

The Eagle's Gift Study Guide

The Eagle's Gift by Carlos Castaneda

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Plot Summary

The Eagle's Gift by Carlos Castaneda describes the anthropologist/apprentice sorcerer's trials dealing with memories that gradually emerge from his mind's blanked-out "second awareness," the facility by which sorcerers deal with otherworldly as opposed to everyday phenomena. Carlos learns and shares much about how "the Eagle," a spiritual entity, has over two generations recruited "impeccable" warriors and trained them according to a meticulous "Rule."

The Eagle's Gift reunites Carlos Castaneda, la Gorda, the three little sisters, and "the Genaros" during a strange period in their lives. Carlos' mention of visiting archaeological ruins leads to talk about the second attention and conflict and realignment among the apprentices. Carlos and la Gorda dream together and Carlos begins taking an active part in his own dreaming. Doña Soledad reappears, markedly changed, talking about "parallel lines" and the need to remember one's left side. Silvio Manuel's name brings inexplicably dread and vague memories of a rotating "wall of fog," thereafter a major motif. As the group resolves to break up, la Gorda explodes in painful memories, claiming that Carlos is Silvio's slave.

Over the course of two years, Carlos and la Gorda ferret out all they can remember about Don Juan's life and teaching, including the realization that they have each met Don Juan's Nagual woman. They diligently practice dream immersion, master the four levels of dreaming, and learn "not-doing" to "stop the internal dialogue." They spontaneously entering their "dreaming bodies," the "no-man's land" between worlds and parallel lines, and cross over in their whole bodies. They deduce more than they remember and realize that they have bridged their two sides in a minimal fashion.

Carlos recalls Don Juan's teaching about the warrior's "rule," given by the Eagle and perpetuated by seers. The double nature of Naguals, how they are trained and how in turn gather and train a next generation of warriors is examined at length, in terms of Don Juan and Carlos' difficult and differing experiences. A new cast of characters is introduced as Carlos finally recalls Don Juan's warrior team, whom he encounters only on the wiped-out left side. Silvio sees Carlos as an ill-fitting "three-prong" Nagual and dreams a new "master plan." The Eagle dislodges Carlos. Carlos and la Gorda receive last-minute training to survive alone, including the basics of stalking. The old band's departure is surprisingly sorrowful, but the mystery of the apprentices' jump into the abyss is finally resolved.



Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 1, The Fixation of the Second Attention

Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 1, The Fixation of the Second Attention Summary and Analysis

Author Carlos Castaneda, a UCLA anthropologist turned sorcerer, is reunited with la Gorda, the three little sisters (Lydia, Rosa, and Josefina), and "the Genaros" (Benigno, Nestor, and Pablito). La Gorda, with whom he feels the greatest affinity, is close to recalling something about him when he arrives. He mentions visiting ruins at Tula, where colossal carved figures are said to walk at night. Pablito, who has lived there, talks of fearsome "nagual" and peaceful "tonal" structures. The subject baffles Carlos and makes the others nervous. It is a strange period in their lives.

Pablito says that the pyramids are gigantic "not-doings," where warriors Dream and exercise second attention. One has been destroyed by warriors of the third attention. They recall the teaching of their Nagual, Don Juan, about how the total being consists of the physical body and the luminous body that only seers perceive. The goal of sorcery is to reach this "luminous cocoon." Consciousness (or attention) is divided into three parts: the everyday, the luminous, and an immeasurable, undefinable third, hard to reach but fruitful.

The pyramids are harmful to "unprotected" sorcerers and "formless" warriors. Warriors of the second attention fixating on the weak side become hunters of men and ghouls. Fixation of the second attention is evil when it focuses on worldly items and impeccable when focusing on the unknown. Only now does Carlos understand that in suggesting that Carlos give up keeping field notes has he tried to allow his "dreaming body" (or "double") to focus energy rather than attach itself to something.

La Gorda declares that they need a real leader. When Pablito recalls a story showing the young Don Juan's weakness, Carlos is surprised suddenly to understand things that earlier he merely accepts. Logically, luminosity unraveling facets of attention means that impeccable sorcerers must have been able to create colossi that now can walk.



Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 2, Seeing Together

Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 2, Seeing Together Summary and Analysis

Carlos is back and forth between Los Angeles and Mexico, suffering from tension. Pablito runs away to Tula to die, but Carlos as Nagual declares that he must be helped. The women move to defy him physically, they scuffle, and he wins. When the apprentices pair up asexually, bickering and outbursts end. All adopt native Indian dress as a sign they are ready to move on. La Gorda needs to go with Carlos to a nearby town, where she talks of "rallying knowledge" as they had on the day they nearly come to blows. Carlos realizes that he had seen and responded to four amorphous blobs of light; had attacked the threatening ones on their vulnerable right sides, and had melted into the mellow one, la Gorda. Carlos suggests a drive to Mexico City.

Sitting silently in Oaxaca on Don Juan and Don Genaro's favorite bench, resting their heads together, Carlos and la Gorda see people as blobs of light morphing into giant oblong luminous eggs—and threatening them. La Gorda is certain that she sees Don Juan and Don Genaro nearby, but they disappear. Carlos is less convinced. Realizing that they have "seen together," they talk about an experience that neither knows the other is having, but which la Gorda says may have happened to them before. Carlos realizes that he has learned to turn off his "internal dialogue" and believes that la Gorda is the catalyst. She says that Carlos' body is just beginning to remember, just as things that Don Juan has told her about Carlos are coming back. She demands nine days of silence to allow healing before talking more.



Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 3, Quasi Memories of the Other Self

Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 3, Quasi Memories of the Other Self Summary and Analysis

La Gorda diverts Carlos into talking about his dreaming. Once, dreaming about himself sleeping, Carlos gets involved: leaving his room and house through closed doors, with no sense of walking. The street is colorless and disorienting, and Carlos levitates. As the dream recurs, Carlos knows how to deal with it. He moves down the familiar street, stops in a coffee shop, sees people he knows. Other times, the street becomes a primeval valley and Carlos faces a huge saber-toothed tiger that teaches him to breathe in a particular way. Carlos feels his body grow more muscular.

When the apprentices dream, they have particular tasks (curing, predicting, building). La Gorda nervously recalls Don Juan mentioning violent, destructive "ghost dreaming," which entails "ghost helpers and allies." She shocks the apprentices by revealing that she and Josefina meet daily with Eligio while dreaming together. They recall only that Carlos is the Nagual, but not for them, and must help them go where they must once he remembers his left side. Josefina sees a wall of fog, where Eligio waits for her, shows her things, and lets her go. Twice Eligio and Josefina snatch La Gorda from her own dreaming. As they plead for his help, Carlos is sick to his stomach.

La Gorda waits for the appropriate time to talk about Oaxaca, but tells Carlos that losing human form brings the freedom to remember oneself; she cannot feel this freedom until Carlos loses his human form. At the Genaros' house, Carlos finds them playing an odd "three-sided tug of war." with Pablito dangling in a leather harness being pulled by Nestor and Benigno's ropes. Benigno and Nestor both recall Carlos teaching them things in dreams. Oppressed, Carlos shares about Oaxaca and the two men. La Gorda is waiting when they return, agitated. She is sure that she has seen Don Juan and Don Genaro disappear eastward toward town. Later, all hear how Lydia recalls Carlos taking her to a healer for her eyes. Carlos claims it is impossible, but feels his rational self become a spectator. He leaves the reader as confused as he and the apprentices are. Clarifications are forthcoming.



Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 4, Crossing the Boundaries of Affection

Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 4, Crossing the Boundaries of Affection Summary and Analysis

Carlos and la Gorda talk about returning body-memories. Don Juan has foreseen the apprentices coupling to form a four-parted rattlesnake: Carlos and la Gorda the head, Nestor and Lydia the heart, Pablito and Josefina the belly, and Benigno and Rosa the tail. They set out this on a midnight hike to find a "power spot" in the mountains. When an enormous man blocks their way they retreat in silence. Believing it is Carlos' ally, la Gorda despairs, and Carlos volunteers to lead them elsewhere. Hearing Doña Soledad's name, Carlos feels an odd shiver in his belly and alone "sees" where she is. The little sisters, who have been cold towards Carlos, each suddenly recalls some forgotten past deed. He supposedly had gone beyond the wall of fog seeking la Gorda, nearly died, and afterward recognized no one. Nestor reminds them that Don Juan has promised them a sign to leave the world.

While the others prepare to move, Carlos visits the house that had fascinated and disturbed him. It holds feelings but he remembers nothing. Doña Soledad appears, looking younger and stronger than years ago, and talks about things for which they lack the energy to cross over parallel lines and communicate. Carlos is struck by an inexplicable feeling of kinship and blacks out. When he comes to, the apprentices are outside, and they set off as on a Sunday drive. It is uneventful, but only in the lowlands do they grow talkative, about how they could have memories of Carlos when they have known him a few months. They are confused by Soledad's talk of parallel lines.

In Oaxaca, the apprentices visit the spot from which Don Juan and Don Genaro disappear and newly-recalled details convince them that they must go north, never to return home again. They take rooms, buy fashionable clothes, and finish up business. Alone with la Gorda, Carlos flashes back on her old, fat self and jumps. She says that they must all sit on Don Juan's "power spot" in the mountains, a natural crack between parallel worlds. Eligio is there. They must remember their left side in order to recall visiting the parallel world. Soledad has told la Gorda that Carlos is only sometimes lucid. Before dusk, they gather on Don Juan's bench but the apprentices refuse any more to be bossed by la Gorda. Carlos shocks himself by taking command.



Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 5, A Horde of Angry Sorcerers

Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 5, A Horde of Angry Sorcerers Summary and Analysis

They drive all night. La Gorda and Lydia go to Mass. Only Josefina is in a good mood, seeing Silvio Manuel's house, although it lacks the usual wall of fog that rotates as one turns one's head. Silvio's name shakes the others. First, they examine an old bridge at the edge of town. Josefina says that "that devil," Silvio, is on the other side. Afraid, they retreat. The home owner lets them look around, and all are tied in emotional knots until they sit in a large empty room apart from the courtyard. They sense in what order to sit and leave after a tense, silent hour.

When la Gorda declares that this power spot has given them freedom, the women agree and the men do not. Angry at being opposed, la Gorda insists that they had lived in that house while on the "left side." Lydia knows that she also had been here with other men and women. They head back to the bridge. Rosa recalls crossing it and hearing Silvio devour her companions. He is at both ends of the bridge. The women agree that this is a true "moment-to-moment memory." The women do not recall being hurt but had been paralyzed with fear. The men remember nothing. No one remembers Silvio's face, just his eyes and muffled voice. When la Gorda claims that Carlos had been Silvio's close helper, he nearly kills her in anger. Carlos notices that there are no people on the normally-busy bridge.

