert field craft, thereby giving Dashee the credit for the discovery and avoiding himself being involved in a Federal investigation. This further cements the mutual cooperation between the Hopi Deputy Sheriff and the Navajo Tribal Policeman.

Then in the most critical meetings, which Dashee arranges, he takes Chee to meet with the guardian of the Hopi shrine and witness to the nighttime crash of the plane in Wepo Wash and acts as a translator between Sawkatewa and Chee. Cowboy Dashee's expression of humorous incredulity at Chee's unconventional solution to the vandalized windmill typifies the working relationship which has developed between the two lawmen.

Jake West

Jake West is the owner and operator of the Burnt Water Trading Post. Originally from Phoenix or Los Angeles, he has operated the trading post for twenty years and has established a fairly good reputation among his Navajo and Hopi customers. He had once been married to a Hopi woman and had a son by her. The local Hopis consider West to be a "powaqa", or "two-heart—that is a person with the soul of an animal as well as that of a human. At one stage in his career Jake West was a professional magician and he often entertains his customers with illusions and tricks.

In West's living quarters there are photographs of his son Tom, who was in the Marines. When Chee asks him about his son now, he notices that West's normally genial demeanor becomes stony faced. He tells Chee that his son made some bad friends in El Paso when he left the Marines and they killed him.



Captain Largo

Captain Largo is the senior officer at the Tuba City Navajo Tribal sub agency. He is Jim Chee's boss and is determined that Chee not get mixed up in the drug smuggling case, which is a Federal Investigation and not the concern of the Navajo Tribal Police. Captain Largo is "born to" Standing Rock Dinee and is "born for" the Red Forehead Dinee, which is also the secondary "born for" clan of Chee's father. Thus Chee and Largo are distantly related kinsmen.

Joseph Musket

Joseph Musket had been a friend of Tom West, Jake West's son, who was murdered in Santa Fe Penitentiary. They had been arrested together in a failed drug smuggling operation, and when Musket was paroled he came to the Burnt Water Trading Post to work for his friend's father, Jake West. Jake West tells the Navajo Tribal Police that he fired Joseph Musket and later Musket returned and stole a lot of pawned silver from the Trading Post.

When Chee visits Musket's mother near the Trading Post at Cottonwood, she tells him that when Joseph came back from prison he had a good deal of cash and was planning on buying a herd of sheep and rejoining his people as a herdsman. He had arranged for Hosteen Begay to sing the Enemy Way ceremony for him on leaving the prison. His mother also describes the metal splints Joseph had had to wear on his hands after a horse accident, and in doing so explains the origin of his name of "Ironfingers".

Fannie Musket

Fannie Musket is the mother of the missing Joseph Musket and she lives near the Cottonwood Trading Post. When Chee goes to visit her they introduce themselves by family, by kinship, and by clan. Mrs. Musket is Standing Rock, "born for" the Mud Clan.

She tells him a good deal about her son and why he would not have stolen the pawn silver at the Burnt Water Trading Post.

When Chee leaves she asks him that if he finds her son to tell him to come home.

T. L. Johnson

T. L. Johnson is the head of the DEA investigation into the failed drug delivery operation. He is convinced that Chee is somehow involved and employs strong-arm tactics to try and get Chee to admit knowing where the missing cocaine can be found. Johnson is unscrupulous and ruthless, and Chee, when he goes to the Santa Fe prison, finds out that Johnson deliberately set up Tom West to be murdered by inmates as a snitch when he could get him to reveal details about the impending drug shipment.



His greed and preoccupation with getting his own hands on the drug shipment eventually prove his undoing.

Miss Pauling

Gail Pauling is the middle-aged sister of the pilot of the plane that was delivering the drug shipment when he was killed by the sabotaged landing in Wepo Wash. She arrives, accompanied by an attorney Ben Gaines, to try and find out how her younger brother, Robert, was killed. She is staying at the Hopi Cultural Center motel and refuses to take Chee's advice to go home. She is bound and determined to get revenge for her brother's death.

