

# **The Fire from Within Study Guide**

**The Fire from Within by Carlos Castaneda**

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



# Contents

<a href="#">The Fire from Within Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Foreword and Chapter 1, The New Seers.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 2, Petty Tyrants.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 3, The Eagle's Emanations.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 4, The Glow of Awareness and Chapter 5: The First Attention.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 6, Inorganic Beings.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 7, The Assemblage Point.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 8, The Position of the Assemblage Point.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 9, The Shift Below.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 10, Great Bands of Emanations and Chapter 11, Stalking, Intent and the Dreaming Position.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 12, The Nagual Julian.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 13, The Earth's Boost and Chapter 14, The Rolling Force.....</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 15, The Death Defiers.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 16, The Mold of Man.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 17, The Journey of the Dreaming Body.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">Chapter 18, Breaking the Barrier of Perception and Epilogue.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">40</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">44</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">46</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">48</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">54</a>





## Plot Summary

The Fire From Within by Carlos Castaneda is a novel about the experiences of the narrator, an apprentice, with the master sorcerer don Juan Matus. The narrator details his final training before the departure of his mentor. The Fire From Within is an interesting account of the knowledge that the narrator gains from don Juan Matus.

The narrator has many extensive descriptions of his apprenticeship with the Mexican Indian sorcerer, don Juan Matus. He learns that there are three facets of a seer's knowledge: the masteries of awareness, stalking and intent. Don Juan Matus begins to teach the narrator about awareness, starting with the tradition of the ancient Toltec seers. The seers of the new cycle are not caught by death; they choose the moment of their departure from this world and are consumed by a fire from within, vanishing as if they never existed. The narrator goes to Oaxaca where don Juan sends him into a state of heightened awareness to prepare him for the final exercise which is necessary before warriors are considered fit to be on their own. Don Juan warns the narrator that it will take years to recall what he has learned on his left side. The narrator learns about petty tyrants after an encounter with la Gorda. He also learns the five attributes of warriorship and the difference between the known, the unknown and the unknowable. Don Juan teaches the narrator about the Eagle, the source of all sentient beings as well as the reason for the existence of sentient beings, to enhance awareness.

The narrator becomes angry and sad at the limitations of his being since he cannot remember his lessons while he is in normal awareness. Don Juan, don Genaro and the narrator go to the original setting where the original seers lived thousands of years ago, and don Juan teaches about the three levels of attention. People approach, intending to harm. Don Juan leads the narrator to don Genaro's house while don Genaro continues walking to misdirect the weird creatures. When don Genaro returns, he opens the door to let the creatures in, but the narrator does not see anything. The three seers leave quickly and go to don Juan's house. When the narrator asks for an example of the ancient Toltecs' practices, don Juan has him make a mirror and call an ally into it at the creek. The narrator is melancholy when he realizes that humans are truly nothing.

Don Juan teaches the narrator about shifting his assemblage point, and don Genaro forces the narrator's assemblage point to shift several times. At don Juan's order, the narrator meets la Catalina in a worm-like form, and the pair romp and play in another world. Don Juan teaches the narrator about the great bands of emanations and the dreaming body. Don Genaro shows the narrator his dreaming body which causes the narrator to scream as don Genaro walks on the ceiling and the walls. There is a strange excitement in the house because don Juan is close to leaving. The narrator hears about don Juan's training with the master stalker, the nagual Julian. He also learns about the boost from the earth, and the tumbler. Don Juan and don Genaro drag the narrator to the hills to meet the old seers who have defied death, and the narrator confronts the creatures because of an uncontrollable urge despite his intense fear.



Since don Juan has finished his explanations, the narrator must now move his assemblage point unaided and align another great band of emanations. First, the narrator sees, appreciates and desires to worship the mold of man. The narrator assembles another world, and he and don Juan walk through a deserted plain of yellow dunes of sulfur. Next, he moves to the Black World. Don Juan insists that the narrator shift his assemblage point directly to the Black World since he will have to do so in several days to save his life, and the narrator accomplishes this feat. The narrator and two other apprentices, Pablito and Nestor, meet don Juan, don Genaro and the other members of the nagual's party on a mountain. The apprentices must intend to shift their assemblage point after jumping from the cliff. The narrator, Pablito and Nestor jump from the cliff, but they all manage to shift their assemblage points to assemble another world and escape. They are left to remember don Juan's teachings about heightened awareness and try to reassemble the lessons he taught them in order to achieve freedom.



# Foreword and Chapter 1, The New Seers

## Foreword and Chapter 1, The New Seers Summary

The Fire From Within by Carlos Castaneda is a novel about the experiences of the narrator, an apprentice, with the master sorcerer don Juan Matus. The narrator details his final training before the departure of his mentor. The Fire From Within is an interesting account of the knowledge that the narrator gains from don Juan Matus.

The narrator has provided extensive descriptions of his apprenticeship with the Mexican-Indian sorcerer, don Juan Matus. He explains that men have two sides of awareness, the right side, normal awareness, and the left side. Don Juan introduces the narrator to don Genaro, and both men convince the narrator jump from a mountain top into an abyss. In his left-sided awareness, don Juan and don Genaro teach the narrator who they really are and what they really do; they are seers or naguals. Don Juan is the leader of the nagual's party while the narrator is a nominal leader. In order to learn in the left side, it is necessary to enter a state of perceptual clarity, also called heightened awareness. Once he returns to normal awareness, it is difficult to recall what he has been taught in the left side. There are three facets of seers' knowledge: the mastery of awareness, the mastery of stalking, and the mastery of intent. Don Juan begins his teachings with the mastery of awareness. He explains the tradition of the ancient Toltec seers as well as the fact that the new seers are not caught by death but choose their moment of departure and are consumed by a fire from within, vanishing as if they never existed.

The narrator goes to Oaxaca in southern Mexico where he finds don Juan on his favorite bench. They begin talking about the narrator's academic problems, but soon don Juan slaps the narrator on his back, sending him into a state of heightened awareness followed by silence. Don Juan teaches the narrator about the Toltec seers, powerful sorcerers who were able to fixate their awareness of their victims. The narrator is confused at this new round of teachings. Don Juan says that the narrator is ready for the final exercise which is necessary before warriors are considered fit to be on their own. New seers know these techniques, but they do not use them, nor do they call themselves sorcerers. The Toltecs started on the path of power by eating power plants; don Juan knows this because he is able to see the past. Some of the Toltecs became obsessed with seeing and lost their knowledge. Other Indian conquerors came, but they did not have the Toltecs' knowledge because they were not seers. After the Spanish Inquisition, a new breed of seers rose.

After the first world of the Toltecs was destroyed, the surviving seers regrouped and established stalking, dreaming and intent as the key procedures in seeing. Centuries of subjugation provided the ideal circumstances for them to perfect their skills. Now, there are only a few seers scattered all over the world. New seers are different from each other, each concentrating on specific aspects of knowledge. Naguals separated from each other at the end of the sixteenth century. Don Juan lists all of the current naguals.



Don Juan and the narrator's line changed in 1723. The narrator does not see don Juan again until noon the next day after he joins the other apprentices, Pablito, Nestor and la Gorda, for a shopping excursion before returning to the boarding house. Don Juan wants to talk privately with the narrator before meeting the others for lunch, but la Gorda wants to join them and is angry when don Juan forbids her. Don Juan tells the narrator that the basis of knowledge was lost in the Toltecs' time and that real learning takes place in the left side. In the olden days, children were apprenticed to old seers. The value of the new seers' method is the ability to recall what is learned in the left side after years of allowing the information to become internalized.

## Foreword and Chapter 1, The New Seers Analysis

The fact that the narrator mentions previously providing extensive descriptions of his apprenticeship highlights the fact that this novel does not detail his entire apprenticeship, nor the beginning of it. The introduction of the two sides of awareness is an important feature throughout the novel. The introduction of don Genaro is also important. The mention of jumping off of a mountain into an abyss foreshadows the final task of a warrior. The information that it is difficult to recall left side lessons in the right side begins the difficulties that the narrator will face throughout the novel. The three facets of a seer's knowledge outline the material that don Juan will teach the narrator. The ancient Toltecs are mentioned first in the preface and then throughout the novel as a means of contrast with the new seers as well as the forefathers of their practice. Don Juan's explanation that the new seers are not caught by death but choose their moment of departure and are consumed by a fire from within, vanishing as if they never existed, foreshadows his departure at the end of the novel while also explaining the reason for the title.

Don Juan's bench is introduced in the first chapter, and it is a place where don Juan and the narrator frequent. The narrator's reason tends to get in his way of learning in the left side, as evidenced his discussing academic problems with don Juan. It is also obvious that don Juan quickly gets irritated with this line of thinking by his sending the narrator into heightened awareness. The description of the ancient Toltec seers fixating the awareness of their victims foreshadows don Genaro and don Juan utilizing this practice on the narrator. Don Juan prepares the narrator for his final exercise. Don Juan also provides background information in his recital of the history of the ancient Toltecs and the new seers. The allusion to the change of their line in 1723 foreshadows the story that later appears detailing the exact change that occurred. The other apprentices are introduced in chapter one, but they are not seen very often throughout the story. La Gorda is introduced and her irritation sets her in place for the next chapter. The fact that the value of the new seers' method is the ability to recall what is learned in the left side after years of allowing the information to become internalized foreshadows the narrator's inability to recall what he has learned as well as his lifelong pursuit of regaining the knowledge.



## Chapter 2, Petty Tyrants

### Chapter 2, Petty Tyrants Summary

It is months before don Juan discusses the mastery of awareness again. Don Juan wants to go to the town square, and la Gorda wants to join them, but don Juan forbids it. La Gorda believes they plan to talk about her, and don Juan agrees in order to provoke her self-importance. The narrator is offended that don Juan has not spoken to him for two days. Don Juan is attempting to provoke his self-importance which must be eradicated in a warrior. La Gorda becomes enraged and slaps the narrator. Realizing what she has done, she sits and weeps. Don Juan walks away, laughing. The narrator realizes that he and la Gorda are alike in the context of their large self-importance, and he runs after don Juan. They return to the house where don Juan teaches the narrator that there are two types of seers, those willing to exercise self-restraint and channel their activities toward pragmatic goals, and those who do not. Don Juan explains that his lessons are strategic not moral, providing examples of strategic inventories. He defines a petty tyrant as a tormentor and also teaches the narrator that there are five attributes of warriorship.

Don Juan recounts his introduction to his petty tyrant at twenty years old. He works at a sugar mill and is sent to the boss' house to work himself to the bone doing heavy and dangerous work and staying until his death, according to the foreman. Don Juan runs away eventually, and the foreman shoots him in the chest and leaves him for dead. Don Juan's benefactor finds him and insists that he face the foreman, his petty tyrant, again. Don Juan returns to the sugar mill and is again sent to the boss' house. There, he thanks the woman of the house who does not know the ill treatment her workers receive. Don Juan works hard and learns about the foreman. He gains the lady of the house's protection by constantly thanking her, causing the foreman to decide to kill don Juan. His attempts are thwarted. One day, don Juan insults the foreman in front of the lady of the house, causing the foreman to chase don Juan into the stall of a wild stallion. The stallion kicks and kills the foreman. Don Juan warns the narrator that petty tyrants can defeat warriors by causing them to join the ranks of petty tyrants.