The apprentices drive east to Veracruz, a "neutral" city, and there shred their old clothes. They go next to Mexico City and visit the airline office into which Don Juan once pushes Carlos—another power spot—and then the place in Alameda Park where they had rested. At a loss how to manage them as a group, Carlos asks each to assess the situation. Pablito insists that Carlos is Silvio's helper in forcing them from the tonal to the nagual (right to left). Carlos and la Gorda's objection that they have just now learned of parallel lines turns them into "a horde of angry sorcerers" supporting Pablito. Nestor allows that Carlos might be an "unwilling envoy;" Benigno talks of jumping into an abyss; Lydia insists that Silvio and Carlos have devoured one another's bodies and that Carlos is not Don Juan's apprentice, but Silvio's, and not part of their group. Rosa says that Silvio gives Carlos all that he is. La Gorda believes that Carlos is better off knowing his true origins.

This is nonsense to Carlos, but he suddenly recalls being with Don Juan and another man whose face he cannot recall, discussing a yellowish fog bank that divides the world vertically and moves relative to Carlos' field of vision. The other man says that a warrior with serenity can control that rotation, face the wall, and go through it at any time. The women are sure that this other man is Silvio. La Gorda explodes in painful memories, claiming that Carlos is, in fact, Silvio's slave, intent on enslaving others on Silvio's



behalf. The spell had broken in Silvio's house. This betrayal staggered Carlos. He argued that Don Juan had changed his life for the better, giving him freedom, and that is all that he can give to anyone else. Nestor sided with Carlos, is sorry that they must part bickering, but asks Carlos to leave. Carlos accepts his fate humbly, as a warrior. La Gorda agrees, saying privately that she will join him later: they must yet fulfill their fate together as warriors.



Part 2, The Art of Dreaming, Chapter 6, Losing the Human Form

Part 2, The Art of Dreaming, Chapter 6, Losing the Human Form Summary and Analysis

La Gorda locates everyone around Mexico before settling in Arizona. Out of duty, Carlos acts as though nothing is wrong. Alone once in Los Angeles, he wakes up with great pressure in his head, which over the course of hours rolls down his body, like a carpet being rolled up. La Gorda says that Carlos' human form, his "shield," has dropped away. They begin remembering, arguing over whether Don Juan had been celibate. Carlos recalls, early in his apprenticeship, being hidden when a woman visits Don Juan. He has the impression that she is young and beautiful. La Gorda paces and weeps, denies jealousy, but admits to feeling asexually like Don Juan's woman. They piece together what they know about Don Juan's associates, but neither recognizes the other's except a young woman with a white car. Carlos also recalls a man named Vicente, who had gotten him peyote plants; la Gorda shrilly demands a description, but Carlos cannot produce one.

Feverish in bed one day, Carlos recalls dreaming vividly of a Mexican melody being played monotonously on a guitar, and a beautiful woman. It turns into a full-fledged memory involving la Gorda and two men whom he knows but cannot describe. Carlos sees that this is the Nagual woman, Don Juan's "feminine analogue," serene, commanding, and nurturing. Fearing for his life, Carlos chants a formula that ends with "I will dart past the Eagle to be free." Sharing this, Carlos and la Gorda realize that each has met the Nagual woman. Each has sat contentedly with her and Don Juan on the bench in Oaxaca. La Gorda's voice becomes a conduit for Carlos' bodily memory, convincing him that the Nagual woman is Don Juan's partner. La Gorda disagrees: the Nagual woman is Carlos' partner and la Gorda is her ward. Carlos' duty is to deliver her one day to the Nagual woman.

La Gorda accuses Carlos of hiding the Nagual woman in Los Angeles and uses Carlos droning voice as a conduit. When he mentions Don Juan telling him about the loss of a female companion and that his feelings for her are rekindled by poetry, Carlos recalls that the Nagual woman provides the books from which he reads to Don Juan. He sees her and is filled with pain as his intellect resists releasing the memory. Hysterical, la Gorda is sure that the Nagual woman is nearby, but Carlos knows better. He feels for the first time "boundless sadness" and incompleteness, a reopened wound. La Gorda reminds him that as warriors they must snap out of it, and the speed with which his mood changes shocks him. La Gorda's past mood shifts become comprehensible. Formlessness torments them both as no more memories emerge. They feel like guinea pigs in Don Juan's hands, fueling one another's doubts and fears.



Part 2, The Art of Dreaming, Chapter 7, Dreaming Together

Part 2, The Art of Dreaming, Chapter 7, Dreaming Together Summary and Analysis

When Carlos suggests that they immerse themselves in dreaming, fear and distrust lift. La Gorda's feels like they have dreamed together in the past, so doing it again should be a "cinch"—just like seeing together. They agree to start dreaming far apart and the first to enter dreaming will wait and snatch the other before going deeper. Anxious, it takes Carlos 10-15 minutes to enter "restful vigil," a preliminary state when the senses grow dormant but one is still aware. It is marked by a red-orange light. The remaining stages are 2) "dynamic vigil," when the light dissipates and the dreamer views a static, frozen tableau; 3) "passive witnessing," when the dreamer observes an event as it occurs; and 4) "dynamic initiative," when the dreamer acts.

Carlos sees Don Juan with 12 laughing comrades, including a fat la Gorda, feels the "real" Gorda grip his arm, and they pass to the third stage. Don Juan would be delighted if they marry and orders Carlos to learn by interacting with la Gorda to face life's trying situations. He may never be angry with her, for she is his benefactress, teaching him to harness his selfishness. Upset by the scene, la Gorda pulls Carlos back to reality. They recall Don Juan's other cohorts but not what binds them. La Gorda is angry at being reminded that she is an unbearable woman—empty while wanting to be cute. Only Carlos has put up with her behavior. Silvio remains only a feeling.

Next day and for weeks to come, they try to dream together, grow desperate and greedy, and turn to Don Juan's teachings about dreaming. It begins when the "residue of consciousness" (second attention) focuses on some element in everyday dreaming and is harnessed by "not-doing"—"stopping the internal dialogue." Where one concentrates attention, what aids one uses, one's posture, and the time of day are important. The second attention beckons the first to focus on something and can be developed. That is how she learns to fly through years of practice, taught by a voice in her dreaming body. She has once demonstrated it for Carlos, but he sees it as a vision under stress.

Attention makes the world. First attention can never be overcome, but if the body has stored enough second attention in dreaming, it can be accessed while awake. Don Juan gives Carlos exercises for this, but leaves before Carlos perfects it. The will controls the body's luminosity. Absolute silence, sheer terror, and profound sadness can trigger the force. Carlos and la Gorda have both experienced it but cannot recall the moment when "intent" takes over to effect the will. Will is quiet and unnoticeable. Carlos suddenly understands but cannot disentangle or verbalize it. La Gorda has long been in this situation. Their common task is remembering.



La Gorda says that they must "shoot off" their dreaming bodies while dreaming together, as Don Genaro often had. Manual is the ultimate master of intent and the true chief, who makes Don Juan take care of Carlos. When Carlos gags, she insists that accepting his true nature will free him of wrath. Don Juan once tells her about Silvio's disappearance into the other world and return permanently in his other self. They must learn more about how intent enslaves and make it more than just a friend.



Part 2, The Art of Dreaming, Chapter 8, The Right and the Left Side Awareness

Part 2, The Art of Dreaming, Chapter 8, The Right and the Left Side Awareness Summary and Analysis

Carlos and la Gorda try dream together again, spontaneously entering their "dreaming bodies," and finding themselves in a world of yellow sandstone and oppressive yellowish fog, hovering and easily fatigued. They collapse into the dreaming position and awaken where they begin, with identical memories. They have been in the "no-man's land" between worlds, between parallel lines, crossing over in their whole bodies through dreaming. Carlos has previously been there only under Don Juan's guidance and chalked it up to the effects of hallucinogenic plants. La Gorda vaguely recalls Silvio taking the Nagual woman, Carlos, and herself there while not dreaming.

Carlos recalls a visit to "limbo" that Don Juan allows when Carlos somehow enters the special "left left side." Silvio sends Carlos and la Gorda into an oppressively fatiguing and suffocating "wall of fog." On the point of bursting, Carlos abandons himself to death peacefully and sees a white vapor leave his body. They all return through the fog bank to the everyday world and Silvio's house, a locus of power. No one had worried about Carlos' survival, for he had been protected against allies/demons but not needed help. Carlos feels sorry, wondering where the Nagual woman is.

In another dream session, Carlos and la Gorda walk awkwardly through a rugged area and come upon a huge and angry saber-toothed tiger. Thereafter they dream together nightly, watching events objectively and sometimes reenacting them. They cannot explain why they have forgotten things or why they are recalling them now. Rehashing dreams in waking hours triggers more recollections. It takes two years to begin to understand what has happened to them. Each recalls Don Juan moving them by force from the tonal (right) side to the nagual (left), where they enjoy extraordinary clarity and a speed-up of time. The blow between the shoulder blades, they believe, knocks the air from their lungs and gulping for breath is a catalyst.

On the left side, action needs no preliminary thinking and they realize only after the fact what they perceive as great clumps of intense detail. Memory requires synthesizing these chunks into a linear sequence and reconciling left and right forms into a unified whole. Don Juan had needed them to interact with certain people while in left state only, so that they would be remembered later. Carlos and la Gorda now experience a bizarre state of possessing knowledge too detailed to speculate about its meaning. They deduce more than they remember about relations with Don Juan, Don Genaro, and the Nagual woman, and realize that they have bridged their two sides in a minimal fashion.



Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 9, The Rule of the Nagual

Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 9, The Rule of the Nagual Summary and Analysis

Carlos recalls Don Juan's teaching about the warrior's "rule," which ascribes the destiny of all living beings to the Eagle, which feeds on awareness, which only seers perpetuate after death by entering the the opening hidden passage to freedom. Naguals are double beings, occurring in male/female pairs, such that they appear to seers as a luminous egg having four compartments, their right and left sides each having two sections. Naguals have male and female assistants of distinct types who live in groupings and come together only for strenuous tasks or to leave the world. To be sure that the Nagual man leads truly, the Nagual woman is taken to the other world to serve as a beacon to the hidden opening. The man and his warriors are forget, scatter, regain their totality, and then gather successors and leave the world.

Don Juan maintains that the rule is endless and covers every aspect of a warrior's behavior. Seers, seeing the Eagle's flux through the ages, interpret the rule. Crossing over to freedom is not eternal life as commonly pictured but a preservation of the awareness that is normally lost at death, the moment when one enters the third attention and full awareness. As Don Juan's benefactor helps him accept this reality, so Don Juan helps his apprentices, particularly Carlos. He uses the rule not as a myth but as a map to the world of awareness. Don Juan's benefactor is severe, waiting for apprentices to help themselves. To avoid this waste of time, when his time comes to mentor, Don Juan confronts apprentices with situations and forces them to accept it.

The benefactor's warriors are deliberately difficult with Don Juan, forcing a breakthrough on the left side. Two enormous Indian women immediately beat and harass him for twelve hours. He then meets the other warriors and is maltreated and hung by the fierce westerly women in a harness for six months to cure him of lust. Meanwhile, the other women gather him a warrior party as he resigns himself to adhering to the rule. He admits to youthful ambition and sees in his benefactor an opportunity at least to become a seer. Carlo meets Don Juan's warriors caring only about the limitation of human types to eight and about the cultural context of Don Juan's knowledge as part of a stripped-down and restructured post-Conquest Indian society.



Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 10, The Nagual's Party of Warriors

Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 10, The Nagual's Party of Warriors Summary and Analysis

When Carlos' time comes to meet Don Juan's warriors, he shifts awareness to the left and is warned that they may do anything except kill him. They are replicas of his benefactor's party, the women fierce and the men powerful. Warned to expect a "head-on conclusion," Carlos is apprehensive and curious. Don Juan dispenses with ritual but insists on an omen—a traffic stop. They observe the traditional order: south, east north, and west. In central Mexico, they approach a rural house, guarded by two massive women, identical except that one is dark-skinned and one light. The latter is Cecilia, a dreamer; the former is Delia, a stalker. Inside, Carlos meets Don Juan's courier Emilito, a slender, radiant "old child," and Teresa, the women's courier. They enjoy a pleasant dinner together.

They drives next to northern Mexico for the easterly encounter, which must occur midmorning. Don Juan leaves Carlos on a bench while he runs errands. Carlos is joined by two women, whom he ignores. A smiling old man joins them and introduces himself as Vicente Medrano. The women are his sisters, Carmela and Hermelinda. All are unmarried, thanks to their domineering father, who is coming to join them for breakfast. They urge Carlos to stay. As the siblings break into laughter, Don Juan arrives. Leaving the plaza, they are joined by sullen Juan Tuma, Vicente's courier and research assistant. Chiding him for his snobbishness, the women tell him that one must protect but not defend one's person. Over breakfast, Carlos' belligerence vanishes and Juan talks about his journeys, the size of the luminous body, and how the second attention is assembled.

The most crucial westerly encounter occurs at dusk. Don Juan warns Carlos to be cautious and patient with these ultimate authorities on second attention. Carlos pounds on the door until homely, muscular Zuleica orders him to stop. In the dark house she exposes her vagina, mocks Carlos for staring, and insists that he study her well. An older, woman, Zoila, demands that they get down to business before exposing herself to great laughter. Carlos advises him to pay attention. On the dark patio, Carlos feels a jolt meeting Silvio Manuel, a "warrior of darkness" and the party's true leader. With a muffled but overpowering voice as he orders Carlos to undress. Silvio's glowing left eye glows lets Carlos see in the dark. Taken to the patio, Carlos meets Marta, a southern courier, whom he likes, but is plunged into ice water and watched. Over dinner, Carlos discovers that Marta is young, voluptuous, and spellbinding. Don Juan tells him that Silvio is the "silent force" behind him.

The northerly encounter takes place in downtown Guadalajara at 11 a.m. Carlos collides with a lady rushing out of a store and scatters her packages. Tall, elegant, elderly, polite,



and elegantly dressed. Her manservant, Genaro Flores, comes to her side like a lost puppy. Don Juan introduces her as the dreamer Nelida. Nelida and Don Genaro return to the store and disappear into thin air. Carlos meets the other northerly woman, Florinda, Nelida's carbon copy at a later time.

La Gorda's meetings differ only in content. She and Carlos discover that Don Juan's world is a replica of his benefactor's. All of Don Juan's warriors use stalking and dreaming in daily life, but the women specialize in one or the other. Stalkers deal with the world as business managers, using "controlled folly." What seems to Carlos on first contact trickery is in fact skilled stalking. To learn dreaming, Carlos is turned over to Florinda.



Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 11, The Nagual Woman

Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 11, The Nagual Woman Summary and Analysis

Don Juan's benefactor makes him recruit members for his party, and insists that they all become expert stalkers before seeking a Nagual woman. Don Juan is mortified being taken to daily Mass, but there "sees" that Olinda is a double woman. He forsakes stalker training and sets about securing Olinda, whose parents reject his as a suitor. Silvio Manuel use the sorcerer's arts to abduct Olinda and Don Juan plays the rescuer. The benefactor shifts Olinda to the left side, discloses the rule, and she willingly becomes Don Juan's Nagual woman. They work for years together collecting a warrior band, and Olinda goes ahead to the other world. Don Juan and his warriors "explode from within," forgetting everything. Only Silvio remembers, helps reunite the members and over years helps them find the totality of themselves. Part of this is training Carlos and la Gorda to see together and perceive wondrous luminous cocoons, shining from the core. Warriors must break the shell from within at the proper time.

Don Juan's final task—finding a new pair of double beings to serve as Naguals—is initially fruitless. Having hit "rock bottom," Don Juan stumbles upon Carlos, stalks him, and offers to realign his spine, shifts him to his left side, and delivers the rule, which Carlos accepts. Almost immediately, Don Juan finds a double woman, working as a government clerk, feigns ignorance and lost documents to extend their contact over months, and finally offers to show her the last of the Indian "power dancers." The lady is intrigued, but hesitates to step over a line drawn in the dirt. Humor and compassion win her over, she crosses, and instantly Don Juan sails into the air and returns like a boomerang. A smack between her shoulders moves her from her right-right side to her left-left. She understands and accepts the rule and shows the rare ability to turn the fog wall on and off at will, crossing over and, like Silvio, never returning. She and Carlos feel instant rapport. They complete the band, finding exact replicas of Don Juan's warriors.



Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 12, The Not-Doings of Silvio Manuel

Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 12, The Not-Doings of Silvio Manuel Summary and Analysis

The new band shows baffling anomalies and an inability to break through to the left side. Silvio "sees" that the three little sisters and the Genaros are not inept, but that Carlos is not the right Nagual for them. Carlos' luminous body has three compartments, requiring a different rule. Furthermore, when la Gorda slims down it is seen that she is not a southerly woman but a northerly dreamer, throwing off the balance. When Doña Soledad appears as a southern stalker, things grow worse. While dreaming, Silvio receives a "master plan" and excludes Carlos from discussing its details. Silvio takes over Carlos' guidance ordering him and la Gorda to perform a series of not-doings involving sitting in darkness in a crate, lying in the fetal position with eyes closed, and being suspended in harnesses in the tree tops. The second series is more complex: detect the fog wall, stop its rotation, and venture between the parallel lines. At first they need help, but after repeated trips learn to focus "intent" and see two directions at once. Leaving that world brings anguish.

Eligio regularly disappears and returns, telling tales of his findings. He tells Carlos about breaking into the "glory" and takes him into the abyss. When Carlos must be carried, Eligio never talks to him again. Silvio's next not-doing requires that the three little sisters and three Genaros accompany Carlos and la Gorda to become familiar with third attention at the Eagle's feet. The bridge is a symbol of the crossing. Don Juan readies them but, terrified, the apprentices scatter. Carlos and la Gorda alone cross to Silvio and Eligio, who hold open a slit beyond which is nothing. Carlos feels himself being torn apart and pushed forward, and is saved from disintegration by the Nagual woman. Silvio says that the Eagle has dislodged Carlos from the group, plans to take him back in unconscious, have that world remove all useless energy from him, and then have the apprentices blow the life force back into him. The Nagual woman promises to come back someday to help them find their freedom. Carlos wakes up energized but is sad to hear that he must leave la Gorda and concentrate alone on perfecting his attention. Carlos does not see Don Juan for a long time, and then has his instruction divided between Don Juan for the right side and Zuleica for the left.



Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 13, The Intricacies of Dreaming

Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 13, The Intricacies of Dreaming Summary and Analysis

After teaching him about dreaming, Don Juan gives Carlos to Zuleica, warning him not to squander his life force. Each apprentice is taught heightened awareness by his or her warrior counterpart, and Zuleica teaches la Gorda and Josefina the finer points in order one day to help Carlos. Florinda teaches the Genaros advanced stalking, including techniques of "controlled folly" that convince everyone that Soledad is Pablito's mother.

Zuleica is an effective guide into the second attention, working quickly because of Don Juan's planned departure. During one session, Carlos feels an intense itch outside his body, which Zuleica tells him to play as though it were a harp. The itch grows nearer, forming a dent. Carlos feels himself roll up like a cigar and tuck inside the dent, where he is secure, conscious but unresponsive. Zuleica explains that this experience makes entering dreaming easier; Don Juan had had to kick dents into Lydia and Rosa—the vulnerable spot that Carlos once perceives, kicks, and nearly kills them. Zuleica elicits in Carlos, while in the waking state, the sensation of sweeping the floor from the midpoint of his body. An odd prickling sensation begins in his belly and right thigh and becomes intense when he draws thigh to chest—as though sweeping the floor with his midsection. When Zuleica has him repeat this in "restful vigil," Carlos experiences a mixture of pleasure and pain, feeling as though his forehead and toes, impossibly, are touching. Zuleica cogently explains what is taking place.

Carlos' next must learn to move at will, using three thick tentacles that extend from his midsection as crutches. He fails repeatedly, despairs, but Zuleica chides him into using the sweeping action and he finds himself rocking into a standing position. He practices on every "volitional movement," minimizing rationality. Carlos next learns to direct his dreaming body, sitting alone for hours at a time, gazing at the patio from his wooden crate. The culmination is opening his eyes while asleep. It causes an intense choking tremor. He faces Silvio rather than Don Juan, is put in harness, and hoisted to the roof, where he hangs until midday. This is meant to tune the body for a dangerous journey. Repeating the dream exercise, Carlos realizes that Zuleica has been dreaming with him.

The last time, Carlos awakens to see la Gorda and Josefina. They are to tune their second attention to follow Zuleica on voyages into the unknown. On the third try they break loose of first attention's "hooks" to the earth, and find themselves somewhere unfamiliar, white, and intensely lit. After some exploration, la Gorda and Josefina vanish and Carlos wakes up, never to return to Zuleica's house. Whenever he enters dreaming, Carlos returns to that unearthly scene. Zuleica takes them systematically on voyages deeper into the unknown (particularly Josefina). They are "living slingshots."



Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 14, Florinda

Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 14, Florinda Summary and Analysis

Zuleica's training convinces Carlos and la Gorda that the rule is a map and that another awareness truly exists. Florinda, the only warrior that Carlos has not yet met, becomes his personal guide. Carlos is awestruck; she judges him indulgent and announces the program: the first seven principles of stalking, the first three principles of the rule for stalkers, and the first three maneuvers of stalking. Later, under other circumstances, she will finish his training. He must commit to practice, become self-confident, claim knowledge as power, and be freed from Don Juan.

Florinda tells her life's story. Only males conceal their not-doings, because they are accountable in the world; females are expendable in society. She is the spoiled, conceited only child of a well-to-do family who at 18 marries Celestino, 33, a man of means. Six months later she is struck by an agonizing leg disease, brought on, a servant girl confesses, by a sorcerer's poison and painful enough to overlook her Catholic upbringing and seek an Indian curer.