Robert Pauling

Robert Pauling is the young pilot of the Cessna that delivered the drug shipment to the rendezvous in Wepo Wash. He is a regular pilot for the drug organization and has scouted the route and landing place thoroughly. He used to fly for the Tactical Air force and is used to covert night landings.

Jerry Jansen

Jerry Jansen is a known associate of narcotics dealers. He is a lawyer from Houston and visited both West and Musket in the Santa Fe prison where he deposited money into their commissary accounts. His body is found at the crash site; he has been shot in the back.

Richard Palanzer

Richard Palanzer's photograph is circulated by the FBI as being a known associate of the narcotics traffic and the person whom the DEA suspect drove off with the drug shipment from the crash site. Jim Chee finds his decomposing corpse in the locked GMC carryall, hidden in an arroyo in the Wepo Wash area

Albert Lomatewa

Albert Lomatewa is the Messenger in the preparation for the Hopi ceremony of the Niman Kachina. He is accompanied by two others when he is carrying the bundle of spruce and comes on the mutilated corpse of the dead Navajo. He is the one who persuades the others to not report finding the body until after the successful completion of the Niman Kachina. Lomatewa lives in Shipaulovi, the home village of Cowboy Dashee, and it is here that Dashee arranges for him to speak to Jim Chee.



Taylor Sawkatewa

Taylor Sawkatewa is the guardian of the Hopi shrine that Chee discovers in Wepo Wash, near to the plane crash site and the vandalized windmill. He lives in the village of Piutki on the Second Mesa and speaks no English—only Hopi. He is a member of the Fog Clan and the Ya Ya Society. Cowboy Dashee takes Jim Chee to meet Sawkatewa. In the protracted meeting, Chee suggests a solution to the windmill problem and its adverse affect on the water seep at the Hopi shrine. In turn, Chee elicits from the Hopi elder the details of what he saw on the night of the plane crash in Wepo Wash.



Objects/Places

Tuba City

Tuba City is the location of the Navajo Tribal Police sub agency in Central Arizona, north of Flagstaff.

Flagstaff, Arizona

Flagstaff is the major city in Arizona where the Coconino County Sheriff's department has its office and from where FBI and DEA agents converge on Wepo Wash, looking for the missing drug shipment.

Crownpoint

Crownpoint is the name of the sub agency in New Mexico from where Jim Chee has been transferred to Tuba City

Navajo-Hopi Joint Use country

The Navajo-Hopi Joint Use country is the land from which the US Supreme Court has decreed nearly nine thousand Navajos are to be forced out of their ancestral homes to make room for Hopi people.

Wepo Wash

Wepo Wash is the dry wash near Tuba City where Jim Chee stakes out a vandalized windmill and where a light aircraft crashes during the night. It is also the place where Chee discovers a Hopi shrine near a water seep.

Polacca Wash

Polacca Wash is the wash running below the village of Sityatki and which floods into a torrential river during the Hopi ceremony of the "Washing of the Hair".

Black Mesa

Black Mesa is a vast, broken plateau, rising out of the Painted Desert, with a dozen major dry washes that drain off the torrential "male rains". Virtually roadless and waterless, it is largely uninhabited except for a few summer grazing camps.



The Mesas

The First, Second, and Third Mesas are a series of parallel running mesas in the heart of the Navajo and Hopi tribal lands in central Arizona.

Burnt Water Trading Post

The Burnt Water Trading Post is on the Second Mesa. For twenty years it has been owned and operated by Jake West and used by both Hopi and Navajo. This is where Joseph Musket worked and from where the pawn silver was reported stolen.

Shipaulovi

Shipaulovi is the home village of Cowboy Dashee and also of Lomatewa, the Messenger for the Niman Kachina.

Piutki

Piutki is a village on the First Mesa, which is the village of the nearly extinct Fog Clan. It is the home of Sawkatewa, the Hopi elder, who is guardian of the shrine in Wepo Wash.