### Chapter 2, Petty Tyrants Analysis

Don Juan forbidding la Gorda to join him and the narrator for their trip to the town square provokes her self-importance. His ignoring the narrator for two days for the same reason creates a parallel between the two characters. La Gorda slaps the narrator in a surge of self-importance, creating a revelation for the narrator, an event that recurs throughout the novel. Don Juan explains the dichotomy between the types of seers and also the five attributes of warriorship, further explaining the background of seeing to the narrator. The description of petty tyrants explains la Gorda's position in the novel while don Juan's recollection of his encounter with his own petty tyrant serves to parallel the foreman to la Gorda. Don Juan shows his cunning in his encounter with the foreman





while simultaneously demonstrating the teaching style of his mentor, Julian, which later is explained in greater detail. Don Juan's warning that petty tyrants can defeat warriors by causing them to join the ranks of petty tyrants foreshadows many more warnings against different roadblocks that can arise in the path of a warrior.



# Chapter 3, The Eagle's Emanations

## Chapter 3, The Eagle's Emanations Summary

The narrator and don Juan take a walk the next afternoon, and don Juan explains that their conversation about petty tyrants was only the introduction to the topic of awareness. The narrator gains a new view on their previous topic of the Yaqui Indian oppression when don Juan argued that it was useless to single out the Yaquis when the conditions of men in general is hell. He also realizes that he will not remember this epiphany once he returns to a state of normal awareness. Don Juan begins to explain the mastery of awareness; men perceive a world of objects which in reality are an universe of the Eagle's emanations. He also differentiates between the known, the unknown and the unknowable. The unknown is exhilarating while the unknowable is draining so new seers separated the unknown from the unknowable.

The reason for the existence of sentient beings is to enhance awareness, an idea with which the narrator cannot argue since he has no other answer. Don Juan further explains that the indescribable force which is the source of all sentient beings is called the Eagle. Don Juan compares the Eagle to gravity and time, something a seer must witness to understand though there is nothing visual about the Eagle. Some seers envision a ruling Eagle who devours men at their death. The Eagle's emanations are commands of which men sense a small portion. Don Genaro's comments about the Eagle evoke laughter from don Juan. Each seer sees the emanations differently, though the Eagle appears the same to all seers.

## Chapter 3, The Eagle's Emanations Analysis

The explanation about petty tyrants being only the introduction foreshadows a lot more conversations about awareness. It is ironic that the narrator expresses sympathy for the plight of the Yaquis while don Juan's sorrow encompasses all of mankind. The narrator's revelation is pointless because he will not remember it after returning to normal awareness. This chapter includes an introduction to the Eagle and the Eagle's emanations. The Eagle's emanations can be compared to commands for the function of the world and all of the beings within the world. The features of the known, the unknown, and the unknowable are compared and contrasted. Don Juan's mention of the discovery of undeniable facts about the nature of man and the world foreshadows the narrator's later lessons about the earth's boost and the Mold of Man. Don Juan explains that men are capable of anything once they expand their awareness to the point of accepting that fact; this echoes the common mantra that people can do what they believe they can do. Don Juan looks down on conclusions drawn through reasoning. The idea that mankind's perception is due to a certain aspect of awareness foreshadows the discussion of the assemblage point. Don Juan's companions' refusal to discuss the Eagle during don Juan's absence demonstrates their respect for the nagual

and their unwillingness to interfere with his teachings. Don Juan compares the Eagle with time and gravity, while the narrator compares the Eagle to a Christian God.



# Chapter 4, The Glow of Awareness and Chapter 5: The First Attention

## Chapter 4, The Glow of Awareness and Chapter 5: The First Attention Summary

Don Juan makes the narrator, who is at don Genaro's house with his two mentors, change awareness. Don Genaro laughs at the difference in the narrator's standards in the right and left side, such as the fact that though both sides respect and admire don Juan, his left side is terrified of Silvio Manuel. The narrator, influenced by suspicion, believes that don Juan and don Genaro are holding something back from him. Don Juan explains that the deepest learning takes place during the transition period. As don Genaro sleeps, don Juan explains a number of terms to explain the second truth about awareness and seeing. He also explains how seers see the Eagle's emanations before the narrator falls asleep. Don Genaro, who don Juan says is a doer who does not care about explanations, wakes up to eat. Don Juan slaps in heightened awareness the narrator who is afraid of don Juan and don Genaro since he slipped into normal awareness during his sleep.

The narrator is angry and sad at the limitations of his being and his inability to remember his lessons once he returns to normal awareness. Don Juan further states that he remembers nothing yet because many things are forgotten, trapped in other areas of his total being. Emotional realizations are the realization of nothing. Seeing is an alignment. The narrator concentrates so hard on his conversation with don Juan that he does not realize he eats. Then, he realizes that don Genaro plays a joke on him by putting his empty plate in front of the narrator. The degree of an individual's awareness depends on the degree to which he is capable of letting the pressure of emanation carry it. Awareness develops from the moment of conception which is the reason for the ultimate importance of controlling sexual energy. One day, Julian, don Juan's benefactor, recommended that don Juan, Silvio Manuel and Emilito not have sex. Soon after, he opened the curtain of another world where all except Silvio Manuel nearly died because they did not listen to Julian's advice. The Eagle commands that sexual energy be used for creating life since having children taxes the glow of awareness.

Don Juan, don Genaro and the narrator visit the original setting where the original seers lived thousands of years ago. Don Genaro's jokes make the narrator nervous. The consciousness of adults grows from awareness to attention through the harnessing and enhancing of awareness through the process of being alive. Don Juan elaborates the differences between human alternatives, everything men are capable of choosing as persons, and the three types of attention, or three levels of attainment, for human beings which are animal awareness, left-sided awareness or dreaming, and the unknowable, which is usually only achieved at death. The narrator has a seizure due to being pushed beyond certain limits of his awareness and attempting to rush back to



normal awareness. Luckily, don Juan catches the narrator before he returns directly to normal awareness.

Don Genaro is a master of awareness, and he and don Juan laugh at and tease the narrator, causing the narrator's self-importance to flare up, an emotional response. They then explain that a shift in awareness causes men to become weak, and don Genaro reinforces the narrator by causing him to become angry. As the narrator and don Genaro watch a moth, people approach them with the intent to harm them. Don Juan leads the narrator to don Genaro's house as don Genaro continues walking to lead them away. Don Juan explains that they are not men. Awareness stops death, and knowledge is composed of many contradictory propositions. Men take inventories because it the Eagle's command. After taking an inventory, two things may happen: they ignore the impulses of the emanations or use them in a very specialized way. Ignoring them results in reason, while using them results in self-absorption which the majority of men turn to. Men of reason live longer than self-absorbed men. Don Genaro returns, out of breath, and says that the first attention only works with the known. He opens the door, but the narrator sees nothing though he feels an uncomfortable, cold wind. Don Juan tells him that weird creatures entered when don Genaro opened the door. The three men lock don Genaro's house and drive to don Juan's house in the next town.

## **Chapter 4, The Glow of Awareness and Chapter 5: The First Attention Analysis**

Don Genaro compares the narrator's opinions and standards in his left and right sides, or normal and heightened awareness. The narrator is influenced by suspicion in many of his interactions with don Juan and don Genaro, a factor that is directly connected to his belief in his self-importance. During don Juan's explanations in these chapters, he uses much terminology that can be called jargon, terms of his trade that may be unfamiliar to those outside of his trade. The narrator's fear of don Juan and don Genaro is a result of his return to normal awareness. Don Juan compares himself to don Genaro by saying that don Genaro is a doer, implying that don Juan is an explainer. The narrator's despair at his inability to recall his lessons can be viewed as advancement in his learning. The fact that seeing is a result of alignment foreshadows the lessons about the assemblage point. Don Genaro's joke on the narrator with their dinner gives an example of don Genaro's sense of humor, but it also highlights the deep interest the narrator takes in his lessons with don Juan. The importance of controlling sexual energy is not a moral lesson, though at first the narrator believes it is so. The importance is linked to children draining their parents' glow of awareness from the moment of conception.

Don Genaro plays a joke on the narrator early in chapter five, further demonstrating his joking nature. The narrator demonstrates his paranoid and suspicious nature in his extreme nervousness. Adults' consciousness grows through the process of being alive. Don Juan's lesson in this chapter includes comparing and contrasting the three types of attention or awareness. The narrator's seizure is a result of his awareness being pushed too far. Don Juan saves the narrator from rushing straight back to normal awareness.



Don Genaro angers the narrator, causing his self-importance to flare up, in an attempt to reinforce the narrator since the shift in his assemblage point made the narrator weak. The narrator's growing powers allow him to realize that the people who approach on the hill intend to harm him. Don Genaro passing his house foreshadows the discovery that he is leading the people away from the narrator. There are two things that men do after taking an inventory: they ignore the emanations, resulting in reason and a longer life, or they use them in a specialized way, resulting in self-absorption and a shorter life. Don Genaro returns and suggests that the narrator cannot see what has been following him because the first attention only works with the known. He opens the door, but the narrator cannot see the strange creature that enters; this proves don Genaro's hypothesis and suggests that the creature was part of the lesson to begin with.

# Chapter 6, Inorganic Beings

## Chapter 6, Inorganic Beings Summary

Don Juan and don Genaro will not tell the narrator what happened at first. Finally, don Juan explains that the narrator is extremely fatigued because don Genaro pushed him into the unknown, but the narrator does not have enough surplus energy. The unknown is the superfluous part of the average man who does not have enough energy to grasp it. The narrator brought strange things with him when he rushed out of the unknown. Don Juan tells the narrator about the old seers and their practices. Organic beings are not the only creatures that possess life. For seers, to be a live means to be aware. Don Juan explains that fire can transport a man bodily, just as water does, and the ancient Toltecs often used both as a means as transportation to the realm of inorganic life. The narrator wants an example of the ancient Toltecs' practices, so don Juan tells him to make a mirror and meet him at the creek near don Genaro's home.

The next day, the narrator makes a mirror and meets don Juan at the creek. Don Juan tells him that they will use the mirror as a link between the organic and inorganic worlds. As they gaze into the mirror, their images become more clear, and the mirror grows larger. Don Juan instructs the narrator to gaze fixedly without staring, and suddenly a third face appears; the narrator is seeing! The narrator feels himself dying as he is held by force by the gaze of the third face. When he looks into don Juan's eyes, he is free. The ancient Toltecs used this practice to travel and meet living beings from the first level. The mirror works as a window between the worlds. Don Juan warns the narrator to be prepared because tomorrow will be even scarier since they will meet the creature, an ally, face to face, which can scare men literally to death. He laughs as he sees himself in the narrator.