Before the next session with Florinda, Don Juan reveals to Carlos that the time is near for him and his party to enter the third attention, and shoves him into the fog wall to attain his keenest state of awareness. Florinda says that they are building a repository for memories of interactions for Carlos some day to recall. Florinda calms him by resuming her life's story: She is carried on a stretcher into the mountains. A polite old man says that the seer is away. Returning, the curer looks at the leg, knows who has done it, forces Florinda to drink a foul liquid, and sends her home, warning her to return in nine days or wish she were dead. Celestino demands to accompany her on her return visit, only to be whipped. Florinda says that this illustrates principles of the art of stalking: 1) choose your battlefield, and 2) discard the unnecessary. Florinda adds three precepts of the rule for stalkers: 1) everything around is an unfathomable mystery, 2) one must try to unravel the mysteries without hope of doing so, and 3) one must take one's place among the mystery and regard himself as one; one must be humble, "equal to everything."

Florinda wants to hear about Don Juan's teachings, but when Carlos panics, unable to focus, she continues with the principle of stalking: 3) be willing and ready always to make a last stand; 4) relax, fear nothing, and let the powers guide; 5) retreat for a moment from impossible odds; and 6) compress time, for every second counts. When Don Juan's teachings flood into Carlos' mind, Florinda is no longer interested and resumes her story: Celestino knows better than to block her return and she stays six days. The curer is a seer who sees Florinda's luminous body and claims to be



commissioned by the Eagle to heal her and teach her. Florinda tells Carlos that such trickery is needed to free her from attachment to her "stupid life."

On her next visit, the friendly old man builds a treatment box around Florinda, and gives her a list of tasks to do. On the tenth day he reveals that he is the true curer and becomes Florinda's benefactor. He gives her an ointment that makes the other leg seem infected, gaining her time for instruction in stalking. She meets Don Juan, a terrifying, unruly, witty, thoughtful young man, who helps her escape Celestino and "recapitulates" her life. This creates a "surrogate" for genuine awareness at death that satisfies the Eagle. Associated is a breathing method that restores energy and purifies the luminous body.

Finally, Florinda gives "last-minute instructions," including a seventh principle of stalking: never push to the front. Applying the principles has three results: 1) one never takes oneself seriously, 2) one has endless patience, never hurries, and 3) one can improvise endlessly. On the patio Carlos recognizes Soledad's voice and finds her changed. She has spent five years recapitulating, been accepted by the Eagle, and set free. Thereafter, Carlos deals primarily with Soledad, learning to stop the fog wall but not go through. Florinda confides that Soledad is the greatest stalker, able to cross the parallel lines any time and has, almost impossibly, found her "parallel being." Florinda reminds Carlos that warriors focus on their freedom and the audacity of sneaking around the Eagle.



Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 15, The Plumed Serpent

Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 15, The Plumed Serpent Summary and Analysis

Don Juan and his party prepare to leave the world. Carlos' three-part luminosity is a twist of fate that strands the apprentices. Don Juan decrees that each must enter the other awareness individually. Believing that Carlos is strong enough to help one apprentice, Don Juan picks la Gorda. They all gather in la Gorda's house, shift to the left side, and are reminded of all they have been taught. Carlos receives the summation in both states before his mind locks up to avoid the pain. Later, la Gorda tells him about a last, failed, attempt to cross the bridge. Only Carlos, la Gorda, and Josefina make it across, but cannot endure the pressure beyond the "cosmic vagina."

At Silvio's house, Carlos hears that he must go on alone. Some day the Eagle will put someone in his path to tell him what he must do to free himself. Surrounded by his warriors, Don Juan talks to the apprentices. Florinda tells Carlos about the wheel of time, a tunnel of infinite length and width and furrowed. Creatures normally look only at their own furrow, but by will warriors can gaze at the receding furrows and realize that they are not trapped. Don Juan wishes Carlos well, Vicente talks of the challenge of being left behind, Silvio gives him an incantation and demonstrates how to go into and out of the luminous egg. Carlos is ecstatic, realizing that intent can be evoked, beckoned. He tries it and it works: he sees the others' luminosity and their physical bodies as two channels of vision. Genaro offers a parting joke and asks Carlos to read José Gorostiza's poem, "Death Without End."

The warriors encourage Carlos and hug him, last of all the Nagual woman, who is overwhelmed by her last day on earth. Finality sinks in and Carlos goes berserk. The warriors form a chain of energy and disappear. Don Juan comforts Carlos, shifts him to the right to let him forget temporarily, and says that he must jump into the abyss in that state for his second attention to take over. At dusk, Carlos, Pablito, and Nestor jump. Don Juan's shifting blow is so accurate that Carlos remembers nothing of the farewell. His left side recalls the warriors catching him for an instant before the Eagle lets them through. They turn into exquisite lights, a cluster, a glow, like the Toltecs' plumed serpent. The light vanishes.



Characters

Carlos Castaneda

The author and chief character of *The Eagle's Gift*, Carlos introduces himself in *The Teachings of Don Juan* as a graduate student at the University of California, Los Angeles, who finds himself undergoing an apprenticeship to the Yaqui Indian sorcerer, Don Juan Matus. The methodology depends heavily on the use of hallucinogenic drugs, which Carlos comes to fear, and ends the relationship. A sequel, *The Second Ring of Power*, has introduced Carlos' fellow apprentices, the "little sisters" and the Genaros, in the central Mexico highlands and named him their "Nagual." There is profound opposition to his leadership and doubt of his ability, but the warrior's "impeccability" demands that they follow Don Juan's wishes. They continue to harp on Carlos' inability to free himself from possessions, most notably his notebooks, which he finds soothing. Don Genaro once suggests that he write with a bare finger so that nothing will be left to store. Don Juan assures Carlos that this is no joke. For the first half of the book, Carlos is unable to shed his human form, which makes recalling his hidden past more difficult.

After a confrontation, in which the apprentices charge that Carlos is a follower and agent of the feared Silvio Manuel rather than of Don Juan, the apprentices disband across Mexico and Carlos and la Gorda settle, perhaps together but asexually, in Arizona. Having made a start at dreaming together in Mexico, they perfect this and experience in the left side of the luminous body loosens repressed memories. Talking about their experiences suggests other memories. Over the course of years, they untangle what has happened to them individually and the group.

Carlos is a "three-pronged Nagual" rather than four-pronged and thus subject to a different rule from that which guides Don Juan. He is incompatible with those who form his band. The separation had been warranted. He still has a fate in this world that has not been discerned, although someone is expected to arrive some day and make this clear to him. As Don Juan and his band leave the world, Carlos rejoices to learn a parting tip on how to switch between levels of awareness on command, but then, parting with the Nagual woman with whom he has grown close, goes berserk. His left-side memories are locked away to spare him pain for a while until they begin the process of emerging, which has filled this volume.

Don Juan Matus

Author Carlos Castaneda's Yaqui Indian mentor, a full-fledged sorcerer, Don Juan is present in the book through memories of his teachings and actions. He is most often referred to as "The Nagual," a title he passes to Carlos when he and his warrior party pass out of this world. As the book begins, Carlos is concerned about knowing so little about Don Juan's early life. Don Juan reveals only that he is born in Arizona of Yaqui and Yuma Indian parentage, is early removed to northern Mexico and caught in the



Yaqui wars. His mother is killed and Don Juan is sent with his father to a relocation center in Yucatan. He lives as an aggressive, unruly exile, working on tobacco plantations until he is shot in the chest one day after work and healed by a kind but severe old Indian, who takes him into his own house and nurses him.

When Don Juan is recovered, the Indian gives him a sound blow on the back that shifts him into heightened awareness. Don Juan believes that nothing matters prior to this—his becoming involved in the warrior's "rule." Living the myth makes him the Nagual. Don Juan's benefactor is severe, leading with an iron hand, rejecting the idea of giving information away. The result is much wasted time. When his time comes to mentor, Don Juan confronts apprentices with situations and forces them to accept it. The Benefactor reverses the usual sequence in gathering Don Juan's warrior party, but Don Juan's enthusiasm about having four sexual partners is frustrated. The Benefactor's warriors are deliberately difficult with him, forcing a breakthrough on the left side. They are all Mexican Indians.

Don Juan once lives in Tula and knows the pyramids there like the back of his hand. He considers himself a cultural descendant of the ancient Toltecs and a warrior on the periphery of the third attention. He has confided in Pablito that he had been warned by his Benefactor to avoid the pyramids but had practically lived there until being driven away by a "horde of phantoms." Don Juan has a favorite bench on the plaza in Oaxaca, where he sits with Don Genaro, and sometimes with Carlos or la Gorda. Dusk is Don Juan's favorite time of day. Carlos often reads Don Juan poetry there.

Somehow, Don Juan fails to perceive that Carlos has three compartments to his luminous body rather than the normal four for a Nagual man, and this makes him a bad match for the apprentices whom Don Juan and his warriors carefully identify and train. Don Juan must leave the world with his warriors and Carlos' intended Nagual woman and hope that Carlos and the others can remember all they must to become wholly what they are called to be.

Maria Elena (La Gorda)

The most powerful of Don Juan Matus' apprentices, La Gorda (meaning "Fat" in Spanish, from her original appearance before losing a great deal of weight) has received a series of teachings from Don Juan that she is to impart to author Carlos Castaneda when he comes looking for answers. Don Juan has taught la Gorda things that he entrusts to no one else, not pampering her, but trusting her. La Gorda also has the most personal power among the apprentices, knows everything, and has been taught to control people. Carlos sees much of Don Juan in la Gorda, has special feelings for her, and gives her the most attention.

Before this book's action begins, la Gorda frequently visits the archaeological ruins of Monte Alba at Oaxaca in southern Mexico. Juan Matus warns her specifically to avoid them, but once, visiting with Nestor, she sees a glitter on the ground, digs out a strange rock, and is overtaken by its power. A man fixates his second attention on the rock as he



is being murdered, and his horror of being eaten by his enemies enters la Gorda. By the time she drops the rock it is too late and must be buried naked in a dirt coffin for nine days by Don Juan get back to herself. La Gorda alone sides with Carlos during confrontations about what each has learned from Don Juan. When Pablito runs away to die in Tula, la Gorda alone is joyous, seeing it as an opportunity for the rest to live in harmony. La Gorda and Carlos nearly come to blows over Carlos' insistence on helping Pablito. La Gorda later insists that she has dreamed that they must go together to Oaxaca, where they sit on Don Juan's favorite bench, fall asleep while somehow conscious leaning their heads together, and each perceives the crowd that gathers around them as luminous blobs that coalesce into large, oblong eggs. La Gorda is certain that she sees Don Juan and Don Genaro a block away, but chasing them achieves nothing. They vanish.

Only when he is satisfied that la Gorda is proficient in dreaming does Don Juan turn la Gorda over to her counterpart, Nelida, who teaches her Western grooming and taste..For most of the book, la Gorda and Carlos work together to restore any memory of earlier associations. These have been stored in the left side as "higher awareness" and erased from the right (normal) side. They get good at it only after Carlos loses his human form, as la Gorda had long before. Still it takes years. La Gorda and Carlos alone manage to cross the bridge and enter the other reality, but it proves too heavy and they must be left behind. Carlos, when he remembers everything, is supposed to deliver la Gorda to the Nagual woman.