Sityatki

Sityakti is on the East Rim of the Third Mesa. It is the site of the "Washing of the Hair" ceremony, during which the drug shipment is to be returned to the drug organization. It is also the village where Jake West lived for two years with his Hopi wife.

Windmill Number 6

Windmill Number 6 is the wind driven water well drilled into Wepo Wash by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as part of the Hopi resettlement scheme in the Navajo-Hopi Joint Use lands. It is being repeatedly vandalized by person or persons unknown.

Cessna

A high winged Cessna aircraft is used for the covert delivery of the smuggled drug shipment by a nighttime landing in Wepo Wash. It is piloted by Robert Pauling and crashes when the lantern lights marking the landing area are deliberately misplaced.



Drug Shipment

The drug shipment is contained in two aluminum suitcases, each weighing over sixty pounds. According to T. L. Johnson of the DEA it is of the highest purity and is worth several million dollars.

Green GMC Carryal

The vehicle, which drives away from the crash scene and is discovered hidden in an arroyo by Jim Chee, is a Green GMC Carryall.

Pawn Silver

Joseph Musket is suspected of stealing a collection of pawned silver objects from the Burnt Water Trading Post. A big squash blossom necklace from this collection of silver is given to a girl at a dance by a man who says he is Joseph Musket. She eventually tries to pawn it at Mexican Water.

Hopi Cultural Center Motel

The motel at the Hopi Cultural Center is where Miss Pauling and Ben Gaines stay while they are looking into the death of Miss Pauling's younger brother. It is where Chee creates a diversion by setting fire to some tumbleweed so that Miss Pauling can overhear a telephone call to Ben Gaines by operating the switchboard.

Burnt Water Quadrangle

The Burnt Water Quadrangle is on page thirty-four in the book of US Geologic Survey Quadrangle Maps of Arizona. It is a highly detailed map used by federal surveyors and geoscientists and also by Navajo Tribal Policeman Jim Chee when he tracks down the missing vehicle in Wepo Wash.

Prayer Plumes

The Hopi name for the prayer plumes that Chee finds in the shrine at the water seep is "pahos". They consist of tiny semi-faces painted on sticks framed by two downy feathers.



Corpse Powder

To make corpse powder, a Navajo witch uses those parts of the skin of an individual that have the essence of his soul stamped into it, the skin made up of the whorls of his fingerprints and the soles of the feet.



Themes

The Dark Wind

Jim Chee, as a Navajo Tribal Policeman, often exists between the two worlds of Anglo American stereotypes and bureaucracy and his own Navajo culture. In his senior year at the University of New Mexico he learned not to be upset by the all encompassing generalizations of the white man in terms of his own culture when he or his culture was labeled as "Indian". The same generalizations are, of course, used when the Hopis refer to the Navajos, and as it has been pointed out to him, he himself cannot distinguish between the different European nationalities.

Jim Chee uses his native Navajo culture to properly focus his thinking on the pattern of the evidence he has to unravel to solve the puzzling case in which he becomes embroiled. As his uncle Hosteen Nakai told him, he has to think in "sunwise" fashion and not in the supposedly logical fashion of the white man. Thus, to Chee, the supposed burglary of the pawn silver from the Burnt Water by Ironfingers Musket makes no sense because Musket had lots of cash, and the idea of stealing something of monetary value when he already has a relatively large amount of cash only makes sense to the "belacani".

But nowhere is this fundamental difference more apparent than when Chee ponders the motive for the arrangement for the payoff of the hijacked cocaine shipment. While he waits for the culprit to pick up the buried cocaine suitcases, it is a "white man's motive" that emerges in his thinking and leads him to unearth the suitcases and take them with him to Sityatki.

To Chee, revenge and punishment for an injustice is an alien concept, but one he knows is prevalent in the white culture. For a Navajo, someone who violates basic rules of behavior and inflicts harm on his fellow beings is by definition "out of control" and has been invaded by the "dark wind", which has destroyed his judgment and good sense. The solution to this aberrant behavior is to avoid the person until they have regained their "hozro", their harmony, from the temporary insanity with which they have been inflicted.