The next day, it is easier to see the clear reflections in the mirror, but it takes longer for the ally to appear. The ally tries to climb through the mirror, causing the narrator to drop it. Luckily, don Juan catches it. After this experience, the narrator is very melancholy at his realization that humans are nothing. Don Juan explains that the ally could not escape from the narrator's mirror because the frame was made of metal, unlike don Juan's which was made of wood. When don Juan was studying under the nagual Julian, his mirror broke, the ally came out and chased him to don Juan's maddening fear. Julian laughed, enjoying the scene. Although allies cannot physically harm men, they are capable of scaring them to death. Most allies are useless because they are so different from men. The allies with matching emanations provides a common ground. Men like allies' ethereal quality, while the allies seek the greater energy field of man so that they can materialize.



## Chapter 6, Inorganic Beings Analysis

Don Juan and don Genaro hide the truth of what happened from the narrator at first, causing the reader to question whether the narrator's suspicions and paranoia may be justifiable. The fatigue of being pushed into the unknown is caused by a lack of surplus energy. The narrator brings strange creatures back with him when he rushes from the unknown, but luckily he has don Juan and don Genaro to help protect him. In this chapter, don Juan reveals the dichotomy of the ancient Toltecs' list of secret knowledge. The importance of awareness for seers is explained by the fact that life is awareness. Don Juan's explanation that water and fire can be used to transport one's body foreshadows the ally's attempt to transport itself through water. The narrator's desire for an example of the Toltecs' practices foreshadows the ally appearing in the mirror. The creature's inability to climb through the mirror is due to the frame being made of metal, as opposed to wood like don Juan's frame. Men and allies are compared and contrasted; allies can be useful as companions if a seer accidentally gets stranded alone in the Eagle's emanations.





# Chapter 7, The Assemblage Point

## Chapter 7, The Assemblage Point Summary

Several months after the narrator's encounter with the allies, don Juan resumes his explanation of the mastery of awareness after sending the narrator into heightened awareness. Don Juan explains that the assemblage point selects internal and external emanations for alignment. In order for the narrator to perceive an ally, it means that his assemblage point has moved away from its customary position. Pushing the emphasis away from the usual emanations to neighboring emanations is called the nagual's blow, and the force of the blow creates a dent in man's cocoon, displacing the glow of awareness, though it is forgotten once the warrior returns to normal awareness. Don Genaro arrives and pushes the narrator's assemblage point. The assemblage point can move almost at will by acquiring new habits. If the assemblage point does not return to its original position, people will either go crazy or begin movements toward the unknown, becoming seers. Don Juan describes the assemblage point as a clustering of emanations. The position of the assemblage point is what our senses perceive.

## Chapter 7, The Assemblage Point Analysis

Don Juan gives the narrator a break before resuming his explanation about the mastery of awareness. The ally leaves when the narrator controls his fear, evidence that the ally is drawn to strong emotions. Don Juan explains the assemblage point, foreshadowing the many exercises with it. The explanation of the assemblage point also foreshadows don Genaro pushing the narrator's assemblage point. The narrator's dislike of don Juan's town serves as ironic juxtaposition of don Juan's statement that the narrator will have to live in a similar place someday. Don Genaro pushes the narrator's assemblage point, fulfilling the earlier foreshadowing. The narrator's beliefs about the dark side of man and his mystery contrasts with don Juan's arguments.



# Chapter 8, The Position of the Assemblage Point

## Chapter 8, The Position of the Assemblage Point Summary

The nagual woman reads "Hora Inmensa" by Juan Ramon Jimenez to the narrator. The narrator asks don Juan if warriors are preparing for death, but don Juan states that they are preparing for awareness. When the narrator seems melancholy, don Juan and don Genaro debate whether he is sorry to be there. Don Genaro begins a gait of power which the narrator mimics, sending him into heightened awareness with a sense of urgency. The narrator sees a forest and wants to run, but don Juan and don Genaro stop him. The narrator is weakened from the shift in his assemblage point. He collapses to find himself in a church where he wants to join the worshipers. Suddenly, he is back in the hallway with don Juan and don Genaro. Don Genaro is able to push the narrator's assemblage point only because he stops his internal dialogue. The shift in the assemblage point is not purely mental. Movement is to the left while spirituality is to the right. Don Juan discusses the practice of shifting one's assemblage point to become an animal, and he reminds the narrator of the time that he became a crow.

## Chapter 8, The Position of the Assemblage Point Analysis

The flowering plants in this chapter symbolize the solitude of a warrior's endless path. The poem that the nagual woman reads to the narrator alludes to a poem by Juan Ramon Jimenez called "Hora Inmensa." The narrator's melancholy demonstrates his progression in his lessons. The gait of power looks silly, but it transports the narrator with don Genaro into a forest. The narrator is overcome by fear, which is repetitious throughout the novel, but don Juan and don Genaro prevent him from running off. In the church, the narrator is influenced by the people that he sees and wants to join them in their worship. Don Genaro's ability to manipulate the narrator's assemblage point is a demonstration of his great power. The idea that man's command can become the Eagle's command provides evidence of man's power once he has mastered intent. The idea that children who see are treated as oddballs attempts to explain children's imaginations as fact that adults simply cannot understand. Don Juan's attempt to explain that the shift in assemblage point is not purely mental foreshadows the shifts that cause the narrator to become an animal and to travel to other worlds. The fact that women's greater ability to make their assemblage point hold onto other positions foreshadows the narrator's experiences with la Catalina.



## Chapter 9, The Shift Below

### Chapter 9, The Shift Below Summary

The narrator joins don Juan and don Genaro in the Sonoran desert where don Juan wants him to see la Catalina who both scares and attracts the narrator. La Catalina is attracted to the narrator because they are the same; she is closer to the ancient seers. Don Juan, don Genaro and the narrator ascend the hill where la Catalina waits at the top. A creature appears which frightens the narrator, but his fright quickly dissolves and he chases the creature. The creature becomes la Catalina, and she, with the narrator, crosses into another world where they romp and play before returning to don Juan and don Genaro. After his experience with la Catalina, the narrator becomes very depressed. Don Juan and don Genaro laugh because it means that the narrator is advancing in his path to becoming a seer. They explain that women are more bizarre than men, evidenced by la Catalina being able to easily change forms. She appeared as a worm and caused the narrator to shift his assemblage point to become a worm also.

### Chapter 9, The Shift Below Analysis

Don Juan compares the narrator to la Catalina, enraging him since he does not want to believe he is like her. She is comparable to the ancient Toltec seers. La Catalina likes the narrator because, like her, he is similar in his personality and power to Julian and Elias. Paradoxically, the narrator is both attracted to and repulsed by la Catalina. The narrator's experience with la Catalina fulfills the earlier foreshadowing that occurs by the discussion of women's greater ability to hold onto any given position of the assemblage point. It also fulfills the foreshadowing that occurs concerning the narrator shifting into an animal when he shifts into a worm like la Catalina. They also travel to another world. The narrator catches his first glimpse of the unknown during his experience with la Catalina, causing him to sink into depression. Don Juan says the depression is because he needs a new home since he has begun to see the unknown. This chapter contains a repetition and expansion on the differences between men and women in terms of the powers of seeing.



# Chapter 10, Great Bands of Emanations and Chapter 11, Stalking, Intent and the Dreaming Position

## Chapter 10, Great Bands of Emanations and Chapter 11, Stalking, Intent and the Dreaming Position Summary

Don Juan explains about the great bands of emanations, clusters of the Eagle's emanations. There are only forty-eight bands on earth, one organic, seven inorganic and forty bands that produce bubbles without awareness. The Eagle bestows awareness through its emanations. Each bundle gives of a different hue. Men are the amber bundle, though different men, with different degrees of awareness, give off different casts of amber. The only similarity between organic and inorganic being is that all have the awareness-bestowing pink, peach or amber emanations which make the most fascinating communication possible between them. Organic beings initiate the communication with inorganic beings. Inorganic beings can become allies, and the old seers were mesmerized by the allies' devotion. Inorganic beings are not as plentiful as organic beings, but they live longer.

The product of the other forty bands is not awareness but the configuration of inanimate energy. Normal awareness only has two bands, organic and one without structure or awareness. Assemblage points can assemble seven other complete worlds. Don Juan discusses the narrator's experience with la Catalina. A shift in one's assemblage point allows a seer a detailed and narrow view of the known world. Interestingly, trees are closer kin to man than ants since plants have pinkish luminosities. The old seers believed that plants have the most intense communications with inorganic beings, so they focused on harnessing the awareness of trees and small plants to use as guides to descend to the deepest levels of the dark regions. In actuality, they pushed their assemblage points to assemblage the seven other worlds. The ancient Toltec seers believed that it was worthwhile to break all of the barriers of perception, regardless of the consequences. As don Juan and the narrator walk, don Juan warns him that it is easy in the path of knowledge to get lost in intricacies and morbidity. The new seers need practical steps to shift their assemblage points, so they develop three sets of techniques, the masteries of stalking, intent and dreaming. Don Juan begins teaching the narrator about stalking, the systematic control of behavior which makes the assemblage point move steadily. There are three aspects: seeing, will, and intent. The new seers determine the need to see the Eagle's emanations to find a more suitable way of moving the assemblage point.

Don Juan warns the narrator that there is no way of really directing the movement of the assemblage point, but sobriety can help to guide the movement of the assemblage point



in dreaming. The narrator begins to argue but realizes that don Juan is right. This makes don Juan happy since it means the narrator's assemblage point has shifted. Don Genaro has shown the narrator his dreaming body many times before when the narrator was in a state of heightened awareness. Now, don Genaro waits in the house to show the narrator his dreaming body. The narrator finds don Genaro asleep, wakes him and screams. Don Genaro has two points of amber light in place of his eyes. Don Genaro walks on the walls and the ceiling as he turns into a blob of light, his dreaming body. Don Juan informs the narrator that they still have an appointment with don Genaro's dreaming body in the fields while the narrator is in normal awareness. On the way, don Juan outlines the procedures for getting to the dreaming body. A seer needs impeccability in his daily life to obtain the dreaming body. He can dream alone, but the dreaming body's strength is dangerous. While it is easy for the dreaming body to gaze at the Eagle's emanations for a long time, it is also easy to be consumed by them. Seers often dream in teams by adjusting the positions of their assemblage points to those around them.

## **Chapter 10, Great Bands of Emanations and Chapter 11, Stalking, Intent and the Dreaming Position Analysis**

This section contains an introduction to the great bands of emanations, which foreshadows the importance of these bands in the narrator's future. The different hues of the different bundles contain clues as to the differences in awareness of the beings in each bundles. It is an interesting concept to think of inorganic creatures as being alive, but by the definition of the new seers, to be alive means to be aware, which means that inorganic creatures, such as allies, can also be considered as alive. The old seers' fascination with the allies' devotion could possibly be part of what leads to their downfall. Although there are less inorganic beings than organic beings, the inorganic beings live longer. It is interesting to note that of the twenty-eight bands that exist on earth, only two are perceptible in normal awareness. The ability of the assemblage point to create seven other worlds foreshadows the narrator's travels to the yellow dunes and the Black World. Don Juan explains the narrator's experience with la Catalina in this section. It is ironic that the awareness of trees is more similar to man's awareness than ants' awareness. Don Juan's mention of the old seers' belief that it is worthwhile to break all the barriers of perception regardless of the consequences foreshadows the narrator's introduction to the death defiers.