Benigno

Benigno is the eldest apprentice of the sorcerer Don Genaro Flores. Benigno and Rosa live as a couple without being one. In Mexico City, Benigno believes that Don Juan Matus wants the male apprentices to cross the parallel lines by jumping into an abyss, but their time has not yet come. Benigno is taught heightened awareness by Silvio Manuel

Carmela

Don Juan Matus' easterly stalker, Carmela is the older of Vicente Medrano's sisters, whom Carlos meets on a bench in Zacatecas. Carmela has fine features with clear, peaceful eyes. She is beautifully dressed and looks well-to-do. She appears to be in her fifties. None of the siblings is married.

Cecilia

Don Juan Matus' southerly dreamer, Cecilia is light-skinned muscular, stern, with braided black hair. She and dark Delia, the southerly stalker, look like sisters. Cecilia is aloof, filled with inner strength, which makes her seem impatient, particularly hearing Emilito's "tales of eternity."



Delia

Don Juan Matus' southerly stalker, Delia is dark-skinned, muscular, stern, with braided black hair. She and light Cecilia, the southerly dreamer, look like sisters. Delia is rational and down-to-earth.

Eligio

Never seen in the book but much talked about, Eligio is an apprentice of the sorcerer Don Genaro Flores. Eligio, according to Josefina, is able to make the wall of fog stand still and enter it at will. Unlike Don Juan as a youth and Pablito and la Gorda later, Eligio never visits the forbidden pyramids at Tula, Hidalgo, near Mexico City, which instill sadness, fatigue, and bad luck in unprotected sorcerers.

Emilito

Don Juan Matus' southerly courier and all-around helper, Emilito looks like an "old child," in his fifties; he is wiry, with penetrating dark eyes. He tells exotic "tales of eternity" about creatures highly sensitive to motion—interspersed with dirty jokes. Don Juan says that Emilito is his scout, going to the limits of second attention ahead of him and reporting back what he sees.

Don Genaro Flores

A full-fledged sorcerer like Don Juan Matus, Don Genaro has taken part in author Carlos Castaneda's instruction and, with Don Juan has gone permanently through the crack into the other world. "The Genaros" refers to his three apprentices, Benigno, Pablito, and Nestor. Carlos first meets Don Genaro, Don Juan's northerly warrior, as a forlorn-looking Indian who in Guadalajara acts the role of Nelida's manservant. Genaro eventually teaches heightened awareness to Pablito.

Florinda

Don Juan Matus' northerly stalker, Florinda is a carbon copy of Nelida, the dreamer in Guadalajara. Author Carlos Castaneda meets Florinda late in the story, but she is Don Juan's first female warrior. Although her specialty is stalking, he assigns her as Carlos' personal guide to dreaming and the mystery of the third attention (if he ever reaches that point). As Florinda enhances the Genaros' primitive training in stalking, they become lighthearted and jovial, enjoying life. They do not know what they are doing, but become consummate artists at bending people to their wishing, practicing "controlled folly."



Florinda succeeds Zuleica as Carlos' personal guide. Carlos is immediately awestruck by her, but she judges him indulgent. Florinda under time pressure teaches Carlos the first seven principles of stalking, the first three principles of the rule for stalkers, and the first three maneuvers of stalking. Later, under other circumstances, she promises to finish his training. Florinda shares her life's story as a spoiled, conceited only child of a well-to-do family who at 18 marries Celestino, 33, a man of means. Six months later she is struck by an agonizing leg disease, brought on, a servant girl confesses, by a sorcerer's poison. It is painful enough for her to overlook her Catholic upbringing and seek an Indian curer. Thus she is introduced to and hidden by Don Juan as she learns to "recapitulate."

Hermelinda

Don Juan Matus' easterly dreamer, Hermelinda is the younger of Vicente Medrano's sisters, whom Carlos meets on a bench in Zacatecas. Hermelinda has fine features, with clear, peaceful eyes. She is beautifully dressed and looks well-to-do. She appears to be in her forties. None of them is married. Hermelinda eventually teaches higher awareness to Lydia.

Josefina

One of the "Little Sisters" apprenticed to sorcerer Don Juan Matus, Josefina readily admits that she is crazy and advises the others not to pay her any attention. Seeing that she is the one apprentice who genuinely needs someone to look after her, and knowing that Pablito resents her the least, author Carlos Castaneda, the new Nagual, takes Josefina to Tula to help Pablito when he runs away to die in the town of his ancestors. Pablito and Josefina lives as a couple without being one, setting an example for the others to pair off. Josefina is not a good one to perform verbally under pressure. Josefina is a "connoisseur of the wall of fog. She tells the apprentices that it is most easily approached in dreaming, because then it does not rotate. Josefina is taught the finer points of dreaming by Zuleica in order one day to aid Carlos.

Lydia

The first of Don Juan Matus' apprentices, called "Little Sisters," Lydia has a history of eye troubles. She lives with Nestor as a couple without being one. Lydia is taught higher awareness by Hermelinda.

Silvio Manuel

The true leader of Don Carlos' warrior's party, Silvio is a "warrior of darkness," whom author Juan Castaneda first meets on a darkened patio along with the westerly warriors Zuleica and Zoila. Silvio has a muffled voice, coughing his words and appears to float in the darkness. His voice is overpowering and cannot be disobeyed. Don Juan says that



even Silvio's stern, unsparing benefactor had lavish attention of the profoundly sober, implacable Silvio who, after entering his left-side heightened awareness, never leaves it. Seen in the light (rarely), Silvio is small, like a jockey or gymnast, who with superb muscular control and ability to disjoint himself can appear double his size. He always inspires fright in Carlos. His features are sharp, resembling a Mayan fresco. By day he is friendly and warm but turns formidable at night and is swallowed by darkness—except his catlike left eye.

Silvio is introduced a third of the way into the book as a mere name that causes dread. Josefina calls him "that devil." Rosa recalls crossing a bridge and Silvio devouring her companions. Silvio is at both ends of the bridge. The women apprentices do not recall being hurt by Manual but do recall being paralyzed with fear, while the men recall nothing. Silvio turns out to be the one who conceptualizes using the Eagle's rule as a road map to the passageway into the other world of awareness, and is the "silent force" behind Don Juan. Silvio dreams a "master plan" that excludes Carlos as Nagual. Silvio personally teaches heightened awareness to Benigno. At the final parting, Silvio gives Carlos an incantation and demonstrates how to go into and out of the luminous egg. Carlos is ecstatic, realizing that intent can be evoked, beckoned. He tries it and it works: he sees the others' luminosity and their physical bodies as two channels of vision.

Marta

A southern courier whom author Carlos Castaneda meets in conjunction with westerly warriors Silvio Manuel, Zuleica, and Zoila, Marta is a contrast to their deranged behavior. She is "a paragon of calm and silent purpose." Carlos cannot at first see her features in the dark but pictures her as beautiful. Her voice is haunting. In the bright kitchen, he sees that Marta is young, voluptuous, and round-faced. Although uneducated, Marta is a spellbinding talker. Don Juan Matus believes that she is "the finest example" of determination affecting a human being. She cares for the three formidable westerly sorcerers.

Vicente Medrano

Don Juan Matus' eastern scholarly warrior and his oldest companion, Vicente introduces himself to Carlos on Zacatecas bench, where he joins his sisters, Carmela and Hermelinda. He is a fit, older man with fine features and a groomed white beard. He seems frail and almost effete. A non-Indian, Vicente had been a pharmacist before recruitment. He has a passion for botany and teaches everyone, including Don Juan, about medicinal plants. Nestor is his special student, destined to be like him.

The Nagual Woman

A mysterious woman from both author Carlos Castaneda and la Gorda's forgotten pasts, the Nagual woman is Carlos' "feminine analogue" and partner, and la Gorda is her ward. Carlos' duty is to deliver la Gorda one day to the Nagual woman. After Don



Juan stumbles upon and recruits Carlos, he finds a double woman, serving as a clerk in an Arizona government office. He feigns ignorance and lost documents to extend their contact over months before offering to show her an old Indian, the last in a line of "power dancers." Humor and compassion win her over. Shifted from her right-right side to her left-left, the Nagual woman understands and accepts the rule, and is able to turn the fog wall on and off at will. Like Silvio Manuel, once she crosses over she never returns. She and Carlos feel an instant rapport. The pair complete the band, finding exact replicas of Don Juan's band. When the time of departure comes, the warriors all encourage Carlos and hug him. Last of all comes the Nagual woman, overwhelmed by her last day on earth. Finality sinks in and Carlos goes berserk.

Nelida

Don Juan Matus' northerly dreamer, Nelida is tall, elegant, polite, and elegantly dressed. Author Carlos Castaneda believes that she must have been ravishingly beautiful in her youth; she is now in her sixties. They collide in downtown Guadalajara at 11 AM as she is rushing out of a store carrying packages. She is elegant as a fashion magazine model, appearing to be French or northern Italian. Nelida teaches higher awareness to Rosa... Only when he is satisfied that la Gorda is proficient in dreaming does Don Juan turn la Gorda over to her counterpart, Nelida, who teaches her Western grooming and taste.

Nestor

Nestor is an apprentice of the sorcerer Don Genaro, the special student of Vicente Medrano, the group's expert in medicinal plants. Nestor and Lydia live as a couple without being one. In Mexico City, Nestor allows that author Carlos Castaneda might be merely an "unwilling envoy" leading them to destruction, rather than Silvio Manuel's willing assistant. He sees it as possible to cross parallel lines by one's own power or under another's, and believes that Silvio frightens the apprentices so badly in forcing them to cross over that they are unable to recall the incident. They must now cross over on their own, but Carlos is thwarting them.

Olinda

A double being, the daughter of middle-class non-Indians, Olinda becomes Don Juan Matus' Nagual woman. Don Juan's benefactor forces him to attend daily Mass for over a year, during which time Don Juan and Olinda often sit together. One Sunday he notices her special luminosity. The parents do not approve of marriage and Olinda is quite cautious. Don Juan appears to give in to his benefactor's own disapproval and gets Silvio Manuel to use the sorcerer's arts to abduct Olinda during busy preparations for a dinner party. Don Juan plays the role of Olinda's rescuer, allowing himself to be beaten up badly. Pretending to adjust her injured back, the benefactor shifts Olinda to the state of left side, discloses the rule to her, and she willingly becomes Don Juan's Nagual



woman. They work for years together collecting a warrior band, and Olinda departs to the other world with the benefactor's band.

Pablito

An apprentice of the sorcerer Don Genaro, Pablito once lives in Tula, the land of his ancestors, and knows its pyramids like the back of his hand. He tells stories about Don Juan Matus, back when the Nagual is an impetuous young jinx, explaining special teachings that the others have not heard about the second and third attention.