It is when Chee understands that this combination of vengeance and temporary insanity is what is driving West's actions that the final pieces of the puzzle fall into place.

Two Peoples, Two Cultures

The location of the story is the Navajo-Hopi Joint Use territory and the background is the US Supreme Court mandated displacement of the resident Navajo peoples to make way for Hopi peoples.



It is a unique historical fact that the indigenous peoples in this part of the Southwest United States are of such different cultures. These differences persist to the present time despite the invasions, first by the Spanish, and then by the white settlers from America.

Essentially the Hopi people are descendents of the permanent residents of the area. Their stone houses dot the rims of mesas and their present day pueblos are unique in their structure and architecture. The Hopis think of themselves as "The Peaceful People", and their religious beliefs center on kachina spirits and are largely based on the kivas, which are found in every Hopi village.

The high-density living conditions in the pueblos are probably the underlying necessity for the "peaceful" nature of the Hopis, but there have been bloody incidents in their history. For example, the Bow Clan massacred the Arrowshaft clan at Awatovi when they allowed Spanish priests into the Arrowshaft village.

In contrast, the Navajo are essentially descended from nomad hunters. As Jim Chee notes when he visits the Hopi elder at Piutki, it is inconceivable to him that Hopis live right on top of each other in these tight little towns without privacy or breathing room. The Navajo do exactly the opposite, they scatter and prefer to live in dispersed hogans.

Navajo rituals, such as the one followed by Jim Chee before he goes to unmask Jake West at Sityakti, are very much those based on the hunter culture. Both the Hopis and the Navajo have witches and sorcerers, the Hopis have sorcerers or "two hearts" and the Navajo have their witches and shamans. Both believe in invoking supernatural powers through elaborate rituals. The Navajo employ the sweat lodge in their rituals, and the imagery is that of the hunter. The Hopi focus on calling the clouds to give them the blessed rain they need for their crops. The Navajo are equally dependent on water to maintain their herds of sheep but have no specific ritual to invoke the rains, as Chee explains to Sawkatewa at the meeting in Piutki, and they, therefore, respect the Hopis because they have this power.

The Hopi creation myth contains the imagery for the difference between the Hopi and the Navajo. It describes how Masaw, guardian of the world, let each kind of people choose their own way of life and how the Navajo picked the long ear of corn for the easy life and the Hopi picked the short, hard ear so that they would always endure even though they would always have hard times

Both peoples have in common respect for mother earth and the care and protection of their sacred places, and they are united in their distrust of the white man. For this they have good reason, but they realize that their young people are picking up the ways of modern white society and they can do nothing to prevent this.

Field Craft

There are strong elements of field craft in the story on the part of the drug smugglers and the Navajo Tribal Policeman who unravels the puzzle resulting from their failed plot.



The preparations by the pilot Pauling, in designing his route and the choice and organization of the landing place, are a good example of the sort of field craft, which he would have acquired when he flew for the Tactical Air Force. The route he flies, two hundred feet above the ground and about the same distance below the mesa rim rock, is dangerous but specifically chosen to avoid detection by the radar scanners at Albuquerque and Salt Lake. Pauling has prepared himself by flying the route, twice by daylight and once by night, to become familiar with the landmarks and terrain. From the departure point in Chihuahua there is less than a hundred miles where he will be registered on any radar screen.

As Chee subsequently deduces from his reading of the marks left in the sand, Pauling, in preparation for the operation, has even practiced landing in Wepo Wash before the night of the shipment delivery. Pauling could not have anticipated the disaster that befell him, it was precipitated by events and actions unknown to him and beyond his control, despite the meticulous preparations he made.

A similar attitude of thoroughness and logical reasoning are demonstrated by Jim Chee when he uses his tracking abilities and field craft to reconstruct the events that took place in Wepo Wash that night and then to find the missing vehicle which had left the scene of the crash.