The introduction to the three sets of techniques that are used to shift one's assemblage point foreshadows the narrator learning how to shift his assemblage point. The fact that don Juan separates male and female apprentices reiterates his message that females are different from males. The need for petty tyrants is reiterated as well. The practice of using the Eagle's emanations as a more suitable way of shifting assemblage points is described and demonstrated. It is ironic that the narrator must learn dreaming while in a normal state of awareness, though he must use these practices in a heightened state of awareness. Don Juan contradicts himself by stating that dreams cannot be interfered



with and that there is no way of directing the movement of the assemblage point, and later saying that seers can adjust the positions of their assemblage points to match those around them in order to dream in teams. The narrator ceases his argument when his assemblage point shifts. The narrator cannot recall seeing don Genaro's dreaming body because he was in a heightened state of awareness when he saw it. His reaction is dramatic since he has seen it before, but this highlights the difference between normal and heightened awareness. The capabilities of the dreaming body are demonstrated by don Genaro's ability to walk on the ceiling and the walls. This foreshadows the narrator's uses of the dreaming body to travel from Oaxaca to Tucson, Arizona.



# Chapter 12, The Nagual Julian

## Chapter 12, The Nagual Julian Summary

There is a strange excitement in the house because don Juan is close to leaving. This makes the narrator happy though he tries to feel sad. Don Juan decides to tell the narrator about the deeds of the nagual Julian, master stalker. There are two types of stalkers, those who care for their fellow man and those who do not. Julian was the type who did not; he healed people and would give them the shirt off his back. Don Juan cares about people which is demonstrated by his fear that helping people includes imposing his will on them.

Julian waits many years for an apprentice nagual. He comes upon don Juan after don Juan is shot by his foreman. Julian claims the boy is his son and pays men to carry don Juan to his house. Don Juan wakes and sees Julian's wife, who is actually a female seer, as domineering and Julian as her prisoner. Julian and his wife fight a lot as Julian nurses don Juan back to health. Don Juan believes that Julian is crazy. As don Juan heals, he takes a walk with Julian, and they encounter a monster, actually an ally that Julian summons without warning since he has not begun to teach don Juan about seeing. Don Juan faints, and when he awakes, Julian tells him that he has bargained with the monster for their lives at the cost of being the monster's servants. Don Juan agrees. Julian teaches by a different method than don Juan which is more coercive and does not allow for choice or understanding; don Juan teaches more through words and explanations.

Through his drama, Julian moves don Juan's assemblage point enough to imbue don Juan with the two basic qualities of a warrior: sustained effort and unbending intent. More than anything in the world, don Juan wants to work with Julian in order to free himself from the monster. The movement of the assemblage point marks the completion of the warrior's quest; to continue from there is the seer's quest. Don Juan explains his turmoil as he learns more about Julian's personality and life. A few days after don Juan's encounter with the ally, Julian appears as a young man, stating that he can appear in his true form since their captor is away. His wife also appears young; in actuality, it is a different woman. Julian explains that his wife was imprisoned by a monstrous man, and they donned disguises to escape but were caught by the monster again. They keep up their old appearances and pretend to hate each other. The youthful couple ask don Juan to keep watch as they make love. As don Juan keeps watch, he hears the monster at the front door. Since the couple does not respond to his knocks, he enters the room to find the naked woman sleeping and the man gone. Once again, don Juan faints. This story outrages the narrator whom don Juan accuses of judging Julian. Don Juan envies Julian until his assemblage point shifts. There are two types of realization, emotional and that which signifies a shift in the assemblage point. Julian guides don Juan and others to shift their assemblage points. Don Juan jokingly tells the narrator that if he ever fails in a task, he should return to don Juan's favorite bench, and don Juan will try to collect him there.



## Chapter 12, The Nagual Julian Analysis

It is ironic that the narrator is happy about don Juan's pending departure. The difference between the two types of stalkers is explained; it is ironic that Julian is considered a stalker who does not care since he will do anything for his fellow man. Don Juan will do nothing for others because he cares too much for them to impose his will on them. This dichotomy seems very contrasted to what would be expected. This chapter primarily focuses on providing background on don Juan's education as a nagual as well as provides a contrast between Julian and don Juan's methods of teaching. Their teaching methods seem to fit the expectations for the differences between stalkers who care and those who do not more so than their actions. Julian uses an ally to trap don Juan as his apprentice, rather than giving don Juan the choice of whether he wants to learn how to see. The narrator's anger at Julian's methods can be seen as his self-importance reflecting in his ideas of how he would feel in a similar situation. The two types of realization are compared and contrasted, providing a standard of comparison for the narrator's realizations throughout the novel. Don Juan's sense of humor is reflected in his offer to collect the narrator from his favorite bench since don Juan will no longer be in the world.





# Chapter 13, The Earth's Boost and Chapter 14, The Rolling Force

## Chapter 13, The Earth's Boost and Chapter 14, The Rolling Force Summary

As Don Juan and the narrator walk toward Oaxaca, don Juan explains that the earth has a cocoon. Don Juan, don Genaro and the narrator sit against a rock and watch the sunlight reflected on the eastern mountains. Don Juan explains that perception is alignment and tells the narrator to cut off his internal dialogue as he has done before. Don Genaro will show the narrator the key that unlocks everything. Don Genaro walks, as before, and the narrator follows. They walk for hours until the narrator is sick. Don Juan tells him to look around, and the narrator sees hell. Don Genaro begins walking again, the narrator follows him, and they arrive back at the rock. Don Juan suggests they return home, but don Genaro argues that the narrator can handle more. Suddenly, the narrator realizes that don Juan actually pushes him but allows it to appear that don Genaro does so. Don Juan's nagual eyes appear, piercing and ferocious. Don Juan wants to show the narrator the boost from the earth and tells him to watch the big peak's glitter. The narrator obeys and feels an earthquake, followed by a suctioning force which deposits him back with don Juan and don Genaro.

The next day, they go to Oaxaca, and don Juan questions the narrator about what he was supposed to learn on the mountain. The narrator answers alignment but complains that don Juan and don Genaro do all of the work. Don Juan states that it is the way it is supposed to be. The boost from the earth is the same for every man, and don Genaro wants the narrator to see the moment of alignment. As don Juan, don Genaro and the narrator walk, don Juan and don Genaro become luminous bundles. The narrator feels a great pressure as he sees. Then he returns to normal awareness. Don Genaro helps the narrator align his emanations with emanations at large that belong to another band. Don Genaro walks ahead, his shape becomes diffuse, and he vanishes; he is gone by force of perception.

The aspect of alignment that keeps the assemblage point stationary is will. The aspect that causes it to shift is intent. Sitting on a park bench, don Juan tells the narrator to see but to look only at men's backs. The narrator sees ten people and hears the voice of seeing. Don Juan tells the narrator to look at people face to face now, and the narrator sees balls of fire which roll on him. Don Juan informs him that he has successfully endured his first brief encounter with the Eagle's emanations, but the shoves from the tumbler dangerously open the narrator's gap. The balls of fire are the rolling force of the tumbler. The narrator spends hours in a semi-sleep like state while don Juan and the other seers give him water and put him in an ice cold tub. The tumbler stops the narrator from seeing the Eagle's emanations. The tumbler is a ceaseless force from the Eagle's emanations which strikes continually. Men are protected by shields, but seeing



opens those shields. Don Juan explains what the human form is and what it means to lose it. Don Juan asks the narrator if he saw balls or circles of fire. Don Juan has seen the tumbler take men's lives, as has the narrator. The narrator recalls, but it makes him sick. Old seers were open to the tumbler, but they were too guided by self-importance. Man has a gap in his cocoon near his navel. When the tumbler hits it repeatedly, it cracks, and the man dies. All creatures have a gap, though some are more durable. The new seers see the separation between the tumbling and circular aspects of the tumbler. The circular aspect is life giving and sustaining. If the balance between the two aspects is upset, the tumbler strikes harder and harder until the man dies. The old seers believed that seeing the tumbler held the secrets to immortality, but they were wrong. Old seers chose to live at any cost.

## **Chapter 13, The Earth's Boost and Chapter 14, The Rolling Force Analysis**

The earth's cocoon is described and compared to man's cocoon in this chapter, as don Juan explains to the narrator how to acquire a boost from the earth in order to shift his assemblage point. Perception is compared to alignment. Don Juan expresses his confidence in the narrator in his belief that the narrator is capable of cutting off his internal dialogue; he even reminds the narrator that he has done so successfully before. The narrator mimics don Genaro's walk, which takes him to a new world. After returning to the rock, the narrator realizes that the parts that don Juan and don Genaro play are actually juxtaposed with who they really are; don Juan pushes the narrator to his limits while letting it appear that don Genaro actually does so. The narrator finally sees don Juan as he truly is. Then he passes a verbal quiz regarding their exercises that day. It is interesting to note that though most of the aspects of seeing that don Juan teaches the narrator in this novel are different for each man, the Eagle appears the same for every man, and the earth's boost is the same for everyone. Don Juan and don Genaro demonstrates what occurs at the moment that the position of the assemblage point changes, and they become luminous bubbles; this means the narrator is seeing. Don Genaro vanishes by the force of perception, demonstrating how important a role perception plays in the life of the average man.

Don Juan explains the will's function in keeping the assemblage point stationary, while intent allows the assemblage point to shift. The narrator sees the rolling force, and it is explained. The rolling force is a sort of yin yang feature of life. It has the circular, life-giving and sustaining aspect, and the tumbling, death, aspect; therefore, the rolling force literally provides life and death, and it is only when the balance is upset that it becomes a true danger. The narrator survives his first encounter with the Eagle's emanations, though it is cut short by the thrusts of the tumbler. The narrator recalls seeing the tumbler take a man's life in the past. Don Juan explains that the old seers believed that the tumbler held the secrets to immortality, but he refutes that idea. His mention that they searched for immortality at any cost foreshadows the narrator's introduction to the death defiers.



# Chapter 15, The Death Defiers

## Chapter 15, The Death Defiers Summary

Don Juan wants the narrator to understand what he means by saying that the old seers chose to live at any cost. The old seers are dreadful men. Don Genaro sleeps but manages to agree with don Juan between his snores. Don Juan plans to give the narrator an example of the old seers' terror; the narrator is frightened. The old seers patterned themselves on allies and intended death away. They closed their gaps to resemble the allies' small gaps. Don Juan reminds the narrator of the day the strange creatures chased him back to don Genaro's house; besides allies, he also saw old seers who are still alive. The new seers banned the techniques that allowed for this until the early eighteenth century, when Sebastian was greeted by an old man who asked for his energy. Sebastian disappeared for many days and returned with information about the old seers since the old man is a surviving ancient Toltec. The narrator is unable to delay for this lesson as don Juan and don Genaro practically drag him to the hills. Don Juan points out the place where there are at least seven sites where the ancient seers focused the power of awareness. Don Juan takes the narrator to the place where the old seers buried themselves alive and intended death away. The old seers learned how to bury themselves without detriment, in order to escape the strikes of the tumbler. Don Juan tells the narrator to move his assemblage point to reach around the rock, but the narrator begs not to be forced to do so; he does not want this example. Don Juan informs him that it is too late because the old seers and their court will focus their awareness on the narrator and cut him down. The narrator, nauseous from fear, feels something grip his ankle. Don Juan and don Genaro tell him to sing, and the three men harmonize. When the narrator looks down, he sees a head like shape biting his foot and nearly faints. Don Juan sprinkles water on him.

