

Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan Study Guide

Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan by Carlos Castaneda

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Plot Summary

Carlos Castaneda is an anthropology student seeking information from a Yaqui Indian sorcerer named Don Juan Matus in order to research psychotropic plants. The author's objective becomes sidelined by Don Juan, who avoids all discussion of plants. In this, Castaneda's third book on lessons from a 'man of knowledge,' Don Juan's mysterious but charismatic persona takes Castaneda under his wing. From December, 1960 to May, 1971, Castaneda becomes his reluctant sorcerer's apprentice. The Indian is determined to show Castaneda entry into an alternative reality akin to that reached through peyote.

The introduction clarifies the premise of *Journey to Ixtlan*, which Castaneda explains, as a more concrete and permanent road to the temporary experience of ingesting psychedelic plants such as peyote. Castaneda immediately gives us a glimpse of Don Juan's intimidating wisdom by referring to his piercing glance. In effect each successive chapter is a step of Castaneda's apprenticeship. Whether Castaneda understands Don Juan or not is another matter. The Yaqui Indian reads Castaneda's mind at every turn. His demonstrations of power are always followed by the author's patterned reaction of awe, confusion, lack of understanding and rational argumentation. Although Castaneda is afraid of what Don Juan does to him, he feels compelled to come back for more, and a genuine friendship develops between the two. Clearly the old man is fond of and has great hopes for Castaneda.

To Castaneda, the concepts and behaviors Don Juan proposes contradict "normality" and are often difficult and embarrassing to implement. Don Juan insists, for instance, that Castaneda talk to plants in a loud clear voice and sends him off to practice. The Indian recommends to Castaneda that he get rid of his "personal history" and "create a fog" around himself, in order to make himself not so obvious to others. This goes along with his later premise that he become "inaccessible." Don Juan contends Castaneda lost the love of his life because he was boring, predictable and always there, even as Castaneda argues that his routines are less common than most people's.

Castaneda tends to contradict the Indian with logic he has been brought up with, contending that the changes Don Juan suggests are impractical to his life. Yet Don Juan identifies and highlights aspects of Castaneda's psyche through difficult tasks and trials he puts his unwitting apprentice through. At one point, he alerts Castaneda that his death is always to his left, and that he should not forget this. Frightened, Castaneda argues that he doesn't want to think about death. Don Juan retorts that we are all going to die and should think about it. The reality that Don Juan wishes to impart to Castaneda is always smacking the author in the face with sense and great truth, but Castaneda claims not to understand and attempts to explain the supernatural he witnesses away with logic. In essence, Don Juan asserts that one has to evade logic in order to be happy.

In spite of his stubbornness, Castaneda experiences much euphoria and accomplishes most every technique Don Juan teaches him. It takes Castaneda a long time to finally



"see," Don Juan's contentions that he is no more important than any other plant or creature. He sends him on his own to the mountains and all that Don Juan has taught him comes into play. He speaks to a magical coyote and realizes his equality with everything in nature. He understands that it is a mysterious world we reside in as don Juan contends. Castaneda "stops the world," as Don Juan has prepped him, but he realizes he is not yet ready to take the next step of an eternal journey from which he can never return.



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 1, Reaffirmations From the World Around Us

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 1, Reaffirmations From the World Around Us Summary and Analysis

Carlos Castaneda is an anthropology student seeking information from a Yaqui Indian sorcerer named Don Juan Matus in order to research psychotropic plants. The author's objective becomes sidelined by Don Juan, who avoids all discussion of plants. In this, Castaneda's third book on lessons from a 'man of knowledge,' Don Juan's mysterious but charismatic persona takes Castaneda under his wing. From December, 1960 to May, 1971, Castaneda becomes his reluctant sorcerer's apprentice. The Indian is determined to show Castaneda entry into an alternative reality akin to that reached through peyote.

At their first meeting, the intense quality of Don Juan's glance intimidates the author into arming himself with six months of further research, before daring to visit the Yaqui again. He boasts to Don Juan that he now knows about peyote. Hearing this, Don Juan laughs. The Indian's laugh offends Castaneda at first. Don Juan tells him the story of a king, who is approached by a young man who also prepares for six months. Castaneda, familiar with the tale, is bored but listens politely. His interest is piqued when Don Juan alters the cliché ending to fit the exact situation between Don Juan and himself.

Castaneda proudly stands up to the old man asserting that even if he appears to be stupid, he still wants to learn about plants. He offers the Indian payment for his services. Don Juan laughs and asks how much he will pay. After Castaneda insists he will pay appropriately, Don Juan tells him, "Pay me for my time... with your time."

The Indian takes Castaneda on a hike, explaining that plants can feel. In response, the bushes around them sway, and Don Juan affirms that the leaves and the wind are in agreement with him. Castaneda thinks of the friend who introduced them and warned him of the old man's eccentricities. Over coffee, Don Juan comments that one can stop anything, such as drinking or smoking, at the drop of a hat. The percolator in the place makes a loud sound and Don Juan contends that percolator agrees with him. This strikes humorous but turns cryptic when Don Juan explains that one can get agreements from everything. The percolator again sounds, and Don Juan thanks the percolator.

Castaneda tells Don Juan he will bring a camera and tape recorder when they meet next time. The old Indian responds that if he wants to see him, not to bring up the topic

of those items. Castaneda considers the items as indispensability to his work. Don Juan states that the only thing indispensable is "the spirit."



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 2, Erasing Personal History

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 2, Erasing Personal History Summary and Analysis

On Thursday, December 22, 1960 Castaneda visits Don Juan's house. The Indian sits on the floor leaned against a wall. Castaneda asks if he is interrupting his routine. Don Juan explains that he has no routines and Castaneda pulls out a genealogy chart he intends to fill out with Don Juan's help. He asks Don Juan, what he called his father. Perplexed, Don Juan answers that he called him, "Dad." Castaneda explains the purpose of his survey and after a moment, the Indian answers how sometimes he called his parents "Hey Mom or Hey Dad." Castaneda involuntarily laughs thinking the Indian is stupid. Castaneda attempts to continue, but the Indian stops him cold saying, "Don't waste your time with that crap."

The Indian's force throws Castaneda off kilter in a way that Castaneda describes as reversing their roles. Don Juan is no longer "stupid," the "stupid" one is Castaneda. The Indian stares at him with penetrating eyes, stating cryptically that he has "no personal history." His statement confuses and threatens Castaneda. Noting Castaneda's bewilderment, Don Juan states that he has no need for personal history and that he dropped it the way he dropped drinking. Castaneda asks how anyone can drop personal history. Don Juan responds that one must want to drop it. Castaneda asks why anyone would want to do that, and thinks about how strongly attached to his roots he is.

Contradicting the absurdity of the concept, Castaneda contends that Don Juan is a Yaqui Indian and this can't be changed. He feels triumphant stating something that Don Juan cannot deny. However, Don Juan retorts that someone else thinking he is a Yaqui makes it personal history, but in his case, no one knows for sure that he is a Yaqui. Castaneda is confused. Don Juan asserts that Castaneda will never know who or what he actually is because he has no personal history. To prove the point, Don Juan brings up Castaneda's father and asserts that Castaneda's father has him pegged. He knows who he is and what he does and nothing can change his mind about his son. In fact, explains Don Juan, anyone who knows Castaneda's personal life has expectations of him based on his history. Don Juan asserts that having no personal history, no explanations are needed, "nobody is angry... or disillusioned with your acts... above all, no one pins you down with their thoughts."

The concept is ideal on a mental level, but emotionally, the idea makes Castaneda lonely. Castaneda decides not to discuss philosophy with someone who has never even attended a college like himself. He steers the conversation back to his charts and jokingly asks how he got off the subject. Don Juan reminds him he called his questions, "crap." Taking another approach, Castaneda asks Don Juan if forgetting one's past is something Yaqui Indians do. Don Juan answers that it is something he does. Life has



taught him to do it and he will share the secret with Castaneda. He urges Castaneda to write it down and speaks slowly to allow Castaneda time to jot down his words.

Don Juan explains the advantage of losing personal history is that erasing it makes, "us free from the encumbering thoughts of other people." Don Juan claims he has built a "fog" around himself, and as a result, no one knows who he is or what he does. He claims that he himself does not know who he is. Castaneda argues that of course Don Juan knows who he is. The Indian's responds with a tricky, "you bet I don't." and rolls on the floor laughing. His sudden fixed gaze and posture remind Castaneda of a classic "red-skinned warrior" leaving him intrigued and frightened.

Don Juan tells Castaneda that he must create a fog around him, until nothing about him is certain to anyone. He contends that Castaneda is "too real" and should start to erase himself. Castaneda questions the purpose. The Indian asserts that if he wants to learn about plants, he must erase his personal history, first with little things, such as not telling what he does. He must get away from all who know him, because those who know him take him for granted and, there is an "ultimate freedom" in being unknown.

Castaneda says that he doesn't want to lie. The Indian contends that Castaneda misleads people any way. This touches a nerve in Castaneda, who admits that he is considered unreliable, even though he never lies. Don Juan asserts that he does lie, he just doesn't know why he lies. "Now you do." Castaneda insists he is reliable. Don Juan asserts he is not reliable and laughs at Castaneda's anger. Castaneda despises Don Juan, but admits that he is right.

Don Juan amplifies that in not having personal history, nothing is a lie. Castaneda problem, according to Don Juan, is that he compulsively explains everything to everyone. Castaneda responds that he can't keep secrets. Don Juan tells him to change, saying that there are two alternatives, "we either take everything for sure and real, or we don't." The first is boring, the second is exciting because no one knows anything for sure. After a silence, Don Juan asks Castaneda to drive him to town. The conversation tires Castaneda. He wants to sleep. Noting this, Don Juan takes him to a hilltop and makes him lie on his stomach with his head facing east. He sleeps a few minutes, and awakens renewed.



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 3, Losing Self-importance

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 3, Losing Self-importance Summary and Analysis

Castaneda and the friend who put him in touch discuss Don Juan. The friend says that the old man is crazy. Castaneda does not agree, because the Indian demonstrates an ability to read him too accurately. He decides to visit him again on December 28, 1960. They walk for hours without mentioning plants. Along the way, Don Juan shows him how to walk with his fingers curled "gently," pointing out he walks in a "debilitating" way. Don Juan advises never to carry anything in his hands. Castaneda obeys but does not feel any change in his stamina or awareness as Don Juan says he should.

Castaneda is about to drink from his canteen and Don Juan tells him to take only a sip of water. He gives him some leaves to chew, saying that they will calm his thirst. His thirst is not allayed, but he is not uncomfortable. Don Juan explains that the reason Castaneda does not feel benefit of walking with fingers curled or chewing the leaves, is because his body is young and, "stupid." His words make Don Juan roll with laughter, but Castaneda is in no laughing mood, and Don Juan corrects the word "stupid" to "dormant."

A crow flies overhead cawing loudly makes Castaneda laugh inexplicably. In a serious expression, Don Juan stops him asserting that a crow is no laughing matter because it is not just a crow. Castaneda says it was a crow. Don Juan calls him a fool. Castaneda cannot understand Don Juan's rudeness and says he will leave if he does not want company. Don Juan has a fit of laughter. Castaneda feels annoyed and embarrassed. Don Juan tells Castaneda that he is too angry and takes himself too seriously. Castaneda accuses Don Juan of doing the same thing earlier.

Anger is not his intention, Don Juan clarifies. A crow cawing is an omen, "A very important indication about you," he explains. At that moment the wind kicks dry leaves at their feet. "That was an agreement," Don Juan laughs. Castaneda thinks Don Juan is making it up as he goes along. It is right for Don Juan to laugh but not him. He feels humiliated and decides he's had enough. Don Juan orders him to sit because they are not through and starts a Mexican song imitating a popular singer and makes Castaneda laugh.