Chee's ability to read signs left in the sand, the result of life long learning, are in contrast to the slipshod methods employed by the FBI and DEA agents who are officially in charge of the investigation. Chee is quickly able to reconstruct the setup for the landing and even finds the places where Pauling made practice landings in Wepo Wash. He is constantly aware of the wildlife around him, particularly the birds. He notes the behavior of red winged black birds to deduce that he is being followed and the actions of a burrowing owl tell him when the coast is all clear.

To supplement his traditional skills, Chee uses the latest technology in the form of US Geologic Survey maps to eliminate a lot of the terrain where the vehicle he is tracking could not have gone. Then he makes a detailed observation of supposedly unmarked sand to find scratch marks among the tracks of lizards and rattlesnakes that lead him to the major deduction that someone has swept the sand clean of tracks. With this accomplished, it is simply a question of following this specific arroyo, as it now is conclusively the one in which he will find the missing vehicle.

The interplay of traditional skills and modern technology by both the criminals and the Tribal Policeman are an important feature of the story.

Style

Point of View

The first two sections are exceptions to the general structure and point of view of the whole novel. The first section is from the point of view of Lomatewa, the Messenger in the preparation of a Hopi ceremonial. It describes his dealing with the discovery of a Navajo corpse on the trail, which his party is following. The story then cuts, in the conventional cinematic script fashion, to the point of view of the pilot of a light aircraft on a covert drug delivery flight. Both these sections build considerable dramatic tension and the reader anticipates that the seemingly unrelated scenes will eventually be incorporated into the general development of the plot.

In the third section the point of view becomes that of the main character of the story, Jim Chee, Navajo Tribal Policeman, and remains so for the rest of the story. The point of view is in the third person and deals exclusively with Chee's thoughts, feelings, and actions. The thoughts and emotions of other characters are sometimes indicated as part of the exposition coupled with dialogue, but mostly through Chee's perception of the other person and their described actions. The story is told by following the course of Chee's actions and dialogue as he pursues his investigations. There are no more flash forwards or changes in the timeline or in points of view.

The author sometimes uses the device of not explaining Chee's thought processes while he acts on a conclusion based on a line of reasoning not immediately shared with the reader. An example of this is at the end of section twenty, when the reader is told that Chee finds no more mystery in the windmill but decides on a specific course of action. There is no immediate explanation of what leads to this, though the reader has been following all of Chee's discoveries. This device is very effective in developing interest and curiosity on the part of the reader, who has to wait for events to unfold in the next section before the detailed explanation is forthcoming.

A main theme of the story is the exposition of Chee's internal thoughts and emotions when he struggles to maintain a balance between his traditional Navajo culture and the conventional modern American world of white man's bureaucracy.

Setting

The setting is in present day Arizona in the Navajo-Hopi Joint Use territory, a mixture of Navajo camps and Hopi villages in the north central part of the state. The lyrical description of the geography and scenery of the area, its arroyos, dry washes, and mesas, is a major attraction of the writing. There are occasional forays outside the area, however, as in the case of Chee's visit to the Santa Fe State Penitentiary and his return to Tuba City through northern New Mexico.



The crucial connection with traditional Hopi culture comes from Chee's cooperation with Cowboy Dashee, the Deputy Sheriff of Coconino County. Deputy Dashee's office is in Flagstaff, and it is also from here that the FBI and DEA agents descend on the Navajo Tribal Sub Agency.

Most of the action takes place in the arroyos and dry washes of the Black Mesa country, a largely uninhabited plateau rising out of the Painted Desert. Chee's intimate knowledge of the wildlife and vegetation of the area, coupled with his expert field craft in reading and following tracks, lead him to the unlocking of the various puzzles which confront him in his assignments.