Don Juan changes the song they are singing, and the narrator enjoys don Juan's choice of song, valuing the freedom of not fearing death any longer. As he goes to hug don Juan and don Genaro in gratitude, he realizes that his ankle is free. Don Genaro announces that the show is about to begin, and the narrator sees people approaching, four seers and their allies. The narrator hears a noise behind him and, turning back before don Juan can warn him again it, see three grotesquely deformed men. The narrator screams and jumps off the rock, but don Juan grabs him back as the other men descent. The old seers cannot harm the narrator while he is on the rock, but they can once he is on the ground. Don Juan suggests that they talk as usual since the narrator was brought here for enlightenment, though he is failing miserably. The narrator's confused first attention does not want to relinquish control. Don Juan suggests the narrator face the creatures, but the narrator refuses. Suddenly, he realizes it is dawn and an uncontrollable urge propels him towards the creatures. The narrator is sad for the old seers. He does not see don Juan and don Genaro when he looks for them, but don Juan quickly comes to his side and they leave.



Don Juan commends the narrator for doing well at the site of the buried seers, objecting only to the fact that the narrator indulged in his fear after realizing that warriors have nothing to fear. The allies came to see the narrator, and they can scare people to death. When don Juan smacks the narrator into heightened awareness, the narrator realizes that the old seers are alive like the allies, not like men. The old seers escaped death by fixing the position of their assemblage point in one of the lands of inorganic awareness. Don Juan seems sure that the narrator will not be as stupid once don Juan leaves. The old seers rode on onslaughts with the tumbler and allowed it to move their assemblage point to the confines of human possibilities. Don Juan believes that the old seers were driven to such measures by their love for life. Another death defier exists who is indistinguishable from any average man, but he is able to open and close his gap whenever he wants. This is the man who approaches Sebastian in 1723 and has met every nagual of don Juan and the narrator's line since then. He borrows energy from every generation, exchanging favors and knowledge for the energy, though he never reveals how he closes his gap. He is nicknamed the tenant. This exchange does not hurt the nagual since the tenant taps into energy that is locked deep within the naguals. Don Juan believes that the tenant has realized that his path does not lead to freedom, but he is caught in a circle that he cannot break.

## Chapter 15, The Death Defiers Analysis

The narrator is finally introduced to the death defiers in this chapter, fulfilling the foreshadowing that occurs sporadically throughout the novel. The narrator is unwilling to go to the hills to meet the death defiers, showing a fear that is typical for this character throughout the novel; however, don Juan shows untypical force in insisting the narrator meet the death defiers. It is as if don Juan can be as forceful as he wants, now that the narrator has discovered the juxtaposed game that he and don Genaro play. The narrator allows his fear to overcome him when confronted with the death defiers, causing don Juan to mock him and claim that he is failing in his mission to seek enlightenment. When don Juan suggests that the narrator face the death defiers head-on, the narrator scoffs at his mentor, refusing to adhere to his demands because of his immense fear. In a juxtaposing decision and an ironic act, the narrator suddenly rushes headlong at the death defiers as the sun rises, due to an uncontrollable urge. It brings into question whether don Juan controls the narrator, or whether he simply knew what the narrator would do, or if maybe the narrator just does not want to disappoint his mentor. After this lesson, don Juan says the narrator did well, though he chides him for indulging his fear after realizing the futility of his reaction.

Don Juan's explanation of the tenant fulfills the foreshadowing that occurs concerning the narrator's discovery of the change in don Juan's line that occurred in 1723. Don Juan explains that the tenant struck a deal with Sebastian that has continued to every nagual in Sebastian's line since then. This foreshadows the narrator meeting Sebastian; though it does not occur in this novel, it likely would occur in a continuation. The death defiers and the tenant are compared and contrasted. Although both groups have retained life, the tenant's life seems to mimic the life of other men more closely. The tenant discovers a way to open and close the gap in man's navel and to siphon surplus



energy from naguals without injuring them. In exchange for this energy, he provides information and favors. Although the tenant's life resembles the life of other men more than the death defiers' lives, don Juan believes that the tenant has realized, as the new seers do, that his way does not lead to freedom; however, he is stuck in a cycle that he cannot break.



# Chapter 16, The Mold of Man

## Chapter 16, The Mold of Man Summary

Don Juan finishes his explanation. Now, the narrator must move his assemblage point, unaided, to align another great band of emanations. The transition period when the assemblage point is moving from the normal position is called the moment of perceptual blankness or the wall of fog. The narrator must see the mold of man. Seers recommend that warriors roll their eyes when anger, or any other strong emotion, comes their way. This makes the assemblage point shift momentarily. Don Juan does not have time for the narrator's usual slowness; the narrator must remember seeing the mold of man before seeing it again. When the narrator rolls his eyes, he remembers seeing the mold of man while he was in the foothills of the Sonoran desert with don Juan. Don Juan explains that the mold of man is not a creator; it is a pattern of human attributes. Don Juan feels that worshiping the mold of man is arrogance. The narrator objects to his sacrilege and becomes so angry that he is about to yell at don Juan, when don Juan sends him into a deeper state of heightened awareness. The narrator sees a bright light which is the mold of man. The voice of seeing tells the narrator the truth of the matter. As the mold of man takes shape, the narrator is ready to worship God personified. Don Juan smacks the narrator in the clavicle, sending him back to normal awareness, and mockingly suggests he become a priest. The narrator is confused about how he could have forgotten seeing the mold of man, though it is a slow process to learn. He remembers seeing the mold of man five times since then, and it always appears as male to him, likely because he is male and that makes it familiar. Don Juan and the narrator walk through town, and the narrator sees and appreciates the mold of man. He is ready to serve it, but something pulls him away and he comes to himself kneeling on a bridge as people laugh at him. There are two ways of seeing the mold of man: as a man or as a light. When the narrator tells don Juan that he wanted to serve the mold of man, don Juan mocks him.

## Chapter 16, The Mold of Man Analysis

Don Juan's teaching is finished; now, it is up to the narrator to apply the teachings. This application is comparable to a test to pass a course. The main difference is that the test involves jumping from a mountain top to his death if the narrator fails. It is ironic that the narrator explains that the movement of the assemblage point causes a moment of blankness or fog when the movement of the assemblage point ultimately leads to greater awareness and clarity. It is parallel to the saying that once one hits rock bottom, the only place left to go is up. The narrator wonders how to move his assemblage point causing don Juan to become frustrated, insisting that the narrator already has the necessary knowledge to shift his assemblage point. The narrator grows angry with himself over his inability to recall seeing the mold of man. Don Juan's usual patience disappears as he reminds the narrator that he does not have time for his usual slowness since don Juan's departure is rapidly approaching. There is a comic simplicity



surrounding the idea that a warrior needs only to roll his eyes to temporarily shift his assemblage point. The mold of man is often worshiped as the creator of mankind; this explains the visions of God that many religious men boast of seeing. Interestingly, don Juan chides this sort of vanity since the mold of man is simply the combination of all men. Don Juan further mocks the narrator when he admits to his desire to worship the mold of man.





# Chapter 17, The Journey of the Dreaming Body

## Chapter 17, The Journey of the Dreaming Body Summary

The narrator and don Juan take their last trip to Oaxaca together, but the narrator is unable to be sad because freedom is a contagious disease. Don Juan reminds the narrator that it is possible to be in two places at once through the use of the dreaming body. The narrator remembers seeing don Genaro's dreaming body. As he dances with don Genaro, he also watches himself until he falls in confusion and his double, along with don Genaro's double, disappears. Don Juan wants the narrator to recall the time he really woke up in a dreaming position. The narrator begins to recall a fragment. As he, don Juan, and don Genaro sit on a bench, don Genaro sleeps and makes his body leave the bench. Suddenly, he waves from the other side of the square and walks away, his body on the bench gone. The narrator falls asleep and dreams that he approaches a house where he talks with a young woman, though he is simultaneously with don Juan. The narrator takes a bath in his dream, and don Juan urges him to wake in his dream. The narrator wakes in the lady's bed, don Juan with him. The narrator angrily stomps out of the house. As he panics, don Juan smacks him into normal awareness. The narrator feels that he cannot remember something very important. Don Juan explains that it is possible to move great distances while in the dreaming position. The narrator must realize that everything in the world which man has learned to perceive is tied to the position of the assemblage point. If the narrator shifts his assemblage point, he will remember who the lady is from his dream. The narrator realizes that the woman is Carol, the nagual woman, who lives in Tucson, Arizona. The narrator has only met Carol once while in normal awareness, yet she has never met him in normal awareness. The narrator may have time to integrate it, but she does not because her time is short. The narrator is sad but not sorry.

## Chapter 17, The Journey of the Dreaming Body Analysis

The narrator is not sad at don Juan's pending departure. Don Juan explains that this is because freedom is contagious; the narrator has caught don Juan's happiness at his departure. Don Juan explains the ability of the dreaming body to cause a seer to be in two places at once. Don Juan has already taught the narrator this lesson once before, so he must remind him of what he saw. The narrator recalls don Genaro demonstrating the capability of the dreaming body. The narrator falls asleep on the bench in the square and wakes in Tucson, Arizona at Carol, the nagual woman's, house. The narrator has a strong emotional reaction to this travel, and don Juan has to smack the narrator into normal awareness to keep him from reacting too poorly. The narrator discusses the fact



that he is sad that Carol will soon be departing the world, though not sorry. He distinguishes between the two emotions as though sad means regret, while sorry means regret which causes the desire to change the situation.



# Chapter 18, Breaking the Barrier of Perception and Epilogue

## Chapter 18, Breaking the Barrier of Perception and Epilogue Summary

Sitting on the bench in the square, don Juan tells the narrator that he must now shift his assemblage point from heightened awareness. In a few days, he will meet don Juan and don Genaro on a mountain top and jump from the mountain into an abyss, shifting his assemblage point from normal awareness to escape death by entering a different great band of emanations. This will be the last of don Juan's teachings. The narrator shifts his assemblage point from heightened awareness, and he finds himself walking next to don Juan through a deserted plain with yellow dunes of sulfur. When he looks at don Juan, he sees a ball of luminosity. The allies crowd the narrator, annoying him, but move back as if he chastises them. He sees no inner glow in the allies. Next, he moves to the Black World, as the voice of seeing tells him. The narrator returns to the square, where don Juan praises him for doing exactly what was expected. Don Juan wants to stroll around the square for the last time in this world. Since the narrator does not want to think about don Juan leaving, he asks about the Black World instead. He learns that the Black World ages the body. Don Juan recalls the time that, in his youth, he got lost for several days in the Black World and aged ten years. When a seer assembles another world, his assemblage point becomes fixed in that position and must be shifted again to return to his own world. Don Juan wants the narrator to shift his assemblage point directly to the Black World since that is what he will have to do in several days to avoid death when he jumps from the mountain top. Don Juan walks away, and the narrator assembles the Black World.