After author Carlos Castaneda returns to Los Angeles, Pablito runs away to Tula to die, and la Gorda sees this as an opportunity for the rest to live together harmoniously. Pablito and Josefina lives as a couple without being one. Dreaming of an odd "three-sided tug of war," Pablito unknowingly recreates an important sorcerer's training tool, which helps improve memory. On a visit to Mexico City, Pablito leads the opposition to Carlos trying to "railroad" the apprentices into crossing a bridge controlled by the fearsome Silvio Manuel. Pablito is taught higher awareness by Genaro. It is revealed that the story of Soledad being Pablito's birth mother is a put-on, an exquisite example of "controlled folly." Pablito's role in foisting the ruse is masterful.

Rosa

The last of the "Little Sisters" who apprentice to the sorcerer Don Juan Matus, Rosa lives with Benigno as a couple without being one. Rosa's specialty is gazing at trees. She is taught higher awareness by Nelida.

Doña Soledad

An apprentice of the sorcerer Don Juan Matus, Doña Soledad has gone away to the mountains at the opening of The Eagle's Gift, and author Carlos Castaneda without knowing why says that he is the only one who knows her location. She returns as the apprentices are preparing to leave their homes in the unnamed mountain valley. She is much younger and stronger looking than when they see her last and speaks carefully and deferentially to Carlos. It is subsequently revealed that the story of Soledad being Pablito's birth mother is a put-on, an exquisite example of "controlled folly." At Florinda's, while receiving "last-minute instructions," Carlos again meets Soledad, who has spent five years "recapitulating," and has been accepted by the Eagle and set free. Florinda confides that Soledad is the greatest stalker, able to cross the parallel lines any time and has, almost impossibly, found her "parallel being." Thereafter, Carlos deals primarily with Soledad, learning to stop the fog wall but not go through.



Teresa

Cecilia and Delia's courier, Teresa is in her early thirties and looks to be Cecilia's daughter. She is quiet but very friendly.

Juan Tuma

Vicente Medrano's sullen courier and research assistant in Zacatecas, Juan Tuma is a factual and fascinating man, talking about his journeys, the size of the luminous body, and how the second attention is assembled.

Zoila

Don Juan Matus' westerly stalker, Zoila insists that they get down to business when dreamer Zuleica taunts author Carlos Castaneda by insisting that he study her vagina. Zoila then lies down and does likewise.

Zuleica

Don Juan Matus' westerly dreamer, Zuleica is "weird-looking," tall, muscular, homely, with red, beady eyes, thoroughly unkempt. In a parrot-like voice, she calls Don Juan the "dearest little old man" and admonishes author Carlos Castaneda for pounding on her door while she is in bed. Exposing to Carlos her vagina, she thoroughly embarrasses him. He never fully overcomes his terrible first impression. Nevertheless, Zuleica, after teaching la Gorda and Josefina the fine points of dreaming in order some day to come to Carlos' aid, proves effective at guiding Carlos into the second attention, always working in total darkness. Her sessions are "imbued with mysterious overtones."



Objects/Places

The Atlanteans

A row of four colossal (15 feet high, 3 feet across) figures carved in basalt, "The Atlanteans," stand atop a pyramid in Tula, Hidalgo, near Mexico City, once the epicenter of the Toltec Empire. Author Carlos Castaneda visits them just prior to the beginning of this book, and is most impressed, but wonders about legends of their walking at night, making the ground shake. Pablito is certain that this is true.

The Atlanteans depict Toltec warriors carrying war paraphernalia. Pablito believes that they are "mannish women," placed atop the structure to support it rather than at the base. They are the four corners, four winds, and four directions. They are "nagual" and dreamers, representing "the order of the second attention brought forward." They are creatures of war but not of destruction. Twenty feet behind are four plain rectangular columns. The Atlanteans exist long before the Spaniards arrive.

Being/Consciousness

The totality of human being consists of three uneven divisions. The first is "tonal," consisting of everyday life, which ordinary people largely take for granted. The second, and far larger, is "nagual," available only to sorcerers. In it, sorcerers see luminous cocoons and live in the luminous body. To reach this stage, the sorcerer must make sophisticated use of dreaming and the "rigorous, systematic exertion" of "not-doing."

Don Juan Matus explains these concepts through a three-part, uneven division of the human consciousness. First attention is the smallest, and deals with the everyday world of normal people. Second attention is larger, available only to sorcerers, and normally lying in the background unless brought out by special training or accidental trauma. In it the sorcerer is aware of his or her luminous being. Third attention is immeasurable and undefinable. When one enters it, there is an outburst of energy. It is hard to attain but fruitful.

Dreaming Body/Double

The body that one gets in dreaming, the double is identical with oneself, a perfect replica of the dreamer's body. It is "inherently the energy of a luminous being," a luminous, phantom-like emanation of the "fixation of the second attention," projected into three dimensions. It focuses on the total being and transforms energy into anything suitable, most often the familiar image of the physical body. The will can channel it into anything, however. If the dreaming body attaches itself to something this is destructive. Males are more possessive than females.



Los Angeles

Author Carlos Castaneda is living in Los Angeles, somehow affiliated with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) at the time of this book, and at intervals traveling to the Sierra Madre, the flat, barren region of central Mexico.

Mexico City

After recuperating in Veracruz, the apprentices go to Mexico City, where they spend two days as tourists before author Carlos Castaneda takes them to an airline office into which Don Juan Matus had once pushed him, causing Carlos to slip through the crack between worlds. Carlos then takes them to the place in Alameda Park where he and Don Juan had talked about that experience. At this point, Carlos has no idea how to control the apprentices as a group.

Nagual

The Nagual is a double being drawn to the hidden passageway. Naguals occur in male/female pairs. Seers perceive them as a luminous egg having four compartments, their right and left sides each having two sections. Naguals have assistants: four female stalkers, three male warriors, and one male courier. Each female is distinct: 1) east/order (optimistic, a steady breeze), 2) north/strength (resourceful, a hard wind), 3) west/feeling (introspective, a cold gust of wind), and 4) south/growth (nurturing, a hot wind). The male warriors also are types: 1) knowledgeable, noble, and serene; 2) active, volatile, and fickle; and 3) the mysterious organizer. The courier is a taciturn assistant.

Males and females live in set groupings and all come together only for strenuous tasks or to leave the world. The Nagual and his party must find three more couriers, male and/or female. To be sure that the Nagual man leads truly, the Nagual woman is taken to the other world to serve as a beacon to the hidden opening. The Nagual and his warriors are then commanded to forget, scatter, and regain the totality of themselves. Only then do they gather a new pair of double beings, reveal to them the rule, provide the minimal party of 16, and start a new cycle. The new Nagual woman always leaves the world to become a beacon with the old party.

Oaxaca / Monte Alban

Oaxaca is a town in southern Mexico, site of archaeological ruins at Monte Alban. La Gorda roams the ruins long ago, despite Don Juan Matus' warning to avoid them. She usually goes with Pablito, but it is during a visit with Nestor that she sees a glitter on the ground, digs out a strange rock, and is overtaken by its power. In Oaxaca, narrator Carlos Castaneda and la Gorda sit on Don Juan's favorite bench, fall asleep but conscious, leaning their heads together, and each sees the crowd that gathers around



them as luminous blobs that coalesce into large, oblong eggs. La Gorda is certain that she sees Don Juan and Don Genaro a block away, but chasing them achieves nothing. They vanish.

Carlos returns alone to visit a house that stir feelings but reveal no concrete memories. He drives the apprentices to Oaxaca when they agree that they must leave their mountain valley homes. Discussions of the two strangers who vanish convince them that they must go north. They find places in a local boardinghouse. The men finish up business they have in town while the women shop for Western-style clothes.

Sierra Madre

The flat, barren region of central Mexico, the Sierra Madre is where the action of the first part of *The Eagle's Gift* takes place. Author Carlos Castaneda gives no more information than that the "little sisters" and "Genaros" live near one another in two houses in a mountainous valley.

Toltecs

Don Juan Matus considers himself a cultural descendant of the ancient Toltecs. Tula is the epicenter of their empire. "Toltec" means sorcerer in the unknown language of Don Juan's "benefactor" or teacher, and Don Juan's apprentices adopt the term to designate their group. At the book's conclusion, Don Juan and his warrior band drift off into a wriggling, contracting cluster of lights that resemble the plumed serpent of Toltec legend.

Tula, Hidalgo

Tula, Hidalgo is the site of archaeological ruins near Mexico City and once the epicenter of the Toltec Empire. Author Carlos Castaneda visits them just prior to the beginning of this book, and is most impressed with a row of four colossal carved figures in basalt, "The Atlanteans." Both Don Juan Matus and Pablito have lived in Tula and are intimately familiar with the pyramid. La Gorda is afraid to visit, after her terrifying experiences at another archaeological site, Oaxaca.

Veracruz

Veracruz is the city on the Gulf of Mexico to which the apprentices flee after being unable to cross a bridge associated with Silvio Manuel. It is a "neutral" city. There they shred their old clothes and their morale and feeling of well-being increase.

Themes

Dreaming

The Eagle's Gift describes two disciplines used by impeccable warriors. The greatest accomplishment in the second attention is "dreaming," while in the first attention it is "stalking." The book differentiates second-attention "dreaming" as a special state from everyday dreaming through the consistent use of italics.

Whenever one has the same vision while dreaming three times, it bears noting, but dreamers should take everything with a grain of salt. Volition matters in dreaming, not the body. One should glance at dream situations rather than stare, just as in everyday life. While every dreamer is unique, there are general states of dreaming: 1) "restful vigil" is when the senses go dormant but one is still aware; 2) "dynamic vigil" presents to the dreamer a static, three-dimensional tableau of something or someone; 3) "passive witnessing" allows the dreamer to eyewitness an unfolding event; and 4) "dynamic initiative" draws the dreamer into the act itself.

One begins "dreaming" by focusing the "residue of consciousness" (or "second attention") on the elements or features, of one's everyday dreams. One does this by exercising "not-doing," by "stopping the internal dialogue." One can concentrate on the tip of the sternum, where the attention for dreaming resides; the energy for dreaming resides just below the navel. This energy is called "the will." Only by immobilizing attention an ordinary dream be turned into "dreaming."

In dreaming, the right side (rational awareness) gets wrapped up inside the left and provides a minimal but protective sense of "sobriety and rationality." First attention is "hooked" to "emanations" of the earth and second attention is hooked to emanations of the universe. Dreamers go outside outside the bounds of everyday life and become "living slingshots." Dreaming is not illusion but a learning tool, a way of storing the second attention. Author Carlos Castaneda has all of his memories of training put into the second attention (left side) and it is years before they begin to emerge into his consciousness. The final goal in dreaming is to leave the body and look at oneself asleep.

Stalking

The Eagle's Gift describes two disciplines used by impeccable warriors. The greatest accomplishment in the second attention is "dreaming," while in the first attention it is "stalking." Stalkers deal with the everyday world using techniques of "controlled folly." The principles of the art of stalking are: 1) warriors choose their battleground and never go into battle without knowing their surroundings; 2) warriors discard everything unnecessary; 3) warriors apply full concentration in deciding whether or not to do battle, assuming it is for one's very life; 4) warrior relax, abandon themselves, and fear nothing,



thus allowing the guiding powers to help; 5) when faced with overwhelming odds, warriors retreat a moment, let their minds meander with anything else; 6) warriors compress time, for every instant counts, and not an instant is wasted.