Language and Meaning

The language used throughout the book is modern contemporary American. This is particularly true of the dialogue between the various law enforcement officers, Federal, County, and Tribal. However, there are extremely important components of the story when traditional Hopi or Navajo characters are being portrayed. In these cases the vocabulary assumes terms and phrases specific to the culture being described. Thus, in the first section, the Hopi Lomatewa expounds on the traditional precepts embodied in Sotuknang's dogmas. Here the various Hopi terms are italicized when they are presented in the Hopi language and in quotations when the English equivalent is given. This format is maintained consistently through the book and is clear and concise.

In the case of Chee's Navajo chants, for example, when he follows the hunter's purification ceremony, they are presented, quite correctly, as poetic verses, though entirely in English. The Navajo rituals and traditional beliefs are presented as part of Chee's thought processes and as the basis for his emotions. As such, they are a direct exposition of his character. The traditional Hopi myths, legends, and culture are presented in the words of the various Hopi characters in the story, an important example being the portrayal of the Hopi creation myths by Sawkatewa when Chee and Dashee interview him in the Fog Clan village of Piutki.

Structure

The book comprises thirty sections, numbered but not titled, that divide the narrative into distinct settings or events. They are all logically separate, either in time or place, but are a little too short or limited in time to comprise full chapters and, hence, are designated as sections in this guide. Except for the first two sections, they all follow the thoughts and actions of the main character, Jim Chee, and occur in a linear chronological sequence.

The different locations to which Chee goes on his investigations are described in a detailed and factual manner, even to the extent of describing state and county road numbers, so that the reader gains a sense of authenticity in the unfolding of the story.

The first two sections can be considered as introductory in nature. The first section, the discovery of the dead Navajo by a Hopi ceremonial group, plunges the reader directly into a dramatic and significant discovery, which remains a mystery throughout the major part of the book. It also serves as an introduction to Hopi rituals and belief systems.

The second section, a foreshadowing of the plane crash, which occurs in the third section, is from the point of view of the pilot of the aircraft. These two introductory sections are very effective in producing a dramatic start to the story and immediately engage the attention and interest of the reader.

The third section, which describes the crash of the airplane, contains an important expository flashback to the lead-up to Jim Chee being in Wepo Wash that night.

There are no maps to illustrate the geographically detailed accounts of the Flagstaff area of Arizona and Northern New Mexico. This would be helpful to a reader not familiar with the area or someone who does not have a US road map handy.



Quotes

"Sotuknang has warned us. Our corn dies in the fields. There is no grass. The wells are drying out. When we call the clouds they no longer hear us. If we do the Niman Kachina wrong, Sotuknang will have no more patience. He will destroy the Fourth World."
Section 1, p. 5

"We have to move about nine thousand Navajos off that Joint Use land. I'd say you could cut it down to about nine thousand suspects." Section 3, p. 20

"His 'chindi' had slipped away to wander in the darkness - one more ghost to infect the People with sickness and make the nights dangerous." Section 4, p. 27

"What you seem to be saying is that the FBI hasn't had much luck finding someone who can read tracks." Section 5, p. 32

"'Let beauty walk before me,' Chee sang. 'Let beauty walk behind me. Let beauty walk all around me.'" Section 7, p. 55

"'They all acted just like bahanas,' Lomatewa said. 'Drinking beer around the house. Laying in bed in the morning. Just like white people.'" Section 9, pp. 86-87.

"I am studying to be a singer, a medicine man. I know the Blessing Way, and the Night Chant, and some day I will know some of the other ceremonials." Section 10, p. 88

"'We need to get something straight,' Johnson said. 'I'm the cop and you're the suspect. That Indian badge don't mean a damn thing to me'." Section 11, p. 95

"'One of the Gishis,' Cowboy said. 'I know it. You know it. Everybody knows it. Trouble is, all Navajos look alike, and so we don't know who to arrest'." Section 16, p. 127

"'Look,' Chee said. 'If by chance that car does happen to be hidden out in one of those arroyos, you damn sure better keep quiet about this. Largo'd fire my ass. He was sore. He said I wasn't going to get a second warning.'" Section 16, p. 131