The narrator and two other apprentices, Pablito and Nestor, meet don Juan, don Genaro and the other members of the nagual's party on top of the mountain. Don Juan reminds them that they must intend the shift of their assemblage points because a repeated intent becomes the Eagle's emanations. Men can shift their assemblage points to escape death in this world only to die in another if they are not careful. The new seers realize that the only escape is total freedom through awareness. Don Juan and his party say their goodbyes, and the three apprentices jump from the mountain top. They do not die. They are left behind to remember don Juan's teaching about heightened awareness and try to reassemble their lessons in order to someday achieve freedom.

## Chapter 18, Breaking the Barrier of Perception and Epilogue Analysis

Don Juan's warning to the narrator about needing to shift his assemblage point when he jumps from the mountain top in several days foreshadows the final test. Don Juan has



the narrator assemblage the world of yellow dunes and then the Black World as practice before the final test. This is comparable to homework before a school exam. Don Juan gives him the advantage of doing this from heightened awareness the first time to boost his confidence. Don Juan also travels with him to ensure the narrator's safety. Next, don Juan has the narrator assemble the Black World from normal awareness, since this is what he will have to do for his final test; this is dress rehearsal. All of these steps leading up to the narrator's final tests are purely in preparation for the final test. They also show don Juan's concern for the narrator and his desire for the narrator to succeed. He warns the narrator about the aging that occurs in the Black World.

Don Juan, don Genaro and the nagual's party say goodbye before the apprentices begin their final test because they depart while the apprentices jump from the mountain top. It is interesting to note that Pablito and Nestor are the apprentices that jump with the narrator, but la Gorda is not there. It raises the question of whether she is expelled from the apprentices or whether she simply could not eradicate her self-importance in time to take part in the final test. It also suggests that she could have been placed in the narrator's path simply as his petty tyrant. Don Juan gives them the answer to the question they will have to discover throughout their paths; total freedom is the only escape from death. The narrator, Pablito and Nestor are left in this world to recall the lessons that don Juan taught them and work toward becoming naguals.



# Characters

## Don Juan Matus

Don Juan Matus is a nagual and the narrator's mentor. He was mentored by don Julian. With don Genaro's help, don Juan teaches the narrator about seeing. He makes it appear that don Genaro is pushing the narrator while in reality, don Juan is the one who pushes the narrator. Don Juan teaches through explanation, opposed to his mentor who taught more by action. He also cares too much about his fellow man to help them because he fears he would be imposing his will on them. Don Juan often rescues the narrator during his lessons.

Don Juan teaches the narrator about the ancient Toltec seers, petty tyrants, the Eagle, the Eagle's emanations, the glow of awareness, the three levels of attainment, inorganic beings, and the assemblage point. He also shows the narrator examples of the great below, the great bands of emanations, the dreaming body, the earth's boost, the rolling force, and the mold of man. Don Juan explains the masteries of stalking, intent, and dreaming. He also introduces the narrator to the Tenant, the Death Defiers, allies, and la Catalina.

Don Juan provokes the narrator and la Gorda's self-importance. He believes that the mystery of man is inside man. He warns the narrator against sex since it drains awareness. Don Juan takes the narrator to the creek to see the allies. He also chides the narrator for his fear in the face of the Death Defiers. He shares his experiences with the foreman, his petty tyrant, and his apprenticeship with don Julian. During the narrator's final test, don Juan leaves the world because he has attained total freedom.

## Narrator

The narrator is mentored by don Juan and don Genaro. He has a large self-importance. He respects don Juan on his left and right sides, though he fears Silvio Manuel on his left side. The narrator is emotional and often scared. He is terrified of the Death Defiers but charges them due to an uncontrollable urge. The narrator is frightened of don Genaro's dreaming body as well. The narrator's dreaming body travels from Mexico to Tucson, Arizona. He learns to shift his assemblage point. The narrator is both attracted to and scared of la Catalina. When he sees the mold of man, he is ready to worship it.

The narrator learns from don Juan about the ancient Toltec seers, petty tyrants, the Eagle, the Eagle's emanations, the glow of awareness, the three levels of attainment, inorganic beings, and the assemblage point. He also receives examples of the great below, the great bands of emanations, the dreaming body, the earth's boost, the rolling force, and the mold of man. Don Juan explains the masteries of stalking, intent, and dreaming. The narrator is also introduced to the Tenant, the Death Defiers, allies, and la Catalina.



The narrator jumps from a mountain top and assembles the Black World to escape death as his final test. He succeeds and returns to the world from which don Juan has departed. The narrator, along with Pablito and Nestor, is left in the world to try to recall don Juan's teachings and seek freedom.

## Don Genaro

Don Genaro assists his friend, don Juan, in mentoring the narrator. He is part of the nagual's party and lives one town away from don Juan. Don Genaro constantly mocks the narrator during his lessons, such as when he plays a joke on the narrator by pretending that the narrator already ate. He appears to push the narrator to work harder while in actuality, don Juan is the one who pushes the narrator. Don Genaro helps don Juan protect the narrator during his lessons.

Don Genaro leads the strange creatures away from the narrator when they follow him back from the unknown. He also pushes the narrator into the unknown. Don Genaro is also the one who pushes the narrator's assemblage point to the forest and to the church. He teases the narrator about being attracted to la Catalina. Don Genaro demonstrates the gait of power and shows the narrator his dreaming body which scares the narrator. When the narrator mimics the gait of power, they arrive in hell. When don Juan departs from the world, don Genaro departs with him.

## The Eagle

The Eagle is an indescribable force which is the source of all sentient beings. The Eagle's emanations are commands to mankind. Don Juan compares the Eagle to gravity or time. Some seers envision a ruling Eagle who devours men at their deaths. The Eagle is not visual, but it appears the same to all men as opposed to its emanations which are personal.

## Death Defiers

The Death Defiers are ancient Toltec seers who live in another great band of emanations in order to escape death. They bury their bodies without injury in order to avoid the blows of the tumbler. The narrator meets the death defiers and finds them terrifying, though an uncontrollable urge propels him towards them to confront them face to face.

## Carol

Carol is the nagual lady who lives in Tucson, Arizona. The narrator's dreaming body travels to her. The narrator only meets her once while he is in normal awareness, but she never meets the narrator while she is in normal awareness. Carol will be leaving the world too soon to integrate her relationship with the narrator into her normal awareness.



## **Don Julian**

Don Julian is don Juan's mentor. He saves don Juan from the foreman's shot and forces him to become a seer through his drama, without giving don Juan a choice in the matter. His manner of teaching is different from don Juan's. Don Julian does not care about people, which is why he is able to help and heal people.

## **Ancient Toltec Seers**

The ancient Toltec seers are the founders of the art of seeing that don Juan practices. They became too self-absorbed to survive. Many of the new seers' principles are founded on the Toltecs' findings in one way or another.

## **The Tenant**

The Tenant is an ancient Toltec seer who comes to Sebastian in 1723 and all subsequent naguals in his line. He learned how to open and close the gap in his cocoon at will. The Tenant exchanges knowledge and favors for energy from each generation of Sebastian's line.

## **La Catalina**

La Catalina is a female nagual whose magic resembles Julian and Elias' magic. The narrator is both attracted to and fears la Catalina. La Catalina appears as a worm and forces the narrator to shift below and become a worm as well. They romp and play in another world that she assembles.

## **Allies**

Allies are inorganic beings. Most of them are too different from men to be useful. Seers seek allies for their ethereal quality, while allies seek men for their greater energy field which allows allies to manifest themselves. Although they cannot physically harm men, allies can scare people to death.

## **Warriors**

Warriors are men who are on the path to seeing. They journey along the path to impeccability. They must eradicate their self-importance and acquire control, discipline, forbearance, timing and will in order to finish the warriors' path and begin on the seers' path.



## **La Gorda**

La Gorda is one of don Juan's apprentices. She is also the narrator's petty tyrant because of her large self-importance. She is not one of the apprentices who embark on the final test as don Juan leaves the world.

## **Silvio Manuel**

Silvio Manuel is a member of the nagual's party. He officiates at the house which the entire nagual's party owns. The narrator's left-side is scared of Silvio Manuel.

## **Nestor**

Nestor is one of don Juan's apprentices. He joins the narrator and Pablito in jumping from the mountain top as the final test on the warriors' path.

## **Pablito**

Pablito is one of don Juan's apprentices. He joins the narrator and Nestor in jumping from the mountain top as the final test on the warriors' path.

## **Elias**

Elias is Julian's mentor. He, along with Julian, is more like la Catalina and the narrator than don Juan and don Genaro.



# Objects/Places

## Mexico

Mexico is the setting where the story takes place. It is also where don Juan lives.

## Naguals

Naguals are the leaders of a group of seers. Once they obtain impeccability, their entire party goes with them. Don Juan and Julian are naguals.

## Seeing

Seeing is the practice of naguals to see the Eagle's emanations and obtain truth through awareness.

## Heightened awareness

Heightened awareness is also known as perceptual clarity and must be achieved in order to see.

## Mastery of Awareness, Stalking and Intent

Don Juan teaches the narrator the mastery of awareness, stalking and intent. It must be learned on the path to become a seer, which the narrator's lessons lead toward.

## Oaxaca

Oaxaca is the town where don Juan lives.

## Don Juan's Bench

Don Juan's bench is located in the square in his town. It is his favorite spot, and he often conducts his lessons there.

## Five Attributes of Warriorship

The five attributes of warriorship are control, discipline, forbearance, timing and will. These must be accomplished to become a seer. The first four are needed to deal with petty tyrants.





## **Eagle's Emanations**

The Eagle's emanations are commands. There are many, like filaments of light. They are dangerous to see.

## **Known, Unknown and Unknowable**

The known, unknown and unknowable are classifications of awareness. The known is normal awareness, the unknown is visible in heightened awareness, but the unknowable is a waste of energy to try to see and is usually only seen at death.

## **Left-sided awareness**

Left-sided awareness is used for seeing. It is also known as dreaming.

## **Self-importance**

Self-importance inhibits a warrior's path to seeing. Both the narrator and la Gorda have large self-importances.

## **Inorganic Life**

Inorganic life creates seven of the great bands of emanations on earth. The allies are part of this classification.

## **Assemblage Point**

The assemblage point is the aspect which controls perception. The narrator must learn to shift his assemblage point in order to assemble other worlds and to see.

## **Sonoran Desert**

The Sonoran desert causes heightened emotions. The narrator, don Juan, and don Genaro travel there several times throughout the novel.

## **Great Bands of Emanations**

There are twenty-eight great bands of emanations on earth. They are clusters of the Eagle's emanations. One is organic life, and seven are inorganic life. The other twenty produce bubbles without awareness.



## **The Nagual's Blow**

The nagual's blow is the pushing of the emphasis away from usual emanations to neighboring ones.