Don Juan tells Castaneda that, he takes himself as seriously as the famous singer. His fans take his songs just as seriously when no one should care about any of that because it is all nonsense. He stresses that if Castaneda wants to learn about plants, he must change his behavior. He repeats that Castaneda thinks he is important enough to be annoyed at everything. He assures this is not a sign of character, but evidence of conceit and weakness. His attack on Castaneda continues, asserting how Castaneda



never has finished a project in his life because of a "disproportionate" sense of self-importance. He stresses that Castaneda must drop self importance the way he must drop personal history. The certainty with which the Indian speaks angers Castaneda, but he dares not disagree with Don Juan since he does not know his way back.

Don Juan makes strange sudden movements that make him look alert. His eyes scan Castaneda up and down. Out of the blue, the Indian starts walking fast. Castaneda follows at a fast pace for an hour. Don Juan stops at a hill under the shade of a bush. Castaneda is tired but notices his mood is elated, in contrast to how furious he was when they began to trot. He tells Don Juan how strange it is that he feels so good. A crow caws in the distance. Don Juan lifts his finger to his right ear and calls the crow's caw an omen. A rock crashes nearby down the hill, Don Juan calls it "an agreement." He asks Castaneda if he is ready to discuss his self-importance. Castaneda's can't remember why he was so angry earlier.

He asks the Indian why is it that he was so angry but isn't any more? Don Juan cryptic response is that the mysterious world does not reveal its secrets easily. He tells Castaneda that if he ever returns by himself to avoid the rocky hill they were on earlier "like the plague," but does not explain why. He tells Castaneda that as long as he feels self-important, he is "like a horse with blinders, all you see is yourself apart from everything else." He tells Castaneda that he is going to talk to a plant and proceeds to do so. He explains that it doesn't matter what you say to a plant, what is important is to impart the feeling that you are talking to an equal. One must apologize for gathering plants and assure them that someday we too will be food for plants. He states that we and the plants have equal importance, and urges Castaneda to speak to a plant.

Castaneda feels foolish and laughs. Don Juan comments that at least he did not lose his temper. He tells him to talk to plants from now on, and to do it until he can do it in front of others. Castaneda asks if he can talk in his mind. Don Juan insists he must speak loud and clear if he wants them to answer. Castaneda goes up the hill and tries, but is too embarrassed. He stays a while and returns to Don Juan, who knows he didn't talk to the plants. Don Juan tells him to watch him converse with plants. Castaneda thinks him crazy. Don Juan claims that the plant tells him to let Castaneda know that eating a handful is healthy and that there is a batch growing "over there."

They walk to the batch, with the old man insisting that Castaneda thank the plant because it is both food and medicinal. They arrive at a cluster and Castaneda almost laughs, when Don Juan again tells him he to thank the plants. Castaneda is too embarrassed. Don Juan repeats a cryptic statement several times, "If a little plant is generous with us we must thank her, or perhaps she will not let us go." The way Don Juan speaks and looks sends a chill up Castaneda spine, making Castaneda thank the plant in a clear loud voice.

They hike another hour, and Castaneda lags behind. Don Juan checks if his fingers are curled, and scolds him for making him wait. Castaneda is impressed by the old man's strength and athleticism, and how he has to wait for him. He curls his fingers as

instructed and keeps up with Don Juan effortlessly. He is elated walking with Don Juan and again brings up the topic of peyote. The old man only gives him a look.



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 4, Death Is An Adviser

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 4, Death Is An Adviser Summary and Analysis

On Wednesday, January 25, 1961, Castaneda asks if he will teach him about peyote, but every time he brings it up, Don Juan only stares with disbelief. They go into the desert and Don Juan brings up the "uselessness" of Castaneda's self-importance and personal history. Castaneda thinks the old man ridiculous. The old man laughs. Castaneda is about to rest, but Don Juan orders him to go and talk to some plants "in a loud and clear voice." Castaneda refuses. Don Juan blames it on self importance, but decides that he not try to talk to plants until he is comfortable, adding that he can't learn about plants if he is not willing to work.

Castaneda reminds him that he is willing pay, and that this way, he can ask Don Juan anything. Don Juan gives him a contemptuous look, makes an obscene gesture and starts laughing. Castaneda again remembers the friend who introduced them. This old man is not like most old people, who like to talk. Despite his age, Don Juan is strong and jovial. He is not a good informant, and he is much too eccentric. Castaneda considers that he is crazy himself since he likes being there, but tells Don Juan that they are too different.

Don Juan repeats that one of them must change and starts humming a Mexican song. He casts a "fierce and burning" glance from which Castaneda can not look away. He orders Castaneda to reveal what he sees in his eyes. Castaneda explains that what his eyes make him feel is embarrassed, but Don Juan's glare continues, and asks if he is thinking of a "funny bird." He tells Castaneda, he is sure he (Castaneda) has seen that look before. Angered, Castaneda stares back defiantly. Don Juan laughs at this, but sobers up to explain how it is important that Castaneda not fight him and remember the "funny bird" to which he is referring and commands him to look in his eyes.

Don Juan's eyes look fierce. Castaneda is not sure what to look for. He realizes that the look reminds him of something. Momentarily, Castaneda sees a falcon's features on Don Juan's face. Castaneda tells Don Juan this. Don Juan has a laughter fit. Castaneda tells him he hunted falcons as a boy. His grandfather owned a Leghorn chicken farm and falcons endangered the chickens. Don Juan says he knows it. Don Juan's gall stating that he knows this with certainty angers Castaneda. Don Juan asks why he is angry, and Castaneda cannot explain why. The Indian returns Castaneda's focus to his eyes and orders him to tell him about the falcon.

Castaneda does not remember one particular falcon. The Indian insists that he hunted a particular falcon as a boy. Castaneda tries to decipher what the Indian refers to. Don Juan mentions, "a falcon swift as light" and Castaneda freezes. He recalls a white bird



he and his grandfather witnessed flying off with a chicken. They called it an albino falcon and concentrated on hunting it for two months. Castaneda came close to hitting it once, when the bird stood atop a tree above where he napped. He considered his options and timing waiting to shoot the bird. He remembers a chill down his spine that made him walk away without killing the bird. He hunted hundreds of birds remorselessly, not giving significance to not shooting that one. He asks how Don Juan knows about the falcon.

Don Juan tells him he sees it in front of him. He calls the white bird is an omen. Not shooting it was the right thing to do. The old Indian states that, it was Castaneda's death giving him a little warning, which is always conveyed by a chill. Castaneda is nervous. Don Juan knows things about his life that Castaneda does not know himself. Don Juan whispers in Castaneda's ear, telling him if he looks at a boulder on his left when he gives the signal, he will see his "death" staring at him. At Don Juan's signal, Castaneda turns and catches a flickering movement on a boulder. A chill runs through him. He explains it away as an optical illusion. Don Juan asserts that "death is our constant companion," and that it is always to our left.

Castaneda feels sick, while Don Juan repeats that death is always to our left, and that as a boy he waited to the left of the white falcon patiently, making him the falcon's death waiting. Castaneda is terrified and writes, while Don Juan backtracks to the futility of self importance, knowing that death is always stalking. He asks Castaneda to look left again. Castaneda declines. Don Juan has a laughing fit and tells him that "Death is the only wise adviser... we have," and that when he feels uncertainty because things go wrong, his death will tell him nothing matters since it hasn't yet touched him. Castaneda knows that Don Juan is right. In view of impending death, nothing else matters.

Don Juan starts another Mexican song, reiterating that one of them has to change. Castaneda asks for an explanation, but gets laughter in reply. He doesn't mind the Indian's laughter, and tells Don Juan to let him talk to plants, then. Don Juan comments that he goes from one extreme to the other and that there's no need to talk to plants or see his death. His awareness is sufficient.



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 5, Assuming Responsibility

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 5, Assuming Responsibility Summary and Analysis

In April of 1961 Castaneda visits the old Indian attempting to get him to explain how he knows about the falcon and what he has "done" to him. Don Juan asserts that he has done nothing to him and that it is he who asked to learn about plants. Castaneda argues he has told him nothing about plants. Don Juan answers it takes time to know about plants. Castaneda asks Don Juan to explain the stultifying look Don Juan gave him that very first time they met.

The Indian says that the first time they met, he "saw" that Castaneda was lying. The response confuses Castaneda. Don Juan sees him confused and for that reason, states that explanations are not needed. He asserts that the only thing needed is action instead of talk. He tells Castaneda that what was wrong with him when he "saw" him and what is wrong with him still, is that Castaneda does not take responsibility for what he does. He asks Castaneda why he lied the first time they met. Castaneda says he was only trying to get information for his work.

Don Juan hums another Mexican tune and says that a man must take responsibility for what he chooses to do and proceed without doubt or remorse. Castaneda argues that this is idealism and not possible. Don Juan claims that he lives with no doubt or remorse, because he is responsible for every decision he makes. He knows each time he takes Castaneda into the desert, it could mean his death. The fact of death stalking him leaves no room for doubt or remorse. He is not like Castaneda who feels immortal. In a world where death is the hunter, only decision is important. Castaneda argues that Don Juan's world encompasses "an idealized form of behavior."

To make his point, Castaneda elaborates about his father, who made promises to go swimming at six AM but instead, slept until twelve every day. He deems his father's resolution as "phony." Don Juan contends that his father just didn't know how to get out of bed, and asks Castaneda what he considers a real resolution. Castaneda responds that if his father planned to swim at three PM and followed through. Don Juan tells Castaneda that his father didn't want to swim at three, "Don't you see?" Castaneda asserts that his father was weak because he never carried through any plan.

Don Juan asks if he considers himself stronger than his father. Castaneda amplifies more miseries his father put him through. Don Juan asks him if his dad was mean, petty and did he not do all he could for him. Castaneda admits his father did right by him, but repeats that he was weak, and asks Don Juan why he is "doing all this for," adding they should be talking about plants, because Don Juan is not qualified to pass judgment on him. Don Juan bursts out laughing and tells Castaneda is always angry and righteous.



Don Juan asks, why didn't he go swimming at 6 AM, if he thinks himself stronger than his dad. Castaneda responds that going at that hour was not his idea. Don Juan says that by accepting the idea, it became his. Castaneda says he never accepted it, he knew his father was kidding only himself. Don Juan asks why he never told his father off. Castaneda explains that such a thing was not done in his house. Don Juan asserts he did worse in his house. "The only thing you never did was shine your spirit."

Don Juan deems him is as weak as his father, and asserts that one must be willing to die for any assumed responsibility. Castaneda starts to defend himself but Don Juan cuts him off reiterating about being in a world where death is the hunter. They take off on an afternoon hike, and again Castaneda is impressed by the elder's stamina.



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 6, Becoming A Hunter

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 6, Becoming A Hunter Summary and Analysis

On June 23, 1961, the two meet again and Don Juan states that he feels Castaneda has not changed at all. Castaneda assures that although he finds the changes Don Juan suggests contrary to his way of thinking, he still wants to learn about plants and again, requests to be taught about peyote. Don Juan states that "intentions are not enough." and that to know about "Mescalito" is serious business. He gives Castaneda the strange task of rolling around on the floor of his porch until he finds a "beneficial place or spot." Castaneda falls asleep on a spot on the floor where he "detected a change of coloration on the uniformly dark dirt floor..."

The next morning they go into the desert. Don Juan explains the importance of finding a beneficial spot in the wild. Castaneda wants to discuss peyote, but Don Juan tells him not to bring it up until he does. He returns to the topic of beneficial spots and reminds Castaneda of the time he got very angry when they rested on a hill. Castaneda recalls Don Juan telling him to avoid the spot in the future. Don Juan explains that he was surprised that the crow cawing was not an omen for himself, but for Castaneda. He warns Castaneda that crows are not always around to warn one, and that he must learn to find the right place to rest or camp by himself. He explains to Castaneda that to find the proper place, he must "cross his eyes," as he had to find his spot of rest on his porch. Don Juan is impressed by Castaneda's accomplishment, because the method of crossing the eyes so that each eye sees an image separately, takes years to perfect. It allows one to have a "double perception of the world."