"Someone who violated basic rules of behavior and harmed you was, by Navajo definition, 'out of control.' The 'dark wind' had entered him and destroyed his judgment."
Section 18, p. 148

"He was mad and he was scared. He said the narc wanted to know about when a shipment was going to come in, and where, and all about it, and when Tom told him he didn't know nothing, Johnson laughed at him and just parked out there and said he was going to stay parked until all the cons figured he had time to spill his guts." Section 19, p. 169



"Tell him that what he says is good. It is not good for a Navajo or a Hopi to involve himself in white affairs. But tell him that this time there is no choice for us. Navajos and Hopis have been involved." Section 21, p. 198

"Toward my feathered arrow, the man West turns his side.
That my black bow will bless him with its beauty.
That my feathered arrow will make him like the Talking God." Section 27, p. 253

"A hooting sound, more birdlike than human. It came from somewhere just off the little plaza, out of the darkness, and it made the hair bristle on Chee's neck. The voice of a kachina answering his human brother?" Section 29, p. 268

"'I can think of one reason not to kill me,' Chee said. 'I've got the cocaine.'" p. 280

Topics for Discussion

Why did West not simply bury the corpse of Musket like he did that of Richard Palanzer? Did he jeopardize his whole scheme for revenge in a self-indulgent display of his magician skills? Discuss his possible motives.

Jerry Jansen was the drug organization's man in charge of signaling the okay for the Cessna to land. He must have been aware that West would probably shoot him when he had completed the signal sequence. He situation was almost identical to that of Chee's when Johnson was threatening to shoot him and Chee desperately tried to think of a plan. Discuss what must have been Jansen's thoughts. Did he think he could outwit West? What could have been in his mind? Why didn't he give the wrong signal?

Starting with the incident when the attorney Gaines refers to "Indian" trackers, all the participants in this book express the stereotypical attitude of being unable to distinguish individuals from other groups. Describe and discuss each of the incidents, when Gaines, Dashee, Sawkatewa, and Chee himself express this general attitude.

The bureaucratic structure in which the Navajo Tribal police operate is outlined in the flashback in section three with the description of the path followed by the complaint about the vandalized windmill. Describe the various agencies that interact with the Tuba City Sub Agency. Discuss how these authorities might begin their task of displacing nine thousand Navajo households.

The Hopi story of their great migrations would indicate that the Hopis are the original inhabitants in the area of the Painted Desert. If the Navajos, as nomads, intruded in the area, is this the rationale for the US Supreme Court decision to return control of the Joint Usage Tribal lands? Discuss.

Contrast the rigid rituals of the Hopi ceremonials as describe by Lomatewa with the Niman Kachina, and the extemporaneous and customized chants of Chee, the Navajo, when he performs his individually choreographed, hunter purification. Does this reflect fundamental characteristics of the two cultures? Discuss.

Despite the contention of Tom West's friend in the Santa Fe prison, it is unlikely that Tom West was unaware about the drug shipment. Joseph Musket, his only friend in the prison, was involved in the drug shipment and Jansen, the lawyer, had visited West and had deposited money into both his and Musket's commissary. A previous shipment by light plane in Alamogordo had been intercepted by the DEA. Did the organization not have precautions against infiltration by the Feds and contingency plans in case this occurred? Discuss.

The traditional Navajo treatment of people suffering from the "Dark Wind" syndrome might not be too effective when dealing with people like West and Johnson. Discuss the practical options that people in contact with these persons might use to protect themselves from their aggression.



At the end of the story Chee has caused the disappearance of the incriminating cocaine suitcases. Johnson has disappeared into the torrential floodwaters and, presumably, the bodyguard has driven away the Lincoln, the dead "boss", and the five hundred thousand dollars. But Chee is in Johnson's handcuffs and he has the dead West in his patrol car, dead from Johnson's bullets (not Chee's). Discuss the options open to Chee when he completes his "paper work" for Captain Largo the next day.