## **Barriers of Perception**

Barriers of perception are things that inhibit men from seeing.

## **Dreaming Body**

The dreaming body has the ability to separate itself from one's physical body in order to travel great distances, such as when the narrator goes to sleep in Oaxaca and wakes in Tucson.

## **Don Genaro's House**

Don Genaro lives in the next town over from don Juan. Many of the narrator's lessons are taught there. When the narrator rushes out of the unknown, he brings strange creatures with him which follow him to don Genaro's house.

## **Earth's Boost**

The Earth's boost helps to shift men's assemblage points. It is the same for all men.

## **Tumbler**

The tumbler has two aspects: the rolling force, which injures man's cocoon, and the circular aspect, which sustains life. Once the balance is upset, it leads to death.

## **Cocoon**

A cocoon is an energy field around a man which protects him. It is man's cocoon that the tumbler attacks.

## **Gaps in Cocoons**

The tumbler's attacks cause gaps in man's cocoon.



## **Mountain**

The mountain is where the narrator and the other apprentices jump from as their last test. They must shift their assemblage points to assemblage the Black World in order to escape death. This is also where don Juan and the other members of the nagual's party say goodbye.

## **Black World**

The Black World is one of the worlds that is created by a great band of emanations. This is where the narrator and the other apprentices must go when they jump from the mountaintop. The Black World also causes men to age considerably.

## **Normal Awareness**

Normal awareness is the perception of every man. It requires no shift in the assemblage point and is basically the opposite of seeing.

## **Freedom**

Freedom is the only escape from death, as the new seers realized. Freedom is total knowledge and awareness.



# Themes

## Awareness & Knowledge

Awareness and knowledge are combined throughout this book as the narrator learns how to see from don Juan. There are two types of awareness, normal awareness and heightened awareness. True learning occurs in the left side, heightened awareness. Unfortunately, it is difficult to remember what is learned in the left side once a warrior returns to normal awareness. There are three facets of a seer's knowledge: the mastery of awareness, the mastery of stalking and the mastery of intent. The ancient Toltecs began compiling this knowledge until their own self-absorption lead to the destruction of their culture. It can take years for a seer to recall what he has learned on his left side; during these years, the information becomes internalized.

Before becoming a seer, a man must journey on the warriors' path. The five attributes to warriorship are control, discipline, forbearance, timing and will. The seers' path leads to the path to impeccability. The reason for the existence of sentient beings is awareness. Alignment is another method of seeing. There are three types of attention or attainment: animal awareness, left-sided awareness, and the unknowable. Awareness stops death. Since to be alive means to be aware, organic beings are not the only beings which can be considered alive, according to seers.

## Magic

Magic is present throughout this novel, though it is a different type of magic than what is commonly portrayed. It is more of a personal magic, and it is very subtle for the most part. Don Juan is a Mexican Indian sorcerer, and the narrator is his apprentice. They discuss seeing through left-sided awareness. Don Juan teaches the narrator about the mastery of awareness, the mastery of stalking, and the mastery of intent. The goal of seers is to reach impeccability. The use of petty tyrants assists a seer in building his own personal store of energy. The Eagle's emanations are like filaments of light, and the narrator survives his first brief encounter with them. The narrator also learns the importance of controlling sexual energy since it drains the glow of awareness.

The narrator learns about the differences between the known, the unknown, and the unknowable. He also discovers the categories of secret knowledge attained by the ancient Toltecs: earth and the dark regions, fire and water, loud and silent, above and below, moving and stationary. The narrator encounters allies, inorganic beings who live in another great band of emanations, and the Death Defiers who escape to another world to avoid death. The narrator learns about the possibility of traveling through fire and water, as well as the capability of the dreaming body to be in two places at once. He shifts into a worm during his experience with la Catalina. He also sees the mold of man, the tumbler, and don Juan's nagual's eyes, and he travels to other great bands of emanations.



## Self-Importance

Self-Importance is explicitly and implicitly mentioned throughout the novel. Self-importance is a great inhibitor on the warriors' path. Both the narrator and la Gorda have large self-importance, which don Juan attempts to eradicate. La Gorda is angry that don Juan has something to discuss with the narrator in private because of her self-importance. Later, she believes that he will not allow her to join them because they want to gossip about her. Don Juan agrees in order to provoke her self-importance. This causes her to slap the narrator.

Meanwhile, the narrator is offended because don Juan has not spoken to him in two days. After la Gorda slaps him, the narrator realizes that they are alike in the enormous size of their self-importance. When he joins don Juan, don Juan explains what a petty tyrant is and lists the different categories of petty tyrants. Don Juan tells the narrator about his own experience with a petty tyrant, the foreman for whom he worked when he was a young man, before Julian began to train him. Petty tyrants are needed for a warrior to advance on the path to becoming a seer.

In other situations, the narrator's self-importance flares as he feels that don Juan and don Genaro are mocking him. Also, he realizes the point behind don Juan's argument that there is no reason to pity the conditions of the Yaqui Indians when the conditions of man in general are so poor. The narrator's fear is also a result of self-importance since he feels his life too important to risk. By the end of the novel, most, if not all, of the narrator's self-importance has been eradicated, as evidenced by his willingness to jump from a mountain top.

# Style

## Point of View

The point of view of this novel is first person. The point of view is limited and fairly reliable. This can be seen in the fact that the narrator does not know the feelings of the other characters, and he can only report the actions and recount the stories that he has been told. His reliability is based on the fact that he is not disputed and can further be assumed by his search for truth. This point of view is important since the action of the story revolves around the narrator whereas the other main characters disappear in the end. Without the narrator telling the story in first person, the reader would not be able to know the ending.

The story is told through a fairly equal distribution of exposition and dialogue, or at least the assumption of dialogue as much of the conversation is not direct quotes but a general paraphrase of don Juan's lessons. This allows the reader to learn the gist of the narrator's lessons without having to read through the tedious dialogue that a true lesson might consist of. The time period that passes is slightly unclear, but according to don Juan's instructions in the beginning of the novel, it is not a long amount of time. Some of the time passes very quickly as the narrator leaves don Juan for several weeks or months, but at other times, the events of an afternoon may take a whole chapter. Most of the gaps in time seem to occur between chapters.

## Setting

The novel is set in Mexico, particularly in the southern area of Oaxaca and the Sonoran Desert. The majority of the characters are Mexican-Indians who are seers. Additionally, there is the setting of the human body, which is described as being surrounded by a cocoon. The narrator also travels to Tucson, Arizona through the dreaming body to visit the nagual woman, Carol. Don Juan and don Genaro take the narrator to the stream to see the allies, to the Sonoran Desert to peer at the allies, and to the place where the death defiers are buried.

The assemblage point can also be viewed as being a setting in a way since it can move its location to reassemble other worlds. Since this occurs in this novel, there are several other settings that appear that are not within the modern non-fictional world. The narrator travels to a world with yellow dunes of sulphur with don Juan, and he also travels to the Black World by himself. The Black World is where he returns when he passes don Juan's final test by jumping off of a cliff into an abyss.

## Language and Meaning

The language of the novel can be very difficult to understand. Although the style of the writing is not particularly stiff or formal, the concepts which are discussed are very



abstract which can hinder comprehension of the novel. It is often very difficult to understand the terms that the narrator or don Juan refers to throughout the novel. The language does, however, allow the reader to submerge himself or herself in a world where magic is a reality.

The language characterizes the different characters, especially since the language reflects their tone. Don Juan tends to be more serious and educational, whereas don Genaro is more likely to mock the narrator. There is a lot of dialogue throughout the novel, as well as many paraphrases of the lessons which don Juan teaches the narrator. These conversations which occur help to distinguish the narrator as doubtful, don Genaro as playful, and don Juan as urgent in his instruction. Throughout most of the novel, the extensive descriptions tend to help the reader along, but there are definitely places where an inattentive reader may get confused. Rereading certain passages should clear these confusions up. The use of language in this novel assists in distinguishing characters and describing the abstract magical terminologies with which the narrator is being confronted.

## Structure

This novel is compiled of eighteen chapters, plus a foreword and an epilogue. The foreword and epilogue are very short, whereas the eighteen chapters range from ten to twenty-eight pages long. Each chapter is named according to the lesson which don Juan teaches the narrator within the chapter. The chapters are very descriptive and can become tedious since they are written in the form of a lesson. Short amounts of time tend to pass within the chapters, while larger amounts of time pass in between chapters.

The plot of the novel is simple with no subplots. The novel is about the narrator training with don Juan, a master nagual, to become a nagual. The narrator learns lessons about being a seer and a nagual in his left-sided awareness, which unfortunately he cannot remember while he is thinking in his right-sided awareness. The narrator continues with his lessons as don Juan prepares to leave the world. After passing his final test, the narrator must try to reconstruct those lessons after don Juan is gone.

The pace of the novel tends to be a bit slow because of the content of lessons with much dialogue, rather than action. The novel is a little difficult to read due to the abstract ideas and irregular terminology, but it is very entertaining. There are many flashbacks throughout the story as don Juan shares his past experiences with the narrator and the narrator remembers past experiences with don Juan. The novel is very enjoyable.



## Quotes

"When I asked him once what was the essential character of the seers of the new cycle, he said that they are the warriors of total freedom, that they are such masters of awareness, stalking, and intent that they are not caught by death, like the rest of mortal men, but choose the moment and the way of their departure from this world. At that moment they are consumed by a fire from within and vanish from the face of the earth, free, as if they had never existed." Narrator, Foreword, p. xiii

"Seeing is a peculiar feeling of knowing, of knowing something without a shadow of doubt. In this case, I know what those men did, not only because of my seeing, but because we are so closely bound together." Don Juan, Chapter 1: The New Seers, p. 4

"Self-importance is our greatest enemy. Think about it- what weakens us is feeling offended by the deeds and misdeeds of our fellow men. Our self-importance requires that we spend most of our lives offended by someone. The new seers recommended that every effort should be made to eradicate self-importance from the lives of warriors. I have followed that recommendation, and much of my endeavors with you has been geared to show you that without self-importance we are invulnerable." Don Juan, Chapter 2: Petty Tyrants, p. 12

"Then, when I was sure he was going to defend his point, he agreed that the conditions of the Yaqui Indians were indeed wretched. But he pointed out that it was useless to single out the Yaquis when life conditions of man in general were horrendous. 'Don't just feel sorry for the poor Yaqui Indians,' he had said. 'Feel sorry for mankind. In the case of the Yaqui Indians, I can even say they're the lucky ones. They are oppressed, and because of that, some of them may come out triumphant in the end. But the oppressors, the petty tyrants that tread upon them, they don't have a chance in hell.'" Narrator, Chapter 3: The Eagle's Emanations, p. 31-32

"There is nothing visual about the Eagle. The entire body of a seer senses the Eagle. There is something in all of us that can make us witness with our entire body. Seers explain the act of seeing the Eagle in very simple terms: because man is composed of the Eagle's emanations, man need only revert back to his components. The problem arises with man's awareness; it is his awareness that becomes entangled and confused. At the crucial moment when it should be a simple case of the emanations acknowledging themselves, man's awareness is compelled to interpret. The result is a vision of the Eagle and no Eagle's emanations. What is out there is something that no living creature can grasp." Don Juan, Chapter 3: The Eagle's Emanations, p. 41