The "rule of stalkers" applies not only to warriors but to everyone: 1) "everything that surrounds us is an unfathomable mystery;" 2) "we must try to unravel these mysteries, but without ever hoping to accomplish this;" and 3) "a warrior, aware of the unfathomable mystery that surrounds him and aware of his duty to try to unravel it, takes his rightful place among mysteries and regards himself as one." There is, thus, "no end to the mystery of being." One must be humble, accepting equality with everything, including pebbles and ants.

"Recapitulation" is essential for stalkers. It consists of recollecting one's life in minute detail, systematically back to the moment of birth. Its goal is to enter the "third attention," that moment of perfect clarity at death. There is a breathing exercise associated, which helps restore energy to the luminous body and purify it of feelings and interactions, left as filaments. Only after this process can a stalker practice controlled folly, for it requires the ability to laugh at oneself. At this point, a seventh principle of the art of stalking becomes applicable: "A stalker never pushes himself to the front." Only stalkers face oncoming time rather than watching it recede.

Time

The Eagle's Gift deals with time directly only in the final chapters but time as a limiter of efforts and success runs throughout. Time, ultimately, is not something that is measured by the movement of a clock, but is "the essence of attention." It is the "emanations" of an "Indescribable Force," encountered when one steps into one's "other self" or "second awareness," or left-side awareness. The "wheel of time" can be described as a tunnel infinitely long and wide, and furrowed. The force of life confines living creatures to a given furrow and they see only what is in that furrow. They are trapped there.

Through most of The Eagle's Gift this predicament is presented far less clearly as a "wall of fog" dividing the world in two parts. As one rotates one's head, the wall rotates too. It takes great powers of second attention to stop this rotation in order to enter into the barren world beyond the fog. The image of the furrows shows the solution: when trapped, view the receding furrows. The spellbinding force of those grooves is broken. Being able to do this requires Will. Castaneda likens it to a vine runner or tentacle that everyone possesses. Warriors seek to learn to focus the will on the wheel of time and make it turn. This allows them to gaze at and learn from any furrow.

The Indescribable Force that governs the destiny of all living things is called "The Eagle." It issues irrevocable dictums called "the rule," which is not a tale but a road map. The warrior's goal is, by following the map, to find an opening to freedom and go through, not to an "eternal life" as commonly envisioned (living forever) but to retain a lifetime's awareness from being consumed by the Eagle at the moment of death. It means entry into the mysterious "third attention," when every cell becomes aware of

itself and of the body as a totality. Castaneda concedes that such awareness is meaningless to "compartmentalized minds," but is "the crux of the warrior's struggle."



Style

Perspective

The Eagle's Gift is consistently written in the first person past tense as a study in revelation and clarification. It drops the pretext of being a work of scholarship that characterizes Carlos Castaneda's first work, *The Teachings of Don Juan*, in which he is indoctrinated into the drug culture of the Yaqui Indians through a shaman named Don Juan Matus. Carlos is still a rather uptight scholar but no longer records verbatim or analyzes his experiences in highfalutin terms. The expertise remains, but the continuing story becomes more personal, as it had already turned in *The Second Ring of Power*.

The book virtually presupposes a reading of *Second Ring* (but not necessarily *Teachings*), for the opening characters are brought forward with scant reintroduction and unfinished business demands attention: Carlos' apprentices do not think that he is fit to be their new Nagual. All are experiencing troubling moments of *déjà vu*. The conflict is brought to a head in the first section, after which Carlos and one apprentice, la Gorda, together discover the "dreaming body" and continue clarifying emerging memories.

The third section describes and contrasts Don Juan's apprenticeship to his benefactor and his own work as Nagual. As Carlos' memories come back—purposefully blotted out, it turns out, in order to spare him pain when Don Juan and the others leave the world—he contemplates the "rule" given to warriors by the Eagle and why he requires a different rule to fulfill his destiny. Carlos writes movingly about situations and characters and things of mystery that he is beginning to understand. The final pages are filled with unprecedented pathos. The leap into the abyss, which mystifies much of this book and *The Second Ring of Power* is satisfactorily resolved.

Tone

The Eagle's Gift, which author Carlos Castaneda in his Prologue insists is autobiographical and non-fictional, reads like a novel, engaging readers with fleshed-out, memorable characters and movement along a plot line. As in *The Second Ring of Power*, the UCLA cultural anthropologist turned sorcerer is struggling to understand what he has undergone, particularly the leap into the abyss that culminates his apprenticeship. The tone is one of confusion and resignation as fellow apprentices experience difficult spiritual times and question his aptitude to be their new Nagual. All are experiencing disquieting and confusing moments of *déjà vu*. Carlos and la Gorda in particular use "dreaming" (always italicized when indicating activity in heightened second awareness) to recover fragmentary memories.

Part 3 shifts perspective and fills in information that helps understand the earlier parts—and Castaneda's earlier books as well. Much technical information is provided about the



mythology of the Eagle as a rather blasé guardian of life, about the rule, which functions as a road map for recruiting and training warriors, and the practice of "stalking." Don Juan is seen both as a difficult apprentice and a commanding Nagual. As Don Juan prepares to lead his band out of this world, the instruction has a frantic "end of times" quality, as as many loose ends as possible are tied off.

The Eagle's Gift is not light reading. Several times it suggests that portions of the warrior's training and tradition can apply to civilians (as it were) dealing with those around them, but it is couched in a mythology and spirituality that demand a certain mindset. For those who have read earlier Castaneda works, it helps clarify who and what Don Juan is and how and why he treats Carlos as he does.

Structure

The Eagle's Gift by Carlos Castaneda opens with a Prologue, describing the evolution of the author's work as a cultural anthropologist among the Yaqui Indians, which leads to him becoming an apprentice practitioner of sorcery to Don Juan Matus. Castaneda concisely summarizes The Second Ring of Power, introducing his fellow apprentices, who announce that when Don Juan goes to the other world, he is the new "Nagual." The Prologue is followed by three numbered and titled parts containing a total of fifteen numbered and titled chapters.

Part 1, "The Other Self," consists of five chapters: 1) "The Fixation of the Second Attention," 2) "Seeing Together," 3) "Quasi Memories of the Other Self," 4) "Crossing the Boundaries of Affection," and 5) "A Horde of Angry Sorcerers." In Part 1, Don Juan Matus' apprentices, grudgingly following Carlos as the new Nagual, experience difficult times and prepare to leave their home—and perhaps the world. All experience vague and troubling feelings of déjà vu. The name Silvio Manuel strikes unexplainable terror, connected with crossing a bridge. Carlos drives the apprentices to Mexico city, where they agree to disband.

Part 2, "The Art of Dreaming," consists of three chapters, continuing the count: 6) "Losing the Human Form," 7) "Dreaming Together, and 8) "The Right and the Left Side Awareness." Part 2 moves the action to Arizona and concentrates of Carlos and la Gorda immerse themselves in dreaming, including dreaming together. As Carlos loses his human form and thus catches up with la Gorda, they turn to the common task of remembering, a two-year process of revelation and bridging their two sides in a minimal fashion.

Part 3, "The Eagle's Gift," consists of seven chapters: 9) "The Rule of the Nagual," 10) "The Nagual's Party of Warriors," 11) "The Nagual Woman," 12) "The Not-Doings of Silvio Manuel," 14) "Florinda," and 15) "The Plumed Serpent." Part 3 shifts radically in perspective. It introduces the Eagle and its rule, recalls Don Juan's difficult apprenticeship to a demanded benefactor and his determination to tailor the rule for his own wards. Don Juan recruits Carlos and introduces him to his four geographical teams



of warriors—bringing a new cast of characters who prove the archetypes of the little sisters and Genaros. Carlo's unfitness to be their Nagual is established.

Part 3 also includes much technical material: Zuleica's instructions on second attention and, interwoven with Florinda's life story, the first seven principles of stalking, the first three principles of the rule for stalkers, and the first three maneuvers of stalking. Finally, Don Carlos' departure with his warriors is touchingly described.



Quotes

"I must have had a look of perplexity on my face. Pablito laughed. It was a polite laughter.

" 'No. I don't see what you mean, Pablito,' I said. 'But that's because don Juan never told me anything about it. The topic is completely new to me. Please tell me everything you know.'

" 'The Atlanteans are the nagual; they are dreamers. They represent the order of the second attention brought forward, that's why they're so fearsome and mysterious. They are creatures of war but not of destruction.

" 'The other row of columns, the rectangular ones, represent the order of the first attention, the tonal. They are stalkers, that's why they are covered with inscriptions. They are very peaceful and wise, the opposite of the first row.'

"Pablito stopped talking and looked at me almost defiantly, then he broke into a smile.

"I thought he was going to go on to explain what he had said, but he remained silent as if waiting for my comments.

"I told him how mystified I was and urged him to continue talking. He seemed undecided, stared at me for a moment, and took a deep breath. He had hardly begun to speak when the voices of the rest of them were raised in a clamor of protest.

" 'The Nagual already explained that to all of us,' la Gorda said impatiently. 'What's the point of making him repeat it?'" Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 1, The Fixation of the Second Attention, pg. 21.

" 'Eligio says that you are the Nagual, but you are not for us,' Josefina said to me.

"There was dead silence in the room. I did not know what to make of Josefina's statement. I had to wait until someone else talked.

" 'Do you feel relieved?' la Gorda prodded me.

"I said to all of them that I did not have any opinions one way or the other. They looked like children, bewildered children. La Gorda had the air of a mistress of ceremonies who is thoroughly embarrassed.

"Nestor stood up and faced la Gorda. He spoke a phrase in Mazatec to her. It had the sound of a command or a reproach.

" 'Tell us everything you know, Gorda,' he went on in Spanish. 'You have no right to play with us, to hold back something so important, just for yourself.'

"La Gorda protested vehemently. She explained that she was holding on to what she knew because Eligio had asked her to do so . Josefina assented with a nod of her head.

" 'Did he tell all this to you or to Josefina?' Pablito asked.

" 'We were together,' la Gorda said in a barely audible whisper.

" 'You mean you and Josefina dream together!' Pablito exclaimed breathlessly.

"The surprise in his voice corresponded to the shock wave that seemed to go through the rest of them." Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 3, Quasi Memories of the Other Self, pgs. 61-62.

"She did not finish. She came to my side and began to whisper in my ear. She said that there was something that the Nagual Juan Matus had made her promise to keep to herself until the time was right, a trump card to be used only when there was no other



way out. She added in a dramatic whisper that the Nagual had foreseen their new living arrangement, which was the result of my taking Josefina to Tula to be with Pablito. She said that there was a faint chance that we might succeed as a group if we followed the natural order of that organization. La Gorda explained that since we were divided into couples, we formed a living organism. We were a snake, a rattlesnake. The snake had four sections and was divided into two longitudinal halves, male and female. She said that she and I made up the first section of the snake, the head. It was a cold, calculating, poisonous head. The second section, formed by Nestor and Lydia, was the firm and fair heart of the snake. The third was the belly—a shifty, moody, untrustworthy belly made up by Pablito and Josefina. And the fourth section, the tail, where the rattle was located, was formed by the couple who in real life could rattle on in their Tzotzil language four hours on end, Benigno and Rosa." Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 4, Crossing the Boundaries of Affection, pgs. 71-72.