Don Juan urges him to try it and that it does not injure the eyes. They walk an hour while Castaneda practices his eye exercise and ends up with a headache. Don Juan tells Castaneda to find a proper place for them to rest. Castaneda doesn't know what criteria make a place proper. Don Juan tells him to take furtive glances and his eyes will make him "feel" a good resting place. Castaneda does not know what he is supposed to feel. Don Juan can not explain it, but tells him he will know if Castaneda's eyes work. The Indian says it does not matter what he sees, what is important, is how he feels. Castaneda does not "feel" anything. The Indian moves several feet away, while Castaneda attempts to feel with his eyes. The Indian's laughter gets Castaneda angry. It seems the Indian is making fun of him and he feels foolish.

Out of the blue Don Juan charges at Castaneda, and drags him several feet away. He notes the Indian has overexerted himself in the process. The Indian says that Castaneda picked the wrong spot and he had to save him, because the spot he was on was "about to take over my entire feelings." The Indian's charge and explanation strikes Castaneda funny. The Indian tells Castaneda to keep looking for a spot to rest. He does



not feel anything and Don Juan tells him it takes long to train the eyes and he shouldn't be disappointed. Castaneda is not disappointed about what he doesn't understand which is comical in itself. He admits on three occasions he has been angry to the point of illness standing in places Don Juan deems "bad." He asks Don Juan to describe what he should feel. The Indian responds that he can not. He will learn it himself. He can only show the technique.

After a rest, Don Juan decides that Castaneda has a "knack for hunting" and he will focus on teaching him this from now on and adds they are not going to talk about plants, as if they ever had. They proceed on an endless hike in various directions, during which time Don Juan provides all detail about rattle snakes. After telling him about the snakes' habits, he catches kills and roasts the meat of a snake. Castaneda is fascinated watching him proceed. Eating the snake is another matter. It is delicious but nauseates him. Don Juan laughs hysterically watching him.

After a silence, Don Juan asserts that Castaneda's "hunter's spirit has returned" and that he is "hooked" like himself. Castaneda asks if he hunts for a living. The Indian responds that he hunts "in order to live" and explains that hunters see everything in perfect balance. He explains that in killing the snake, he apologized to it for taking its life "suddenly and definitely." He says his own life will end in the same way—suddenly and definitely. Castaneda says he never considered a balance when he hunted. Don Juan suggests that since Castaneda has a touch for hunting, perhaps he will change his way of life. Castaneda says it sounds romantic, but he does not care to hunt. The Indian asserts the best hunters Don't like hunting, but they do it well.

Castaneda insists he does not want to be a hunter. His just wants to learn about plants. Now they are so far off the topic, he is not sure if he even wanted to know about plants. The Indian thinks this is good, because if he is not sure what he wants, he can be more humble. The Indian explains that he did not always live the way he does. He explains that he, himself had guidance. He did not learn all by himself. He had to change and that he is now pointing out the way for Castaneda to change.

Don Juan goes on to say that "once upon a time" a hunter was the best thing a man could be. Castaneda probes to find out of Don' Juan's assertion is some sort of Indian or tribal credo. Don Juan does not answer definitively. The Indian's furtive manner again makes Castaneda ask what he is doing to him. The Indian looks baffled, but responds that he is having a "gesture" with Castaneda. That someday Castaneda will have a "gesture" with someone. He was once like Castaneda. As an Indian he is treated "like a dog," but someone taught him to hunt, and this changed the way he lived. Castaneda insists he is happy with his life. Don Juan begins to sing a Mexican song, and then asks Castaneda if he considers him an equal. The questions flusters Castaneda. He hears a buzzing in his ear. He replies that they are equal. He knows he is being patronizing. He enjoys being with Don Juan, but is proud of his sophisticated university student Westernized status.

Don Juan asserts that they are not alike. He is a "hunter and a warrior" and Castaneda is a "pimp." Castaneda loses his temper. Don Juan affirms that Castaneda is "pimping"



for others and fighting the battles of others. He really doesn't want to learn anything. His world of precise acts, decisions and feelings is superior to what Castaneda calls life. There is no conceit in how the Indian delivers his speech and Castaneda is not angry. He is embarrassed. They stay on the spot, but do not talk for hours. Don Juan's pose is strangely rigid. It frightens Castaneda. He observes the Indian's silhouette blend into the night. "His state of motionlessness was so total this it was as if he did not exist any longer." Castaneda concedes the superiority of Don Juan's world and is moved to tears.



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 7, Being Inaccessible

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 7, Being Inaccessible Summary and Analysis

On June 29, 1961 Don Juan impresses Castaneda with his knowledge of the life and habits of quail. By day's end they catch five. Don Juan sets three free because two are enough. Castaneda jokes how he would have eaten all five. Don Juan contends that if he had, everything, including the shrubs and quail would have united to stop them. Castaneda asks if he is serious. Don Juan explains that he enjoys laughing, but that he is "deadly serious."

It is late, but Don Juan tells Castaneda they must climb to a hilltop and get away from shrubs. He adds not to be afraid because he will protect him. This scares Castaneda. Suddenly Don Juan becomes alert and points at shrubs. "There it is, Look!" Other than a wind gust that makes Castaneda's eyes burn, he sees nothing. Don Juan asserts that he "just felt it" and insists something is there. Don Juan says he thinks it wind, because wind is what Castaneda knows. He pulls eight branches, orders Castaneda to do likewise, and apologizes aloud for injuring the plants. He tells Castaneda to run with his bunch to the hilltop and lie on his back between two large rocks. Speedily, Don Juan covers Castaneda and himself with branches. He whispers how the "so-called wind" stops now that they are not seen. The wind halts, as Don Juan predicts. He whispers not to make noise or move, because what Castaneda calls wind, is an entity with a will of its own.

They stand up but again, Don Juan points to shrubs. Castaneda notes a wind ripple. Don Juan proclaims the entity's return. A gust smacks Castaneda and they repeat the bush-cutting ritual and cover themselves. The wind entity returns many times, dying down each time they hide. Castaneda ascribes the phenomenon to Don Juan's familiarity the region's wind patterns. Don Juan counters that the world is not only what Castaneda thinks it is. He tells Castaneda they must leave the area because this thing can kill them.

The next day on Don Juan's front porch, Castaneda sits on his "spot" writing. They stay home avoiding the "wind," which Don Juan contends they have disturbed. At that moment a gust makes Don Juan stand up. He asserts the wind is looking for Castaneda. Castaneda will not fall for this and he tells Don Juan what wind is. Castaneda provides a meteorological explanation of cold and hot air masses. In baffled tone Don Juan asks if that is all the wind is. "...afraid so." Castaneda enjoys his triumph. Don Juan is perplexed, but starts laughing, and comments on how final Castaneda's opinions then adds that Castaneda's opinions are "pure crap" He contends that when one lives in the wilderness, in the twilight, wind is "power." A hunter acts according to this knowledge. Acting with knowledge means that he uses the power in the wind. He



either makes himself available or not available to the wind. Don Juan explains that he must make himself available at times and unavailable at others. Right now Castaneda is too available. Castaneda argues that he is becoming secretive. Castaneda contends that being unavailable does not involve hiding or secrecy but inaccessibility. .

Castaneda does not understand. Don Juan asserts that he has to take himself away from traffic. Being in the middle of the road everyone sees all he does. Castaneda finds this a riddle. Don Juan starts another Mexican song. Castaneda knows the Indian "clobbers" him every time he sings. Indeed, Don Juan brings up Castaneda's old girlfriend, asking what happened to her. Castaneda has no recall of ever mentioning her to Don Juan. His girl left, for many reasons, he responds. Don Juan says the reason is that Castaneda was too available. It is too bad because she was good for him. Castaneda is angry because this is a touchy subject. He asks Don Juan what he is doing to him. Don Juan explains he has brought up his ex to make a point he tried to make about the wind. He lost her because he was too predictable and within her reach. Castaneda argues that his life is not routine. Don Juan states that his routine is unusual, but still a routine nevertheless.

Don Juan declares that to be a hunter, one has to be inaccessible because being the same day in and day out results in boredom. "You Don't eat five quail. You eat one....You Don't expose yourself to the power of the wind unless it is mandatory. You Don't use and squeeze people until they have shriveled to nothing..."



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 8, Disrupting The Routines Of Life.

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 8, Disrupting The Routines Of Life. Summary and Analysis

On July 16, 1961, the two spend an entire morning observing the habits of water rats. Don Juan points out their speed and agility at escaping danger. He notes their habit after outrunning a predator of stopping on their hind legs to groom themselves. Don Juan shows Castaneda how to make traps, adding that a hunter must observe all eating and nesting habits to decide where to place the traps.

Castaneda is so absorbed making traps, and he loses track of time. Don Juan looks at his wrist pretending to have a watch and announces lunch time. Castaneda readies for lunch. Now Don Juan blows a pretend siren sound announcing lunch is over. This confuses Castaneda, who returns to trap building. Don Juan blows a whistle announcing time to go home. Castaneda puts down his tools and prepares to go. Don Juan now gives a very loud siren sound and says that he is telling the world to go home. The Indian's behavior terrifies Castaneda who thinks he has gone insane.

The point of all that whistling, explains Don Juan, is to show Castaneda the insanity of routines. Castaneda argues that everyone has a routine. Don Juan asserts he does not. Castaneda asks why he is behaving like this. Don Juan asserts that he knows he is worrying about lunch, because he always does at this time even if he is not hungry. He demonstrates that Castaneda is trained to respond to signals. Castaneda argues that his life is less routine than most. Don Juan says that as a hunter one knows the routines of one's prey. To be a hunter one can not have routines. It is to his advantage to be "free, fluid, and unpredictable" and different from his prey. Castaneda thinks this "irrational idealization." He doesn't think anyone can do this. Don Juan says he doesn't care what he thinks because in order to be a good hunter one must disrupt daily routines. Don Juan asserts Castaneda is like prey "easy to predict." The Indian contends he was once this way, and that everyone is exactly like the prey they are after. He advises that a hunter must stop being like prey.

Don Juan says that on occasional one may meet a creature impossible to track. Such a creature happens once in a lifetime. Don Juan asks Castaneda, what he thinks makes such a creature unique. Castaneda has no clue. His response makes Don Juan explain that unpredictability is what makes it "magical." Castaneda argues that a deer must sleep nights. Don Juan says a magical being doesn't sleep at the same time or in the same place, and that perhaps someday he (Castaneda) will encounter a magical animal that he will track "for the rest of your life." The Indian proceeds with a tale for Castaneda of a magical deer he once encountered. Don Juan contends, the deer talked to him. Castaneda wears a smile of disbelief. He thinks Don Juan is kidding him. He tells Don Juan he can't believe this. Don Juan calls it "the darndest thing."



Part One, Stopping The World, Chapter 9, The Last Battle Of Earth

Part One, Stopping The World, Chapter 9, The Last Battle Of Earth Summary and Analysis

On July 24, 1961 Don Juan and Castaneda roam the desert. Don Juan comments that Castaneda has learned much, but that he has not changed. He reiterates that it isn't enough to know how to make or set traps. One has to live like a hunter. The key is to want to change.

Castaneda explains that he is more aware of his actions. He is impressed by Don Juan's methodology, his character and the certainty of his mastery. He concedes that Don Juan does not demand anything of him. The Indian's persistence about change is more a suggestion. Don Juan ways do not strike as useful remedies for his life. To Castaneda, Don Juan's ways would make his life more difficult.

Don Juan hints about the importance of change in saying, that he "has decided to change" his tactics, because a good hunter always changes. Not only must a hunter know the habits of his prey. He must know that there are powers that guide everything. He tells Castaneda that his stubbornness to change is good because it will be better when he suddenly succeeds in doing so. Castaneda insisting he is trying, and Don Juan counters he is not trying at all, and that Castaneda's life is as bad as when they met.

Don Juan asks Castaneda to name something in his life that has "engaged all his thoughts." Castaneda mentions he wanted to be an artist by failed. The Indian contends this because he does not take responsibility, he will never be an artist and he may never be a hunter. Castaneda's mistake, asserts Don Juan, is that he thinks he has "plenty of time," otherwise, he would change. Castaneda asks Don Juan, if he's ever considered that he doesn't want to change. The Indian says, he didn't want to change, but he "didn't like his life." Castaneda tells the Indian the thought of changing is frightening and that the way Don Juan always "calls the shots" makes it "untenable.". Don Juan calls him a fool because this could be his last "battle on earth." Castaneda agrees. Agreement is not enough, he should instead change instantly, Don Juan contends.