"They say that perception is a condition of alignment; the emanations inside the cocoon become aligned with those outside that fit them. Alignment is what allows awareness to be cultivated by every living creature. Seers make these statements because they see living creatures as they really are: luminous beings that look like bubbles of whitish light." Don Juan, Chapter 4: The Glow of Awareness, p. 49





"The actions of seers are more complex than dividing a man into mind and body. You have forgotten what you've done, or what you're witnessed, because when you were performing what you've forgotten you were seeing." Don Juan, Chapter 4: The Glow of Awareness, p. 53

"There is nothing wrong with man's sensuality. It's man's ignorance of and disregard for his magical nature that is wrong. It's a mistake to waste recklessly the life-bestowing force of sex and not have children, but it's also a mistake not to know that in having children one taxes the glow of awareness. [Seers] see that on having a child, the parents' glow of awareness diminishes and the child's increases. In some supersensitive, frail parents, the glow of awareness almost disappears. As children enhance their awareness, a big dark spot develops in the luminous cocoon of the parents, on the very place from which the glow was taken away. It is usually on the midsection of the cocoon. Sometimes those spots can even be seen superimposed on the body itself." Don Juan, Chapter 4: The Glow of Awareness, p. 60-61

"Don Juan remarked that reason in the human species should be bountiful, but that in actuality it is very rare. The majority of human beings turn to self-absorption." Narrator, Chapter 5: The First Attention, p. 75

"Human beings are truly nothing, don Juan." Narrator, Chapter 6: Inorganic Beings, p. 97

"The next truth is that perception takes place because there is in each of us an agent called the assemblage point that selects internal and external emanations for alignment. The particular alignment that we perceive as the world is the product of the specific spot where our assemblage point is located on our cocoon." Don Juan, Chapter 7: The Assemblage Point, p. 108

"Your flaw is to remain glued to the inventory of reason. Reason doesn't deal with man as energy. Reason deals with instruments that create energy, but it has never seriously occurred to reason that we are better than instruments: we are organisms that create energy. We are a bubble of energy. It isn't farfetched, then, that a bubble of energy would make a dent in another bubble of energy." Don Juan, Chapter 7: The Assemblage Point, p. 112

"Man is not the unknowable. Man's luminosity can be seen almost as if one were using the eyes alone." Don Juan, Chapter 7: The Assemblage Point, p. 122

"Only a bell and a bird break the stillness...It seems that the two talk with the setting sun. Golden colored silence, the afternoon is made of crystals. A roving purity sways the cool trees, and beyond all that, a transparent river dreams that trampling over pearls it breaks loose and flows into infinity." "Hora Inmensa", Chapter 8: The Position of the Assemblage Point, p. 128

"The fact of the matter is that many children see. Most of those who see are considered to be oddballs and every effort is made to correct them, to make them solidify the



position of their assemblage points." Don Juan, Chapter 8: The Position of the Assemblage Point, p. 132

"I've explained to you that man has an assemblage point and that that assemblage point aligns emanations for perception. We've also discussed that that point moves from its fixed position. Now, the last truth is that once that assemblage point moves beyond a certain limit, it can assemble worlds entirely different from the world we know." Don Juan, Chapter 9: The Shift Below, p. 141

"[Don Juan] said that the nagual Julian used to tell them that they had been evicted from the homes where they had lived all their lives. A result of having saved energy had been the disruption of their cozy but utterly limiting and boring nest in the world of everyday life. Their depression, the nagual Julian told them, was not so much the sadness of having lost their nest, but the annoyance of having to look for new quarters." Don Juan, Chapter 9: The Shift Below, p. 153

"'The Eagle bestows awareness through its emanations,' he replied. His answer made me argue with him. I told him that to say that the Eagle bestows awareness through its emanations is like what a religious man would say about God, that God bestows life through love. It does not mean anything. 'The two statements are not made from the same point of view,' he patiently said. 'And yet I think they mean the same thing. The difference is that seers see how the Eagle bestows awareness through its emanations and religious men don't see how God bestows life through his love.'" Don Juan and Narrator, Chapter 10: Great Bands of Emanations, p. 159

"'You understand, of course,' don Juan went on, 'that when they thought they were descending to the depths, they were, in fact, pushing their assemblage points to assemble other perceivable worlds with those seven great bands. They taxed their awareness to the limit and assembled worlds with five great bands that are accessible to seers only if they undergo a dangerous transformation... In their aberration they believed it was worth their while to break all the barriers of perception, even if they had to become trees to do that.'" Don Juan and Narrator, Chapter 10: Great Bands of Emanations, p. 166

"Don Juan then outlined the procedure for getting to the dreaming body. He said that it starts with an initial act, which by the fact of being sustained breeds unbending intent. Unbending intent leads to internal silence, and internal silence to the inner strength needed to make the assemblage point shift in dreams to suitable positions." Narrator, Chapter 11: Stalking, Intent and the Dreaming Position, p. 180

"It is an internal knowledge. You'll know it someday yourself. You see, the nagual Julian made by assemblage point shift countless times, just as I have made yours shift. Then he left me the task of realigning all those emanations which he had helped me align through these shifts. That is the task that every nagual is left to do. At any rate, the job of realigning all those emanations paves the way for the peculiar maneuver of lightening up all the emanations inside the cocoon. I have nearly done that. I am about to reach my maximum. Since I am the nagual, once I do light up all the emanations inside my



cocoon we will all be gone in an instant." Don Juan, Chapter 12: The Nagual Julian, p. 183-184

"With his penchant for drama, my benefactor was able to move my assemblage point enough to imbue me right away with an overpowering feeling for the two basic qualities of warriors: sustained effort and unbending intent. I knew that in order to be free again someday, I would have to work in an orderly and steady fashion and in cooperation with the frail old man, who in my opinion needed my help as much as I need his. I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that that was what I wanted to do more than anything else in life." Don Juan, Chapter 12: The Nagual Julian, p. 194-195

"My benefactor told me that my father and mother had lived and died just to have me, and that their own parents had done the same for them. He said that warriors were different in that they shift their assemblage points enough to realize the tremendous price that has been paid for their lives. This shift gives them the respect and awe that their parents never felt for life in general, or for being alive in particular." Don Juan, Chapter 12: The Nagual Julian, p. 201

"Genaro is separated from us at this moment by the force of perception. When the assemblage point assembles a world, that world is total. This is the marvel that the old seers stumbled upon and never realized what it was: the awareness of the earth can give us a boost to align other great bands of emanation, and the force of that new alignment makes the world vanish. Every time the old seers made a new alignment, they believed they had descended to the depths below or ascended to the heavens above. They never knew that the world disappears like a puff of air when a new total alignment makes us perceive another total world." Don Juan, Chapter 13: The Earth's Boost, p. 216-217

"I asked him to explain to me once and for all what the human form is and what it means to lose it. He replied that seers described the human form as the compelling force of alignment of the emanations lit by the glow of awareness on the precise spot on which normally man's assemblage point is fixated. It is the force that makes us into persons. Thus, to be a person is to be compelled to affiliate with that force of alignment and consequently to be affiliated with the precise spot where it originates." Narrator, Chapter 14: The Rolling Force, p. 222-223

"I insisted that I was definitely in no condition to test such a preposterous thing as that. He laughed at me. He said that sooner or later I had to cure myself of my madness, and that to take the initiative and face up to those four seers was infinitely less preposterous than the idea that I was seeing them at all. He said that to him madness was to be confronted by men who had been buried for two thousand years and were still alive, and not to think that that was the epitome of preposterousness." Narrator, Chapter 15: The Death Defiers, p. 245

"[Don Juan] began then an extremely disturbing elucidation about the mold of man. He said that the old seers as well as the mystics of our world have one thing in common- they have been able to see the mold of man but not understand what it is. Mystics,



throughout the centuries, have given us moving accounts of their experiences. But these accounts, however beautiful, are flawed by the gross and despairing mistake of believing the mold of man to be an omnipotent, omniscient creator; and so is the interpretation of the old seers, who called the mold of man a friendly spirit, a protector of man. He said that the new seers are the only ones who have the sobriety to see the mold of man and understand what it is. What they have come to realize is that the mold of man is not a creator, but the pattern of every human attribute we can think of and some we cannot even conceive. The mold is our God because we are what it stamps us with and not because it has created us from nothing and made us in its image and likeness. Don Juan said that in his opinion to fall on our knees in the presence of the mold of man reeks of arrogance and human self-centeredness." Narrator, Chapter 16: The Mold of Man, p. 262

"They have seen, therefore, that what we call God is a static prototype of humanness without any power. For the mold of man cannot under any circumstances help us by intervening in our behalf, or punish our wrongdoings, or reward us in any way. We are simply the product of its stamp; we are its impression. The mold of man is exactly what its name tells us it is, a pattern, a form, a cast that groups together a particular bunch of fiber-like elements, which we call man." Narrator, Chapter 16: The Mold of Man, p. 263

"I told him that I had felt like a worthless servant worshiping a worthless master, and yet I was moved out of sheer affection to promise undying love. He found it all hilarious and laughed until he was choking. 'The promise of a worthless servant to a worthless master is worthless,' he said and choked again with laughter. I did not feel like defending my position. My affection for the mold of man was offered freely without thought of recompense. It did not matter to me that my promise was worthless." Narrator and Don Juan, Chapter 16: The Mold of Man, p. 269-270

"Freedom is like a contagious disease. It is transmitted; its carrier is an impeccable nagual. People might not appreciate that, and that's because they don't want to be free. Freedom is frightening. Remember that. But not for us. I've groomed myself nearly all my life for this moment. And so will you." Don Juan, Chapter 17: The Journey of the Dreaming Body, p. 271

"Take yourself, for example; you are now in a state of heightened awareness. Whatever you are capable of doing in such a state is not an illusion; it is as real as the world you will face tomorrow in your daily life, and yet tomorrow the world you are witnessing now won't exist. It exists only when your assemblage point moves to the particular spot where you are now." Don Juan, Chapter 17: The Journey of the Dreaming Body, p. 284

"One of the most fortunate decisions that the new seers made, he said, was never to allow their assemblage points to move permanently to any position other than heightened awareness. From that position, they actually resolved their dilemmas of futility and found out that the solution is not simply to choose an alternate world in which to die, but to choose total consciousness, total freedom. Don Juan commented that by choosing total freedom, the new seers unwittingly continued in the tradition of their

predecessors and became the quintessence of the death defiers." Narrator, Epilogue, p. 298-299



## Topics for Discussion

What is the difference between a nagual and a sorcerer?

Why does la Catalina like the narrator?

Compare and contrast Don Juan and Don Genaro.

Who is the narrator's petty tyrant, and what purpose does a petty tyrant serve?

Don Juan constantly refers to running out of time before he must leave. Explain where he is going and how he is getting there.

Describe the different levels of awareness.

What are the Eagle's emanations, and what does intent have to do with them?

Why is the narrator training with Don Juan? What inhibits his training?