"Don Juan had taught me to accept my fate in humbleness.

" 'The course of a warrior's destiny is unalterable,' he once said to me. 'The challenge is how far he can go within those rigid bounds, how impeccable he can be within those rigid bounds. If there are obstacles in his path, the warrior strives impeccably to overcome them. If he finds unbearable hardship and pain on his path, he weeps, but all his tears put together could not move the line of his destiny the breadth of one hair.'

"My original decision to let the power of that place point out our next step had been correct. I stood up. The others turned their heads away. La Gorda came to my side and said, as if nothing had happened, that I should leave and that she would catch up with me and join me at a later time. I wanted to retort that I saw no reason for her to join me. She had chosen to join the others. She seemed to read my feeling of having been betrayed. She calmly assured me that we had to fulfill our fate together as warriors and not as the petty people we were. Part 1, The Other Self, Chapter 5, A Horde of Angry Sorcerers, pgs. 110-111.

"Three months went by almost unnoticed. But one day, while I was in Los Angeles, I woke up in the early morning hours with an unbearable pressure in my head. It was not a headache; it was rather a very intense weight in my ears. I felt it also on my eyelids and the roof of my mouth. I knew I was feverish, but the heat was only in my head. I made a feeble attempt to sit up. The thought crossed my mind that I was having a stroke. My first reaction was to call for help, but somehow I calmed down and tried to let go of my fear. After a while the pressure in my head began to diminish but it also began to shift to my throat. I gasped for air, gagging and coughing for some time; then the pressure moved slowly to my chest, then to my stomach, to my groin, to my legs, and to my feet before it finally left my body.

"Whatever had happened to me had taken about two hours to unfold. During the course of those two grueling ours it was as if something inside my body was actually moving downward, moving out of me. I fancied it to be rolling up like a carpet. Another image that occurred to me was of a blob moving inside the cavity of my body. I discarded that image in favor of the first, because the feeling was of something being coiled within itself. Just like a carpet being rolled up, it became heavier, thus more painful, as it went down. The two areas where the pain became excruciating were my knees and my feet, especially my right foot, which remained hot for thirty-five minutes after all the pain and



pressure had vanished.

"La Gorda, upon hearing my report, said that this time for certain I had lost my human form, that I had dropped all my shields, or most of them. She was right. Without knowing how or even realizing what had happened, I found myself in a most unfamiliar state. I felt detached, unbiased." Part 2, The Art of Dreaming, Chapter 6, Losing the Human Form, pgs. 115-116

"La Gorda thought that the Nagual Juan Matus's efforts were to lead us to the other self by means of the self-control of the second attention through dreaming. He put us in direct touch with the second attention, however, through bodily manipulation. La Gorda remembered that he used to force her to go from one side to the other by pushing or massaging her back. She said that sometimes he would even give her a sound blow over or around her right shoulder blade. The result was her entrance into an extraordinary state of clarity. To la Gorda, it seemed that everything in that state went faster, yet nothing in the world had been changed.

"I twas weeks after la Gorda told me this that I remembered the same had been the case with me. At any given time don Juan might give me a blow on my back. An extraordinary clarity would follow. The world was the same but sharper. Everything stood by itself. It may have been that my reasoning faculties were numbed by don Juan's blow, thus allowing me to perceive without their intervention." Part 2, The Art of Dreaming, Chapter 8, The Right and the Left Side Awareness, pg. 168.

"Don Juan did exactly the same thing with me, and with la Gorda; he made us shift levels of awareness and told us the rule of the Nagual in the following way:

"The power that governs the destiny of all living beings is called the Eagle, not because it is an eagle or has anything to do with an eagle, but because it appears to the seer as an immeasurable jet-black eagle, standing erect as an eagle stands, its height reaching to infinity.

"As the seer gazes on the blackness that the Eagle is, four blazes of light reveal what the Eagle is like. The first blaze, which is like a bolt of lightning, helps the seer make out the contours of the Eagle's body. There are patches of whiteness that look like an eagle's feathers and talons. A second blaze of lightning reveals the flapping, wind-creating blackness that looks like an eagle's wings. With the third blaze of lightning the seer beholds a piercing, inhuman eye. And the fourth and last blaze discloses what the Eagle is doing.

"The Eagle is devouring the awareness of all the creatures that, alive on earth a moment before and now dead, have floated to the Eagle's beak, like a ceaseless swarm of fireflies, to meet their owner, their reason for having had life. The Eagle disentangles these tiny flames, lays them flat, as a tanner stretches out a hide, and then consumes them; for awareness is the Eagle's food.

"The Eagle, that power that governs the destinies of all living things, reflects equally and all at once all those living things. There is no way, therefore, for man to pray to the Eagle, to ask favors, to hope for grace. The human part of the Eagle is too insignificant to move the whole." Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 9, The Rule of the Nagual, pgs. 176-177.



"Another woman was sitting in one of the armchairs. The first woman sat down on a small straw mat on the floor and rested her back against the other chair. Then she put her thighs against her breasts, exposing herself completely. She was not wearing underpants. I stared at her dumbfounded.

"In an ugly gruff tone, the woman asked me why I was staring at her vagina. I did not know what to say except to deny it. She stood up and seemed about to hit me. She demanded that I tell her that I had gaped at her because I had never seen a vagina in my life. I felt guilty. I was thoroughly embarrassed and also annoyed at having been caught in such a situation.

"The woman asked don Juan what kind of Nagual I was if I had never seen a vagina. She began repeating this over and over, yelling it at the top of her voice. She ran around the room and stopped by the chair where the other woman was sitting. She shook her by the shoulders and, pointing at me, said that I was a man who had never seen a vagina in his whole life. She laughed and taunted me.

"I was mortified. I felt that don Juan should have done something to save me from that humiliation. I remembered that he had told me these women were quite mad. He had understated it; this woman was ready for an institution. I looked at don Juan for support and advice. He looked away. He seemed to be equally at a loss, although I thought I caught a malicious smile, which he quickly hid by turning his head." Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 10, The Nagual's Party of Warriors, pgs. 201-202.

"Don Juan's qualms about going to church vanished when his benefactor began introducing him to the daughters of people he was acquainted with. He enjoyed that, although he felt ill at ease. Don Juan thought that his benefactor was helping him to exercise his tongue. He was neither glib nor charming, and his benefactor had said that a Nagual, perforce, has to be both.

"One Sunday during mass, after nearly a year of almost daily attendance, don Juan found out the real reason for their going to church. He was kneeling next to a girl named Olinda, the daughter of his benefactor's acquaintances. He turned to exchange a glance with her, as had become their custom after months of daily contact. Their eyes met, and suddenly don Juan saw her as a luminous being—and then he saw her doubleness. Olinda was a double woman. His benefactor had known it all along, and had taken the most difficult path in order to put don Juan in touch with her. Don Juan confessed to us that the moment was overwhelming to him.

"His benefactor knew that don Juan had seen. His mission to put the double beings together had been completed successfully and impeccably. He stood up and his eyes swept every corner of that church, then he walked out without a backward glance. There was nothing more for him to do there." Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 11, The Nagual Woman, pgs. 216-217.

"Remembering, in retrospect, my first meeting with her, I am reminded of something thoroughly unrelated but apropos. I saw once in a weekly newspaper a reprint of a twenty-year-old photograph of a then-young Hollywood actress who had been made up to look twenty years older in order to play the role of an aging woman. Next to it, the paper had printed a current picture of the same actress as she looked after twenty real years of hard living. Florinda, in my subjective judgment, was like the first picture of the movie actress, a young girl made up to look old.



" 'What do we have here?' she said pinching me. 'You don't look like much. Soft. Indulging to the core no doubt.'

"Her bluntness reminded me of don Juan's; so did the inner life of her eyes. It had occurred to me, looking back at my life with don Juan, that his eyes were always in repose. One could see no agitation in them. It was not that don Juan's eyes were beautiful to look at. I have seen gorgeous eyes, but never have I found them to say anything. Florinda's eyes, like don Juan's, gave me the feeling that they had witnessed all there is to witness; they were calm, but not bland. The excitement had been driven inward and had turned into something I could only describe as inner life." Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 14, Florinda, pgs. 269-270.

"I had been unable to recollect at first what had taken place after this summation. One day la Gorda finally succeeded in breaking the barriers of my memory. She told me that she was inside my mind as if she were reading me. Her assessment was that what kept my memory locked up was that I was afraid to remember my pain. What had happened at Silvio Manuel's house the night before they left was inextricably enmeshed with my fear. She said that she had the clearest sensation that I was afraid, but she did not know the reason why. Nor could she remember what exactly had taken place in that house, specifically in the room where we sat down.

"As la Gorda spoke I felt as if I were plummeting into an abyss. I realized that something in me was trying to make a connection between two separate events that I had witnessed in my two states of awareness. On my left side I had the locked-up memories of don Juan and his party of warriors on their last day on earth, on my right side I had the memory of having jumped that day into an abyss. In trying to join my two sides I experienced a total sense of physical descent. My knees gave way and I fell to the floor." Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 15, The Plumed Serpent, pg. 302

"The Nagual woman came to me last. She sat down and held me in her lap as if I were a child. She exuded affection and purity. I was breathless. We stood up and walked around the room. We talked about and pondered our fate. Forces impossible to fathom had guided us to that culminating moment. The awe that I felt was immeasurable. And so was my sadness.

"She then revealed a portion of the rule that applies to the three-pronged Nagual. She was in a state of ultimate agitation and yet she was calm. Her intellect was peerless and yet she was not trying to reason anything out. Her last day on earth overwhelmed her. She filled me with her mood. It was as if up to that moment I had not quite realized the finality of our situation. Being on my left side entailed that the primacy of the immediate took precedence, which made it practically impossible for me to foresee beyond that moment. However, the impact of her mood engaged a great deal of my right side awareness and its capacity to prejudge feelings that are to come. I realized that I would never again see her. That was unbearable! Part 3, The Eagle's Gift, Chapter 15, The Plumed Serpent, pgs. 312-313.



Topics for Discussion

How does the furrowed tunnel clarify what is signified throughout the book by the wall of fog?

What role does poetry play in the book?

What is the role of "recapitulation," practically and in terms of the book's mysticism?

How is Catholicism portrayed in the book? Do Indian and European Catholics have equal difficulty in accepting the world of Don Juan?

What is the significance of the points of the compass in the teaching of Don Juan and his benefactor?

What are the key differences between "dreaming" and "stalking?" What common purposes do they serve?

What is the root of Carlos Castaneda's failure as a Nagual? What do you suppose is the fate of his dispersed colleagues?