Don Juan explains that some people live happily and that the reason is, that they act with awareness that life can end suddenly. Their actions have power. "There is a strange consuming happiness in acting with the full knowledge that whatever one is doing may very well be one's last act on earth. I recommend that you reconsider your life and bring your acts into that light."

Castaneda contradicts Don Juan. Don Juan laughs and throws his hat down and stomps on it. Castaneda laughs. Don Juan reasserts that happy people treat each act as if it is the last "battle on earth." Castaneda admits he is afraid of thinking about death.



Don Juan can't understand why, since everyone is going to die. He contends it's not a matter of worrying, but a matter of linking oneself to one's death, "without remorse, sadness or worry." The idea is to act as if you Don't have time, and treat each act as if it is the last. In this manner one's acts have power. Otherwise they are the acts of a timid person. It is alright to be timid if you are immortal, contends Don Juan. "timidity clings to something that exists only in your thoughts." Castaneda argues it is unnatural to always be thinking of death. He cryptically scares Castaneda by stating he hopes he has time.

Don Juan stands "in a single movement." As Castaneda ponders the Indian's agility, Don Juan tells him to stalk, catch, kill, skin and roast a rabbit "before twilight." He catches a male rabbit which the Indian orders him to kill. Castaneda has never Done such a thing with his bare hands as the Don Juan commands. The Indian says it makes no difference if he has only used guns in the past. The rabbits time has come, he asserts. Castaneda insists he can't do it. The Indian insists the rabbit must die. Castaneda watches the frightened rabbit in its trap and declares he will set the rabbit free. He feels nauseous and kicks the cage and trying to free the rabbit. The cage disintegrates and kills the rabbit instantly and he becomes preoccupied figuring out how it died. He turns, and Don Juan stares at him in a way that fills him with terror. Don Juan whispers that he must skin and roast the rabbit "before twilight." He tells Castaneda the rabbits death is a gift for him, just as his death will be a gift for something else. Castaneda is nauseous and dizzy in identifying with the rabbit. Don Juan tells him he must eat some of its meat and contends that the trap was the rabbit's last battle on earth



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 10, Becoming Accessible to Power

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 10, Becoming Accessible to Power Summary and Analysis

On August 17, 1961, Castaneda does not feel well. He is getting over the effects of ingesting peyote buttons, which the Indian finally allows. Don Juan leads him to sit down. Castaneda does not amplify on the experience other than to recall his interaction with a dog during the hallucinatory effects of the plant. Don Juan explains that the dog was not really a dog, but the spirit of Mescalito, the deity in peyote. Castaneda feels discomfort and unhappiness, which are common after-effects of peyote.

Don Juan tells Castaneda to take notes if it will put him at ease, and comments that he is starting to learn because Mescalito allowed him to play with him. This makes Castaneda is a "chosen man." This perplexes Don Juan since Castaneda is not an Indian, but he will now give him secret knowledge which his "benefactor" gave him to become a "man of knowledge." Castaneda does not want to be chosen, the aftereffects have him uneasy. Don Juan disregards this and tells him to think of how Mescalito played with him and things will come easy. He tells Castaneda he will teach him to be a "warrior." This does not guarantee he will turn into a warrior, much the way he didn't turn into a hunter. Castaneda complains about weird dreams. Don Juan tells him the dreams are unimportant. It is time for Castaneda to become accessible to power.

Castaneda he must become "accessible to power" by tackling his dreams. A warrior regards dreams as real. Castaneda asks Don Juan if he means, "he takes his dreams as being reality?" The Indian responds that yes, and for a warrior dreaming is comparatively "more real." He tells him in dreams, one can change things; and find out "countless concealed facts; you can control whatever you want."

Castaneda can't believe he takes dreams as reality. The Indian makes some gruel, and Castaneda asks what he calls it. The Indian says he calls it eating. Castaneda says he calls it reality because it is taking place. Don Juan counters that dreaming also takes place. After the meal, they go for a hike to visit places, where Castaneda will make himself accessible to power. Castaneda is afraid. Don Juan tells him not to "indulge" in fear. They walk a long time into a canyon and sit under the shade of a boulder. The Indian tells Castaneda to sit in a "prominent" place. They climb a boulder and instead of staying by Castaneda, the Indian hands him dry meat and tells him it is power meat and must be chewed slowly and moves to the shade while Castaneda eats. Don Juan makes a dramatic show for Castaneda, who observes the Indian sitting rigidly for hours and then hops up with amazing sudden ease, while Castaneda's young muscles are stiff.



The Indian decides to go back to his house, but tells Castaneda to follow three paces behind. He follows Don Juan who meanders and crisscrosses the area without explanation. Back on his porch, Don Juan provides more dry meat for Castaneda to consume. They fall asleep.

On August 19th, they return to the canyon. They make themselves "available to the spirits by being noisy." This is followed by a silence that lasts hours. They climb the mountain and Don Juan picks a rest spot telling him they must wait until dusk and that Castaneda should behave as natural as possible, because the spirit is out there lurking. It comes out at dusk, and they must keep talking because the human voice attracts spirits.

The Indian tells Castaneda that this will be his first "trial" in dealing with "power." It will be difficult for Castaneda to fathom what he witnesses, explains Don Juan, and describes power as a serious thing, even if one doesn't think it exists. He asks Castaneda if he understands. Castaneda says yes, but feels ridiculous. He hardly follows. Don Juan explains "setting up dreaming" and tells him to look at his hands in his dreams tonight. Castaneda finds this funny. Don Juan says it's no joke. "Dreaming is as serious as seeing or dying or any other thing in this awesome, mysteries world." Castaneda asks for pointers. The Indian says he can't do that because everyone is different, and tells him just to look at his hands. He elaborates that when you look at things in dreams, they change shape. Castaneda argues that he doesn't feel like acting like a madman.

As it gets dark, Don Juan says they must walk until "the spirit of the waterhole shows itself." He stops and becomes rigid and remains standing limply. Castaneda cannot figure how he remains standing with muscles so relaxed. A gust of wind hits Castaneda. Don Juan's body suddenly faces the wind at complete attention. Castaneda is stunned by the level of Don Juan's concentration. The Indian shivers as if splashed with cold water, and then walks on as if nothing. Castaneda follows him up a hill where he turns west. Don Juan stares intently at a cave, and suddenly points to an object on the ground, exclaiming, "there!" The object looks like a dog curled up. Castaneda tells Don Juan he sees a dog. The Indian says it is too large for a dog. Castaneda walks closer, but the Indian stops him. It looks like a breathing curled up animal. It appears to be dying. The animal looks threatening. It growls. Don Juan suggests they "run for their lives." At the Indian's signal, they stop. Don Juan says he thinks the animal died.

They approach the animal, and the sight horrifies Castaneda. It is a mammal with a beak. He can't believe he is seeing this. Suddenly Castaneda knows what the animal is. He laughs thinking his realization impresses Don Juan. It is a large branch from a bush. The Indian heads up for the cave, and Castaneda follows. Don Juan tells him he wasted the power that turned a twig into a living being. What he should have done was follow the power until the world he knows ceased to exist. Castaneda apologizes. Don Juan explains this is much like sustaining the sight of something when dreaming.

Don Juan tells Castaneda to stay silent but awake all night, while he talks. He explains that the spirit knows his voice, and it may be subdued by its sound and leave them



alone. He talks about becoming accessible to power. Power can lead to death and thus should be treated with care. This is done "systematically but always with caution." It involves making one's presence known with loud talk or noise, followed by a complete prolonged silence. Making noise followed by prolonged silence are marks of a warrior. He tells Castaneda had he held the sight of the animal longer, he would have been able to "stop the world." Castaneda whispers what stopping the world means. Don Juan gives him a terrible look, but explains it is a technique used by those who hunt for power. The technique makes the world as we know it "collapse."



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 11, The Mood Of A Warrior

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 11, The Mood Of A Warrior Summary and Analysis

This extensive chapter begins on August 31 with Castaneda and Don taking a long drive to a place of power. They drive seventy miles and turn into a dirt road until they reach mountainous slopes and park the car out of view. Don Juan picks a place to sleep, and demands complete silence.

The next day they climb a rock conglomerate and Don Juan explains it to be a place of power where warriors were long ago buried. A crow flies over them, cawing. Castaneda asks if they are going to spend the night. Don Juan says he intended to, but the crow advises against it. Castaneda asks where warriors bones are buried. Don Juan clarifies that it is not a cemetery. No bones are buried there. What he means is warriors buried themselves for a night or two or for whatever time served their purpose.

He leads Castaneda down saying that he planned to bury Castaneda all night, but it is not the time since he does not have power. Instead, he will bury him a short period. Thoughts of being buried make Castaneda nervous. Don Juan collects branches but does not let Castaneda help. He makes Castaneda lie down with his head facing east. He encases him from the shoulders down in a cage of branches. Don Juan explains that a warrior builds his own cage, slips inside and seals it from inside. Castaneda asks why they bury themselves. Don Juan replies, "For enlightenment and for power." Castaneda feels peace and satisfaction in the cage. Don Juan silences him. In the quiet, Castaneda ponders his life and becomes sad. He tells Don Juan he doesn't deserve to be there. Don Juan threatens to cover his head with dirt if he keeps talking in that vein.

Castaneda continues lamenting and Don Juan drags him out and sings a lyric that parallels Castaneda's laments. At first, Castaneda feels Don Juan is sympathetic, but soon sees the Indian hiding a smile. He re-sings the song with a sarcastic slant. He tells Castaneda he likes the song because in his life he does nothing but find flaws and laments everything. He feels like the leaf in the song. Don Juan tells him, he is there with him because he has made the decision to be there, and that he cannot blame the wind.

Don Juan disassembles the cage and returns everything to where it was leaving no trace it was ever built. Castaneda is impressed, but Don Juan says a good hunter will detect they've been there "because the tracks of men cannot be completely erased." Don Juan tells him how a warrior buries himself to find power and not to wallow in self pity. Castaneda starts to explain, but don Juan cuts him off saying he pulled him out because the place could resent his mood and injure him. Self-pity doesn't go with power. A warrior controls himself and abandons himself simultaneously. Don Juan



asserts that there is no point in talking about this because he is still weak. An hour passes in silence.

Don Juan asks Castaneda how he's doing with dreaming exercises. Castaneda reports he has practiced and it is like entertainment. He finds it "relatively easy to sustain the image of my hands." His dreams are vivid and he writes down details. Don Juan asserts that vividness is not important, it creates a barrier. Castaneda is worse off, because he writes it down and he should stop doing it. It distracts from the purpose of dreaming. He tells Castaneda the procedure involves looking at his hands to start. This is followed by shifting his gaze to other items with brief glances. Focus on up to four items, and return to the hands. Each time he visits his hands he renews the power for dreaming. Don Juan says after he masters that, he will add to the technique.

Don Juan looks at the sky and decides its time to go. They come upon a valley between two hills. Don Juan says they may have to spend the night. He sniffs the air like an animal. This is a way to find out where water is and urges Castaneda to imitate him. Castaneda gets dizzy but his nostrils detect river willows. At the river, Don Juan mentions the place is full of mountain lions. Castaneda asks if they have to be there. Ordinarily, he would avoid the area, but the crow pointed this way. He will show Castaneda to hunt for lions, using water rats as bait, in case someday he needs to catch a mountain lion for its special powers.. Don Juan constructs a trap speedily made of sharp hidden spikes. The spikes pierce whatever hits the trap. He explains he does not plan to hurt a lion. He orders him up a tree and to be on the alert to hit the cat with a bundle of rocks after he drops his. He warns him not to fall off the limb and merge with the leaves.

Castaneda cannot see. It is dark and the rodents are loud. He hears muffled steps and sees a huge animal. The rodents stop their noise. The lion charges the trap, but something hits it before reaching it. Following Don' Juan's order, Castaneda drops his bundle and Don Juan lets out penetrating yells and the cat runs away. Don Juan keeps the piercing noise going and tells him to imitate him. Castaneda is embarrassed but realizing the danger he joins in making noise. Castaneda follows Don Juan closely on the trail until they return to the car and the Indian laughs at him.



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 12, A Battle Of Power

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 12, A Battle Of Power Summary and Analysis

Don Juan and Castaneda drive to the mountains. Don Juan tells Castaneda to stick close and not take chances. They are going in search of power. Castaneda asks what specifically they will do. Don Juan explains there is no set plan, but he must be in a state of constant readiness. Power commands and obeys, Don Juan explains, adding, that a warrior stores power. Castaneda asks how power is stored. Don Juan says it is a personal thing. Castaneda cannot understand how power is stored through a feeling.

He alerts Castaneda to watch wind shifts and use him as a shield to protect himself. He gives Castaneda eight pieces of dry meat to hang from his neck as power food, explaining that it came from an animal that had power. They hike in silence and Castaneda finds chewing the meat invigorating. His body detects wind changes in a surprising way. They climb a plateau and are almost on top of the mountain taking on some precarious rocks and see a cave. Don Juan asserts it is safe to camp there. Castaneda is impressed by Don Juan's agility. He jokingly asks the Indian how old he is, who replies he is as young as he wants to be, because when power is stored the body can do amazing things.

Don Juan tells Castaneda to make a wall of rocks, while he makes a roof from branches. When done, they both sit cross-legged. He whispers to Castaneda to act normal, and tells him to write as if he is at his desk at home without a care. When he nudges him, he should look where he points with his eyes, but warns Castaneda not to say a single word. Don Juan can speak because he is immune and known to the power in the mountains.

Castaneda immerses in writing for over an hour. He feels Don Juan tap his arm. His eyes move to a bank of fog two hundred yards away. Don Juan whispers for him to move his eyes "back and forth along the bank of the fog." Castaneda does so for over a half hour. He notices that when he looks directly at a green patch, he doesn't see it. When he looks without focusing, he sees a greenish area. He points it out to Don Juan. Don Juan tells him to "look without blinking until you see."

He continues to focus. The fog reveals what appears to be an unsupported bridge. "... the mirage became so complete that I could actually distinguish the darkness of the part under the bridge proper, as opposed to the light sandstone color of its side." He is stunned and the hallucinated bridge expands. He feels Don Juan shaking him. His eyes itch and Don Juan pours water on his eyes. The sensation is unpleasant. He is feverish. Don Juan gives him water to drink. There is a prolonged cry from a bird. Don Juan



pushes the rocks off the wall and dismantles the roof, and tells Castaneda to drink water and chew more meat. They can not stay there. That cry was not from a bird.

They climb down but it is so dark, Castaneda cannot see at all. He can not understand how Don Juan is walking, he holds on to his arm as if blind. Don Juan drags him. He is disoriented and believes he is on the edge of a precipice he might fall off and leans to his right. Don Juan moves a way and lets him falls on the ground. This reorients his balance. Don Juan tells him to crawl into a nearby cave. Lightening illuminates the scenery. Don Juan states that the fog and lightening are "in cahoots" with one each other. The lightening illuminates his surroundings and they are in a pine forest with trees as tall as redwoods. Don Juan tells him to be vigilant because he is witnessing a battle of power. After watching the lightening for a long while, don Juan tells him to concentrate on the thunder and to follow the sound and figure out the direction it comes from. The fog lifts and the electrical storm is distant. It begins to pour and Castaneda leans against the rock. His hat protects him from rain. Only his feet get wet. He falls asleep.

When he awakens, he is alone. His surroundings almost "paralyze" him. He is completely soaked. He has not been in a cave at all, but under thick bushes. The land is flat. There are no trees and no valley. Where he had seen a path in a forest there is only a bush. He cannot believe what he witnesses. He is confused. "The incongruence of my two versions of reality made me grapple for any kind of explanation." He thinks that Don Juan carried him somewhere without waking him.

He calls for don Juan, who has a mischievous smile. Castaneda is full of questions and gives every detail of his night-long hallucinations. Instead of responding, don Juan tells him to compose himself while he goes off to get some plants. Castaneda works on his notes and feels more relaxed. He calls out for Don Juan, who answers from the top of the mountain and tells him to join him. When he reaches him, Don Juan sits on a very smooth rock. He opens the gourds, eats and hands Castaneda food. Castaneda is full of questions. Don Juan urges him to sit on the flat slab, because it as a power object and he will feel better after sitting on it. He adds that Castaneda is being careless by being morose. If he continues, the power may turn against them and not let them leave alive.

Don Juan urges Castaneda to eat more meat, and Castaneda considers perhaps the meat has psychotropic qualities, thus the hallucinating. Don Juan laughs at the idea, but doesn't exactly answer, and criticizes Castaneda's constant need for explanation. The meat has power. It is the dry meat of a deer, which was a gift to him similar to the way the rabbit was a gift to him, contends Don Juan. Castaneda had an encounter with power, he asserts. The fog, the dark, lightening, the rain were part of a battle of power. Castaneda asserts it could not be a battle of power because it was not real. Don Juan asks what is real. Castaneda responds, "This, what we're looking at is real." Don Juan contends the bridge was real too. Castaneda asks where it is then. Don Juan response is if he had power, he could call it back. He can't do so because he doubts and asserts "There are worlds upon worlds right here I front of us. And they are nothing to laugh at.'



The remainder of this chapter is a back and forth discussion between Don Juan, who contends that other worlds are accessible through stored power, and Castaneda, who cannot fathom what he experienced beyond hallucination, and therefore not real. Still Don Juan recommends that if Castaneda encounters fog, he doesn't enter the area by himself. He infers Castaneda may need to sustain himself in a battle of power. He cannot explain the scenes Castaneda saw, because they are Castaneda's scenes, not his. Don Juan tells him not to worry so much trying to figure it out, because the world is a mystery. Don Juan contends that if he had followed all his instructions, he would have been able to stop the world. Castaneda asks why he would want to do this. Don Juan responds that it just happens. Once it happens, you see the reason.

Castaneda encounters another battle of power before leaving the mountain on that outing. Fog is encountered again in surreal fashion. Don Juan saves him, making him run downhill.



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 13, A Warrior's Last Stance

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 13, A Warrior's Last Stance Summary and Analysis

On January 28, 1962, Don Juan announces a trip to a special place to search for power. They take off in Castaneda's car with nets and food, and arrive in the dark. They park behind a huge rock, which hides his car from view. It is dark, Castaneda cannot see. They hike in darkness to a special place to see if Castaneda is able to hunt for power. Castaneda asks Don Juan if he fails, will he still teach him. Don Juan explains they are looking for an omen. If an omen doesn't come, it means Castaneda is not able to hunt power. If this is so, Don Juan tells Castaneda he will be free to be as stupid as he wants to be, but he will continue to be his friend.

He assures Castaneda not to worry, an omen will come, as if Castaneda wants an omen. He whispers that because they are on a "walk for power, everything counts." Castaneda must walk in his footsteps so that power from Don Juan is transmitted to him. He lines Castaneda behind him and tells him to "match his footsteps" without getting distracted. Castaneda follows his steps, until he looks aside and steps on don Juan, who warns if he does it again, he'll have to walk barefoot. Castaneda tracks him through sand, hard terrain and climbing. At one AM, they take a break and line up again. The next long stretch requires hard concentration to monitor Don Juan's faster pace. He can't feel his legs and doesn't notice daylight. Don Juan jumps aside and lets Castaneda's momentous stride carry him forward. Castaneda is exhausted and falls. Don Juan twirls him so his head faces east to regain strength. He recovers and stands.

Don Juan points to a bush which Castaneda can use to relieve his muscles. Castaneda sees the plant up the hill, but when he reaches the area, it is not there. Don Juan insists it is. Castaneda sees a barren area and calls having seen it a mistake. Don Juan says it is no mistake because he saw it, insisting the plant is there. Castaneda debates that it was a mirage. Don Juan tells him he'll find the plant if he walks on the other side. They find the bush, and Don Juan smiles victorious.

Castaneda becomes sleepy and Don Juan tells him to use the technique of looking without focusing to find a resting spot. He does, and Don Juan uses bushes to "sweep" a circle around the spot where Castaneda will sleep. He picks up surface rocks and lines the rocks in size order around the circle and tells Castaneda, that they are not rocks, but strings to hold him "suspended." Don tells him not go in the circle, but to follow his instructions with full concentration. The task is long and tedious, and when completed, he is exhausted. Don Juan gives him some leaves to place in his umbilical region. With these, he will be warm without a blanket, don Juan assures.



Castaneda awakens feeling energetic and happy. Don Juan is not around and he panics momentarily as he has no clue how to find his car. He lies down on his bed and all apprehension vanishes. He feels an inexplicable joy that makes him weep. He'd have stayed there forever had Don Juan not pulled him up. Don Juan tells him to observe the scenery, and affix it in his mind because, "This is your spot." He found it by "seeing" and whether he likes it or not, he will now hunt for power. Everything on the hilltop, including worms, rocks and greenery is "Castaneda's." According to Don Juan, it is the place where he will store power. He suddenly jumps and orders him to "trot" on the spot he stands. Castaneda jogs feels a "copperish warmth." He feels as if he's going to fly. Don Juan's grip sobers him. Don Juan explains to Castaneda is clearly a night creature, while he (Don Juan) is a night person. Castaneda begins to question him, but Don Juan cuts him off to inquire about his progress with dreaming.

Castaneda reports he has dreamt of his school and friends' houses. Don Juan reiterates to Castaneda to concentrate on specific objects in order to be successful. From those objects he should return to his hands. For now, Don Juan insists Castaneda place full attention on everything that exists on the hilltop, "because it is the most important place in your life." They will visit the hill until Castaneda is "saturated" with it, because it will be the place of his "last dance." He explains that a warrior is obliged to return to his place to store power, awake and in dreaming. He explains that every warrior also has a dance or stance of power which he performs until death overtakes. Don Juan states that he can show him an initial movement, but all others steps, he will learn on his own. During Castaneda's last dance, Don Juan predicts the hill will tremble, before he dies.



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 14, The Gait Of Power

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 14, The Gait Of Power Summary and Analysis

On April 8, 1962 the two are together again, and Castaneda inquires if death is a "personage." Don Juan responds that a man of knowledge "sees" or perceives death witnessing. He has seen his own death watching him and has "danced to it as though I were dying." Death did not point at him, thus his time was not up. He explains that death is not a person but a presence. Further discussing death, Castaneda wants to know if death is reflected by a person's culture. Don Juan contends that upbringing doesn't play into it and that only personal power determines how one sees death. Personal power is a feeling, such as "feeling lucky" or a mood. It is acquired despite one's origin. The hard part of hunting for power is being convinced. One needs to believe in personal power and its storage. Castaneda says he is convinced. Don Juan laughs and says he doesn't need humoring. To be convinced means you do it on your own, and he has only begun. Don Juan tells Castaneda reminds him of himself. He did not want to be a warrior. When one realizes one is wrong, makes a world of difference and conviction.

Castaneda asks to know what a man of knowledge is. Don Juan responds that he is one who has unraveled "the secrets of personal power." He breaks up the conversation asserting, they have a long journey ahead and are going to another place of power.

Instead of taking the car, they go into the desert chaparral behind Don Juan's home. They climb the low slopes of the Sierra Madre mountains. Don Juan signals for Castaneda to sit beside him on a rock. There is no plan to hunting power, Don Juan explains when Castaneda asks what they will be doing. A warrior acts as if he has a plan, trusting his personal power. This trust will assist in behaving appropriately. Castaneda wants to know why Don Juan hunts for personal power if he already has it. Don Juan responds that the one hunting it now is Castaneda. They climb higher. It is steep and tiring for Castaneda, who notes Don Juan's unending stamina. He is does not break a sweat after conquering an "almost vertical" slope. Don Juan laughs observing Castaneda on his back, perspiring and his heart "about to burst." Castaneda comments on his agility, and Don Juan says he's been directing his attention to it. He is not old, and "the secret is not in what you do to yourself, but rather in what you don't do."

despite Castaneda's insistence he explain what he should not do Don Juan changes the subject and tells him to find a spot, squinting his eyes until his vision blurs. Castaneda proceeds scanning the area in a spiral. Don Juan stops him and tells him he is letting his tendency for routines take over. He is covering the area "systematically" in such a way he'll never perceive his spot.



Don Juan gives him some leaves and tells him to place them in his abdominal area, and to press them against his body with his hands while lying on his back. He is to close his eyes, not lose the leaves, and focus on a feeling of warmth from the leaves. Lying motionless Castaneda starts to feel heat from the leaves. The heat spreads to his entire body in a way that he feels as if he has a temperature. He reports this to Don Juan, who tells him not to open his eyes. He helps him stand, tells him to keep pressing the leaves to his stomach until he finds his suitable spot. The heat becomes a warmth as he stops at a sandstone ledge, he finds it beautiful. Don Juan pats his back. He has fulfilled his task.

According to Don Juan Castaneda continues to gather power without realizing it or wanting it. On a conscious level he is just as naïve as the day he began, asking continuous questions of the Indian and never understanding. Don Juan is patient in that he knows his apprentice is not at his level of knowledge. Throughout, one can't deny the extraordinary visions and sensations Castaneda reports, if one is to believe him. Don Juan pushes him almost over the edge by posing terrifying possibilities and real dangers which may well be imagined. What is real and what isn't constantly comes into question. As usual, Don Juan speaks in ways that scare Castaneda.

In complete darkness, the two take off into the mountain wilderness. Don Juan tells Castaneda that he walks like a crippled old woman. He shows him a special way to walk that he calls "the gait of power." The gait strikes Castaneda as hazardous in the dark. The old man runs in black darkness, while he thinks it suicidal to run like that on a mountain. After hours of trepidation attempting to master the "gait of power," Don Juan shoves Castaneda into the. Don Juan runs off and indicates his location using a raspy owl imitations for Castaneda can find him. He succeeds, but is exhausted. Now Don Juan decides it is time to leave, and asserts they must use the gait of power to go back, or they could be mowed down by evil mountain entities. He explains if he gets far ahead of him he will indicate his location with his owl whistle, however he warns Castaneda to be wary of a higher sweeter whistle that is not his. In the course of using the gait of power to return to the car, Don Juan gets way ahead of Castaneda several times, using his owl call. Castaneda becomes terrified upon hearing the high sweet melodious whistle which Don Juan warns him against. Something runs beside him and it is not Don Juan. Something black seems to be at his left. It turns into something that looks like a black door and he feels his curiosity pulling him toward it. Don Juan's desperate whistle stops him from entering the hallucinated door. Don Juan takes him back to the sandstone ledge and tells him to act natural as if nothing has happened and work on his writing. Don Juan explains to Castaneda the secret of a having a strong body he alluded to earlier as not being "in what you do to it but in what you don't do..."

Don Juan orders Castaneda to sit there and "not do" and takes Castaneda's notebook and throws it into the bushes. He orders Castaneda to sit there and look at the bush, but not to focus on the leaves but on the shadows of the leaves. Castaneda becomes involved in the shadows of the leaves to the point that he groups the shadows as he would normally do the leaves. This turns enjoyable for him and Don Juan explains that the body likes things like this. He tells him to find his notebook and Castaneda finds it instantly. Don Juan explains this is so because he spent hours "not doing."



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 15, Not Doing

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 15, Not Doing Summary and Analysis

At Don Juan's, he tells Castaneda to work on his notes as if nothing has happened. He explains they must distance themselves from entities which have affected Castaneda. Because Castaneda may become deathly ill, they must go to Castaneda's "place of predilection to be cleansed and restored" as precaution. They arrive at the hilltop and Don Juan preps a bed of branches, and gives Castaneda leaves to place on his stomach. Castaneda enters a state of joy and well being. The peace arouses emotions about his past. He talks about his evil to others. Don Juan agrees that he does not like himself, and recommends that he drop the remorse, because "to isolate one's acts as being mean or ugly, or evil is to place an unwarranted importance on the self." He tells Castaneda that this mood he tends to lapse into is like a trap door. The trick is to focus on making himself strong as opposed to miserable. Castaneda focuses on the warmth of the sun as guided by Don Juan, who tells him that soon he will learn about "not doing."

On April 12, they reach the desert near "lava mountains." Don Juan tells Castaneda to affix his eyes on a yellowish formation on the mountain. With gazed affixed, Castaneda gets the impression that the mountain is moving. This bothers his stomach and he stands up quickly. From a standing position the yellow formation appears lower. Don Juan orders him to sit. While his eyes are still focused on the yellow mass, he realizes he's been looking a yellow piece of cloth hanging from a cactus. Don Juan takes the piece of cloth and folds it, asserting that the cloth has power.

On April 13, they head for the mountains. Don Juan attempts to explain the difference between doing and "not doing." His explanation is incomprehensible to Castaneda, who keeps asking for clarification. Don Juan uses a rock as an example. "To look at it is doing, but to see is not doing." Castaneda is confused. Don Juan gives him a pebble. He is to pick out the holes and depressions in it. Don Juan laughs at Castaneda's perplexity. He explains that "doing" makes him separate the pebble from a larger boulder. "If you want to learn not-doing, let's say that you have to join them." He tells Castaneda to think of the pebble's shadow on the boulder as glue that binds them. Castaneda studies the pebble's shadow on the rock and notices that its movement is like glue oozing. He reports this to Don Juan who calls it a good start. He tells Castaneda to bury the pebble because watching it for as long as he has, the pebble has absorbed him. Castaneda asks if this is true. Don Juan responds that it does not matter and begins another explanation about perceptions of truth and falseness, contending that "a warrior acts in both instances."



Don Juan guides Castaneda through other optical illusions that give Castaneda glimpses of comprehension. Don Juan attempts to explain that in daylight, "shadows are the doors of not-doing." Castaneda laughs out of nervousness. Don Juan scolds him for "knowing the doing of scorn." Castaneda explains he does not mean it as scorn, he is just incompetent. Don Juan tells him that for the next eight days, he should tell himself the complete opposite, that he is not ugly or rotten or incompetent.



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 16, The Ring of Power

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 16, The Ring of Power Summary and Analysis

On April 14, food is running low and Don Juan says they must leave. Instead of heading home, they visit a border town because Don Juan has business to take care of. He is in the process of giving Castaneda another exercise for "not-doing," and they meet four young Indians who are sorcerer's apprentices and acquainted with Don Juan. Don Juan and Castaneda gather around a fire, which Don Juan builds. Don Juan goes behind a boulder leaving the men to talk. The fire blazes as he reappears in what looks to be a pirate's costume with peg leg and all. Castaneda finds this amusing and Don Juan goes back behind the boulder. Castaneda comments about Don Juan's pirate getup and the other Indians are confused. One says Don Juan was wearing a long black tunic. Another saw him wearing a sombrero, a poncho and holding a basket. Another said he was dressed like a gentleman who'd gotten off a horse and wore leggings, spurs and lashed a whip with his left hand.

Don Juan returns from behind the boulder and summons Castaneda to go on their way. They exchange embraced farewells with the Indians. Castaneda feels a chill down his spine and Don Juan warns him not to turn around because now the Indian's are "now shadows." Castaneda is terrified at implications of what he just witnessed and Don Juan urges him to jog in the gait of power, and they do so for hours and rest.

On April 15th, they reach the border town to eat in a restaurant. Castaneda asks about the disguises. Don Juan says it was a little bit of "not-doing." He says that the young men, like Castaneda do not know enough about "not-doing," and contends that an explanation will not make sense to him. Castaneda insists he try and explain. Don Juan says that each person is born with a ring of power and each ring is linked to every one else's. "In other words our rings of power are hooked to the doing of the world in order to make the world." Castaneda wants an example. Don Juan contends that his and Castaneda's rings of power are "making this room... Our rings of power are spinning this room into being at this very moment." He contends that a man of knowledge develops another ring that is hooked to not-doing. Castaneda contends he is only wants an explanation for the pirates costume. Don Juan laughs, saying that he's already explained. All he did was hook his ring of power to Castaneda's, and Castaneda saw a pirate. Castaneda lapses into doubt wondering if Don Juan and the Indians didn't set him up. He feels exhausted, and tells Don Juan he is not qualified to be a sorcerer.



Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 17, A Worthy Opponent

Part One, Stopping The World: Chapter 17, A Worthy Opponent Summary and Analysis

Castaneda recalls a confrontation he had a month earlier with a sorceress known as "la Catalina." Castaneda never fully amplifies how or why the confrontation terrifies him. Don Juan apparently tricked him into confronting her for the purpose of finding Castaneda a worthy opponent. He expresses anger at having been tricked into the situation by Don Juan, but Don Juan explains that as Castaneda's benefactor, it is up to him to take him to "the brink."

On December 11, 1962, Castaneda is setting traps because Don Juan wants him to catch an exceptional animal whose flesh he can dry and use as power food. Don Juan senses that la Catalina is interfering with Castaneda's hunting. Don Juan asserts they must wait for an omen to know what to do with the woman who is interfering with Castaneda.

At night, in the chaparral, Don Juan shows Castaneda how to do a dance that thumps like a rabbit. He has him start and stop the thumping repeatedly. Out of the blackness something flies down in front of Castaneda scaring him. He rationalizes it as being something like a kite, but concedes it did look like a woman leaping at him.

The following day, Don Juan goes off on an errand and Castaneda visits a Yaqui community to see some friends. He stays with an Indian named Blas. He witnesses an argument a storekeeper is having with Julio, a traveling sales man, in front of a store. A party is planned to celebrate the feast of Guadalupe and they are fighting over the rental of a phonograph and records. The argument is resolved and the party starts. Castaneda buys drinks for everyone, but it annoys the town partygoers that he is not drinking or dancing. They bully him, insisting he drink and dance the twist. They gather around the girl who plays the records to find the right one for him to dance. As they embroil in the record search, Castaneda gets away and passes several people on the dark street. He notices someone squatting, and says hello as the figure stands. The figure begins walking and he becomes terrified. The figure of a woman hops beside him as if on one leg at an unnatural speed. He rushes into Blas' house horrified. His friend explains it away as towns' folks teasing strangers.

When he recounts his experience to Don Juan the next day, Don Juan is worried. He should have been suspicious the moment he saw movement to his left and should have stood up to his opponent, don Juan contends. He says this is his third time with his opponent, and she "almost bagged" him. Castaneda is terrified and tells don Juan the game he is playing is cruel. Don Juan warns that Castaneda must be on the look out from now on because she could tap him on his left shoulder at any given moment. Don



Juan seems amused by the fact that Castaneda is so afraid, yet at the same time he tells him that he is in a "terrible bind," which scares him further. Castaneda's only defense is to stay put and do his thumping dance. Don Juan suggests they drive to la Catalina's house to "confirm her shape." Sure enough after parking across from her white house, the woman comes to the door to observe them. It is the same woman who hopped by his side the previous night. Don Juan concludes that to survive La Catalina's attacks, Casatneda will have to use all that he has taught.



Part Two, Journey to Ixtlan: Chapter 18, The Sorcerer's Ring Of Power

Part Two, Journey to Ixtlan: Chapter 18, The Sorcerer's Ring Of Power Summary and Analysis

Castaneda starts this second part nine years later, in May of 1971 describing it as the last time he visits Don Juan. A friend, and fellow sorcerer named Don Genaro is with Don Juan. Castaneda reports a prior encounter with don Genaro and fears him. His attempts to "stop the world," with don Genaro, not amplified here, were "disastrous." The sorcerer who is around the same age as Don Juan is clowning for the apparent discomfort of Castaneda and to the delight of Don Juan, who laughs hysterically over his friend's antics with in-joked understanding, Don Genaro lies on the floor making swimming motions and actually scoots all around on his stomach as if on ball bearings, in a way defiant to nature.

Don Juan reminds Castaneda of the time he mentally jammed his car so that he could not start it. Now, Don Juan asserts that Don Genaro can do something better and will "take the car away." Don Genaro announces that "it's done!" Don Juan invites Castaneda to go and take a look at his car. The older men walk approximately seven feet in front of Castaneda. They make strange movements with their hands as if pulling strings. They reach the hilltop, and look down to where Castaneda always parks his car. The car is not there. Castaneda paid it a visit earlier to retrieve a notebook. He remembers locking the doors and windows because of flying insects. He sees the car nowhere, but refuses to believe it. Don Juan asks Genaro where the car went. Don Genaro says he drove it away, and makes the sound of a motor pantomiming driving it. The imitation is so perfect that even Castaneda laughs. Castaneda is too perplexed and gets angry and then is ashamed of his anger. His mood changes again, and he feels inexplicably good.

The older Indians laugh going through ludicrous motions trying to find the car. They pick up small rocks and look under them. They make a show to move a giant boulder. They work hard, sweating and struggling and engage Castaneda to help them. They move the boulder and look under it, to find no car. Castaneda knows they are testing him. They want him to "see." He feels an array of strange emotions. As always he reverts to thoughts that Don Juan and Genaro have conspired to trick him and hired people to lift the car. He realizes this ridiculous. Don Genaro leads them into the brush searching for the car. He attaches a string to make a kite from his hat. He flies the hat like a kite, defying Castaneda's experience with the aero-dynamics of kite shapes.

The hat bobs in the air and a childhood memory engulfs Castaneda. He is unaware of the passage of time. Don Genaro yells and the hat falls on his car. He has the impression that the hat turned into his car as it landed, but prefers to think that the hat landed on his car. "Don't fight it," Don Juan yells at Castaneda, who feels strange, as if



"something is about to surface." He runs to the car to examine it. Don Juan orders him to "stop the world." He gets in the driver's seat and the old men into the back seats. He feels sick to his stomach as he drives. The old men howl like kids as he drives back home. It is hard to tell if he succeeds in "stopping the world," because Don Juan thanks him for a "smooth ride" in a way that can be taken both as congratulatory and sarcastic. Castaneda falls asleep while they laugh.



Part Two, Journey to Ixtlan: Chapter 19, Stopping The World

Part Two, Journey to Ixtlan: Chapter 19, Stopping The World Summary and Analysis

The following day Castaneda wakes up full of questions. Castaneda insists that he is ruled by logic and that needing explanations is "like a disease" for him. Don Juan contends that Castaneda now has to use all the "not-doing" to stop the world which he has taught him. He must go alone to the mountains and stay until "his body tells (him) to quit." Castaneda asks what to do once there. Don Juan says he will not answer anymore questions. Castaneda drives on southeasterly roads he's previously taken with Don Juan. He parks and hikes on a familiar trail.

Once on a plateau, he has no idea of what to do. He experiences several sensations, including a diminishment of thoughts, followed by annoyance. He comes to a flat rock. He feels comforted and sits down. He meanders and returns to the safe rock and sleeps. The next day, he climbs a higher plateau, isn't sure what to do, and considers returning to Don Juan's. He lies down and sees a beetle carrying a load. He is not sure if the insect sees him, and compares the insect's world to his. They live in the same world but it is not the same for both of them, he concludes. He notices a flicker on a rock at his left. He turns and sees a shadow, and gets a strange feeling. The shadow melts to the ground and he gets a chill. Heeding Don Juan's words, he knows that death is watching him. The beetle comes out of a hole inches from his face and looks at Castaneda, who contends that it becomes aware of him, the way that he is aware of his death. He realizes that he is no different from the beetle. "Our death made us equal."

He is overwhelmed and begins to weep. Don Juan is right. It is a mysterious world we all live in. He thinks he sees a man several yards away, and hears a roar like of a distant plane. He strains to spot the man, but the sun is too bright. He sees a coyote near the spot he thought he saw the man. It turns in his direction and he yells to scare it, and considers throwing stones in case it is rabid. He realizes it is a very calm coyote that comes to a halt four feet away. "Its brown eyes are friendly and clear." Castaneda sits down and the coyote is next to him. He asks it how it is doing and before he can ponder things, the coyote, responds not in voiced words like a human, but with a "feeling." It responds, "I'm all right, thank you." Castaneda jumps but the animal remains calm, and asks why Castaneda is afraid, and what he is doing there. Castaneda responds that he is "there to stop the world." The coyote responds "Que bueno" in Spanish. Castaneda realizes it is a bilingual coyote and laughs hysterically at the idea it is a Chicano coyote.

The implausibility of what is happening boggles him. The coyote's eyes meet and his. The eyes pull him, and the animal turns iridescent. It glows. His memory takes him back to an event ten years ago when he played with a dog after taking peyote. The image of



the dog superimposes on the coyote. "The coyote was a fluid, liquid, luminous being. Its luminosity was dazzling." Castaneda is touched by the being's luminosity and his body feels "indescribable... well-being... as if the touch... made me explode." He doesn't know how long he is in this suspended state. The coyote and surroundings melt. He has no thoughts or feelings. Everything has turned off. Looking into the sun and the horizon, he sees the "lines of the world" of which Dons Juan and Genaro speak. He stays on the hilltop in a state of ecstasy for what to Castaneda is an endless time. Further intricacies of his experience bring him to a euphoric state, until he falls asleep and awakens to the familiar world. When he recounts his experience to him, don juan comments that he has "stopped the world" and that the man he saw was his "ally" whom he must now tackle.



Part Two, Journey to Ixtlan: Chapter 20, Journey to Ixtlan.

Part Two, Journey to Ixtlan: Chapter 20, Journey to Ixtlan. Summary and Analysis

Don Juan, Don Genaro and Castaneda travel together to the mountain range where Castaneda visited the day before with the objective that he may tackle his ally. Don Genaro picks a spot on a high hill to rest and they sit facing each other. Don Juan announces that Don Genaro is going to tell Castaneda something.

Don Genaro begins to tell Castaneda of his encounter tackling his ally. He begins by explaining the readiness that is necessary in order to tackle one's ally. The jolt is so strong, one has to stand so that his feet grip the ground and one's mouth must be closed to avoid biting one's tongue or losing teeth. Don Genaro reiterates the power of the jolt. "It was something. . . After I grabbed it we began to spin. The ally made me twirl, but I didn't let go. We spun through the air with such speed and force that I couldn't see any more. . . The spinning went on, and on, and on." Don Genaro sits standing on the ground again, he relates. The ally failed to kill him. He was back and in one piece. He knew he had succeeded and finally had an ally.

Don Genaro looks and his surroundings they are not familiar. He figures the ally carried him through the air and dropped him far from where they started. He orients himself toward the east toward his home. He sees people coming toward him. They ask where he's going. He explains he's going to Ixtlan. They ask if he is lost. They tell him Ixtlan is in the other direction, and they are going there, and tell Don Genaro to go with them.

Don Genaro looks at Castaneda as if expecting a question. Castaneda only asks if he joined them. The way in which he stops to look at Castaneda implies that he expects Castaneda to "see" something from what he has thus far told him. Don Genaro responds that he did not because they were not real. Something in their manner gives it away, and he got away from them. Don Juan interjects to explain that they were like "phantoms."

Along his path to Ixtlan don Genaro encounters several other groups, who tell him he is headed the wrong way, because Ixtlan is in the opposite direction. He does not believe them. Again, he can tell from their mannerism that they have been placed there to deceive him. He finally meets a boy tending to goats, who reminds him of himself as a boy. He is impressed by the boy's carefulness with the goats despite how he hides when Don Genaro speaks to him. He confesses to the boy that he is lost and does not know his way to Ixtlan. The boy tells him he is where he estimates himself to be, and this makes Don Genaro happy. He realizes he isn't lost and thanks the boy and begins to walk away, but asks the boy who is no longer hiding where the trail leads. He tells the boy he is hungry and can he take him to his house. The boy answers that he has no



folks. This makes Don Genaro hesitate. The boy says his uncle is gone and his wife's in the fields but there's "plenty" of food. "Come with me."

The boy is a phantom as well, contends don Genaro. "His eagerness" betrayed him. Genaro contends that many phantoms are out there, but he is not afraid. He knows he has an ally and the phantoms can not harm him. After a while the phantoms stop trying to get in his way. Don Genaro is silent and Castaneda asks what happened. Don Genaro says he kept walking. This finishes his tale. Castaneda asks why their offering him food and indication that they are phantoms. He said that their eagerness to lure him and their manner about food gave it away. Perplexed, Castaneda asks if they are phantom allies.

"They were people." Don Genaro responds, and explains that "they were no longer real" after his meeting his ally "nothing is real any more." Castaneda naively asks what the final outcome was, and Don Juan and Don Genaro start laughing. Genaro gives Castaneda a piercing look and asserts that he will never get to Ixtlan. Ixtlan is different for different people. For Castaneda, Ixtlan is Los Angeles, his home. Sometimes, contends don Genaro, he is on the verge of reaching it, but, after meeting his ally, "nothing is the same." He contends that the world is only real when he is with Don Juan. Don Juan and Don Genaro look sad. Don Juan explains to Castaneda that everyone Genaro meets is "an ephemeral being..." He tells Castaneda that to them, he (Castaneda) is a phantom. "Your eagerness is that of people."

Castaneda realizes the journey is only a metaphor. Don Genaro insists it is real, what is not real, is the travelers, implying that the loneliness on his metaphoric journey is something to be dealt with and pondered if one is to go forward on their path. The sorcerers' sadness suggests that they need recruits into an exclusive scarcely populated club of "seers." They seek to encounter more like themselves on their way to Ixtlan instead of average fools locked into one reality.

This story serves as a warning of what Castaneda will leave behind, should he choose to "tackle his ally." For the rest of his life he will deal with average humans who will lack understanding and therefore can only be phantoms for him in light of his knowledge. Castaneda senses this and feels "an indescribable loneliness engulfing the three of us." It appears as if Don Genaro is about to weep. Castaneda cries and embraces them. The two men leave Castaneda on the mountain, to decide if he feels ready to "keep his appointment" with his ally. After they are off in the distance, He walks to his car, because he is not ready to make the commitment.



Characters

Don Juan

It is not hard to wonder if Don Juan isn't pulling Castaneda's leg. The sorcerer certainly enjoys laughing at Castaneda, and although his protégé does not understand most of his contentions at first, he has a genuine affection toward Castaneda. Although it is never stated that Castaneda agrees to become Don Juan's apprentice, everything about the old Indian keeps him intrigued sufficiently to make him return. Some of the tasks he thrusts on Castaneda do seem ludicrous, and just picturing him in the binds Don Juan places him in, make one laugh. The idea that one has to roll around scanning any area for a "spot of predilection" is hilarious. Yet, Don Juan's instructions pay off every time with magical results, because Castaneda is in Nirvana when sitting or lying on his "spot."

The happenings which Don Juan deems giant omens, such as a crow cawing overhead, can very well be made up on the spot, but their coincidence with events that follow make one ponder the relationship of everything in the world animated or not. The percolator agreeing with Don Juan sounds crazy, but it denotes Don Juan's sense of humor. He certainly does enjoy laughing at Castaneda's naïve expense.

Having been a regular man before entering the world of sorcerer, it is surprising that he finds Castaneda's questions surprising. This is a contradiction. His lifestyle demands a patience he often lacks with Castaneda's sloth. In many ways Don Juan holds on to Castaneda to link into the life he gave up to become a man of knowledge. He has a need for Castaneda's company, that works on a couple of levels. If Castaneda turns out not to be warrior material, he promises he will still be his friend. Don Juan's other objective is probably to hand the torch of his knowledge and experience which is almost extinct to another. This sadness is not revealed until the end of the book, although one may begin to surmise it along the way in how he recruits Castaneda into his hunter/warrior lifestyle. Don Juan sees great possibility in Castaneda, who reminds him of himself when young.

One does wonder, if when Castaneda asks for explanations, Don Juan does not provide them because he himself does not know the answers. He does reiterate often that explanations are not necessary. The fact is, when he wants to, Don Juan elaborates extensively. When he does, Castaneda does not understand, proving that "knowledge" does not involve a college education. Then, there are those moments when Don Juan's supernatural aspect can not be challenged. Such a moment is when he forces Castaneda to think about the white falcon he hunted as a boy, a childhood memory which Castaneda himself has forgotten. Another moment is when he tells him about a magical being without explaining how a deer can talk, and calls it "the darndest thing" without any clarification for Castaneda. There is one event in which Don Juan is perceived as wearing 5 completely different outfits by Castaneda and four Indians at the exact same moment and place.



This sort of illusionist cunning makes Don Juan not only tricky but youthful, and although Don Juan's age is never disclosed, his speed, agility and stamina are described as mystical, as is his "not-doing" technique for achieving such strength.

Carlos Castaneda

As the author, Castaneda is in the center of the action with Don Juan. From the very start he makes himself come across as not very intelligent and much too naïve. This contradicts the young educated university anthropology researcher image he portrays of himself. This conniving writer's method drives home Don Juan's lessons for the reader. The pompousness that Don Juan seeks to deflate in Castaneda is not a supernatural concept. Castaneda wonders how Don Juan knows he lies. It is not difficult for an elder to recognize cockiness in any young man. At this, Castaneda is typical. In essence, although he claims to want to study mind-opening plants, most of his arguments and assertions reflect shallowness and close-mindedness. His questions strike as inane. His naiveté suggests he considers will not be inclined to accept Don Juan's absurd notions and contradictions about reality. Perhaps Castaneda was unaware how his generational peers are more willing than ever in history to venture into mental expansion.

The earliest lessons Don Juan gives him regarding loss of self-importance should not strike Castaneda as novel. The teaching is imbedded in Christianity, Buddhist, Hindu and most faith in general. Likewise, the idea of death as a constant companion is expounded in every religion, in the sense that each act contributes to either redemption or damnation which is inescapable. Castaneda indicates a low caliber of depth in behaving as if death does surround every human. The idea of assuming responsibility for one's actions and decisions should not strike Castaneda with the shock that it seems to. Truly he is deceiving himself about many things the way most of us do in order to make life a smoother process.

Castaneda plays a blind fool until the end of the book. Even after he experiences a talking coyote and "stops the world," the metaphoric tale Don Juan and Don Genaro tell him goes over his head. It is Castaneda's way of making a sorcerer's apprentice of each reader.

Don Genaro

Don Genaro is a fellow sorcerer and long-time friend of Don Juan's. We are introduced to him in the second part which terminates the book. When we meet him, there is a crazed quality to his persona. Castaneda calls him passionate. His company brings out aspects of Don Juan that Castaneda is unfamiliar with. It appears that Don Juan has brought him aboard to help speed up Castaneda's stubbornness at "seeing" and "stopping the world."

United with Don Juan, Don Genaro is a trickster. He claims to have driven off with Castaneda's car, although they've been together all morning. When the two sorcerers



accompany Castaneda to his car, it has inexplicably vanished from its parked spot. After much show of dramatic flair from Genaro, he finally returns it by creating the illusion of turning his hat into Castaneda's car.

After Castaneda has seen "the lines of the world," and both sorcerers believe he is ready to "tackle his ally," Don Genaro tells Castaneda his tale of his journey to Ixtlan, his home. In doing so, a great sadness is revealed in both sorcerers. Theirs is a minutely populated world, in which regular people can only be phantoms. The eagerness of foolish human stupidity isolates the sorcerers in their knowledge. Although they straddle two realities, they are more firmly implanted in the foreign one and can no longer relate with any closeness to the life or people they once knew and loved. In essence, they can never return home again. Don Genaro asserts that the world is only real when he is with Don Juan. It appears that in Castaneda, Dons Genaro and Juan seek to find at the very least a spark of a kindred soul.

The Friend Who Introduced Castaneda to Don Juan

This person's name is never given but is referred to a few times by Castaneda whenever he doubts Don Juan's sanity..

La Catalina

La Catalina is a female sorcerer who intimidates Castaneda, and whom Don Juan insists is his worthy opponent.

Blas

Blas is a friend whom Castaneda visits while Don Juan goes off on business.

Assertive and Friendly Yaqui Indian Apprentice

While hiking, Don Juan and Castaneda come upon five indians who are searching for quartz crystal. This indian is not shy and asks Castaneda several questions.

Waitress in a Coffee Shop

She looks at Don Juan and Castaneda with distrust.

The Coyote

When Castaneda finally "stops the world," a friendly coyote sits by his side and talks to him. He then becomes iridescent.

Mescalito

Mescalito is the spiritual agent found in peyote.

Death

Don Juan alludes to death as "always watching" on one's left side. According to him if one takes a fast look to one's left, one may catch a flicker of its presence.



Objects/Places

Arizona

This is where Don Juan and Castaneda meet.

Peyote,

A hallucinogenic cactus

A Spot of Predilection

This is a spot or area that is found by crossing ones eyes and squinting while scanning an entire area. For Castaneda, it is a spot on Don Juan's porch and on a hilltop where Castaneda always finds himself in a state of well-being and euphoria.

White Falcon

Castaneda hunted a white falcon as a child. Don Juan brings back the memory by somehow superimposing on the falcon's features on his face.

Black Crow Cawing

Usually appears to fly overhead to communicate directions to Don Juan.

Plants

Don Juan insists Castaneda must speak to plants in a loud and clear voice.

Leaves

Leaves are often used to keep Castaneda warm by placing them in his abdomen. The type of leaf that accomplishes this is never named.

The Wind

Don Juan asserts that what Castaneda calls wind is not wind at all but entities pursuing them.



Ring of Power

Don Juan asserts that everyone is born with a ring of power that assists in spinning reality.

Ixtlan

This is Don Genaro's home town, it is a metaphor for home. Journey to Ixtlan is a man of knowledge's continuous attempt to return "home."



Themes

Loss of Self

Loss of Self. Don Juan asserts that Castaneda must rid himself of his personal history. The purpose of this is to not have to fulfill the image others expect of one by not giving importance to our own past. This is accomplished by not giving away too much about one's self in order to "create a fog" around oneself. Not focusing on one's self-importance is a way of setting one's self free and avoiding label. One does not have to live up to one's own propaganda. It can be surmised that if everyone did this, no one would be so preoccupied with impressing others and one would live with a more just and humane attitude. The book never talks about love of fellow man, but "do unto others" is implied. It in fact goes one step further implying that nature be equally respected.

It is difficult to see what this has to do with learning about plants, which is, after all, Castaneda's objective for interviewing Don Juan in the first place. However, although he never states it, the nature of peyote and using it involves some understanding and preparation. Don Juan's contention is that nature must be respected and treated as if it were a person because everything in nature is equal. The loss of self-importance is essential if one expects the elements or the world in general to give humans respect. It becomes important that Castaneda "see" that he is no more important than a branch or a leaf he may cut down. It is important he not abuse the balance of nature. When they catch five quail, Don Juan sets three free, because he knows two are sufficient. In his selfishness and greed, Castaneda asserts he would have cooked all five quail. Don Juan asserts had they done that, the mountain may not let them get out alive.

Don Juan repeatedly highlights Castaneda's feelings of self-importance. Castaneda is continuously filled with the need to defend himself or explain away the issues that Don Juan brings up. When he does this, he gets angry. His anger stems from feelings of pride and superiority. He is so susceptible to these negative feelings that they almost swallow him up overwhelming him to an illogical level. Don Juan must physically make him get away from the spot that he stands to save him from himself. In a way it is as if his self importance generates a spiritual pollution that gives it right back and becomes dangerous to him.

Death

Don Juan continually reminds Castaneda about death. He points out that death has been following Castaneda and has been making its presence known to him since childhood. This frighten Castaneda, who wants to avoid the topic altogether. Don Juan makes the matter more disturbing at times by referring to death a personality or a watching entity. In one of Don Juan's supernatural moments, he seems to have the ability to "show" Castaneda his death. He doesn't show Castaneda the scene of his



death, but rather, he points to it as a presence, which he calls identifiable by a chill down one's spine. A quick glance to his left when Don Juan gives the signal to look, Castaneda catches a flicker, and feels the chill. Later, Castaneda asks if death is a person. Don Juan replies that death is different to everyone and cryptically states that it is everything as well as nothing, because its possibility is always present. Because of this constant possibility, one should treat every moment as if it were the last. Castaneda does not want to think about death, and Don Juan says that this is because he does not take responsibility for his actions. He contends that happy people take responsibility and treat every action as if it were their last "dance."

It can be surmised that the other reality which Don Juan's knowledge allows him and wants Castaneda to experience, is the other side of life. This is accomplished by "stopping the world" which is probably more a vision of the atoms and nuclei that form our reality. He refers to seeing "the lines of the world" in a way that implies that not only does he know what death is, he sees the components of life and is not fooled by the "illusion" that we know as life. He gives Castaneda several experiences of a euphoric state of well-being that may be likened to what heaven is imagined to be. This euphoria has been experienced and described by people who take hallucinogens. However, the knowledge contained within requires some preparation and readiness.

Reality

In order to guide him through the door of his knowledge, Don Juan takes Castaneda hunting for "power." This involves far-fetched rituals and ways of walking such as the "gait of power." There appears to be much magic in nature when one focuses in a certain way. If one is to believe these accounts to be non-fictional, Don Juan helps Castaneda cross reality's borders without aid of ingesting a hallucinogen. He has him eat "power" meat as they hike in mountain wilderness. It is difficult not to question, as does Castaneda, if in deed there isn't a little mescaline in those morsels.

Castaneda asks Don Juan how one recognizes power, and Don Juan explains that it is more an individual "feeling" that cannot be described. Everyone, experiences power differently, thus it can be surmised that everyone's reality is equally different. He contends that everyone is born with a "ring of power" that is put to use upon birth. These rings hook into everyone else's in order to perceive the world. He goes on to explain, as they sit in a restaurant, that his and Castaneda's rings of powers are "hooked" to making or "doing" the room they sit in. He contends he is assisting in Castaneda's "extra" ring of power, in which his body will learn, "not-doing" "Not-doing" can be likened to seeing in between everything that our collective consciousness presents. Perhaps it is the reality that holds our common reality up. Ultimately, Castaneda crosses over and "sees" all that Don Juan has spoken of and taught him. For the very first time he understands.



Style

Perspective

This is written in the first person, so that the perspective is the author's. However the narration encompasses enough of Don Juan's voice point of view to keep things balanced. This adds an element of conflict between himself and Don Juan, and is an excellent way to contrast the familiar with the unfamiliar. We see through Castaneda's eyes and experience his reservations and fears and in many ways can identify with him. As curious average humans we can understand his fight for logic and explanation. However, most who pick up this book will find his questions a bit shallow. As stated earlier, this is probably done for the purpose of hammering Don Juan's teachings into the reader.

This is the third book in a long list of books written by Castaneda on the teachings of Don Juan. Apparently, in each volume steps up to a realm further away. There is question as to whether these accounts actually ever took place. If they did not, Castaneda is a master story teller, who can match Tolkien's imagination. Attempts to trace whether Don Juan really existed have apparently failed. However, if the context of his having no personal history is to be taken as truth, then Castaneda's protagonist has accomplished his mission.

Tone

Castaneda's struggles transform him from documenter and researcher to second protagonist and his tone objectively shifts. He starts off pessimistic of Don Juan's contentions, thinking the older Indian crazy. However his outlook becomes self-effacing and self-derogatory in the face of Don Juan's wisdom. The idea that if he doesn't believe Don Juan, he respects him is conveyed. He is sufficiently enthralled to keep coming back for more in spite of his a reservation he does not hide.

One can hear Don Juan humming his Mexican tunes and anticipate what his singing leads to. There is a lot of humor in Castaneda's recreation of Don Juan's pantomime and sharp wit. He captures Don Juan's ability to cartoon animals, people and situations which enriches and enlivens the narrative to a fictional dimension taking it beyond anthropological text and study.

Structure

In this book's introduction, Castaneda explains that his relationship with Don Juan began in 1961 and lasted ten years. The body of the book is structured so that each chapter contains a heavy chunk of Don Juan's advice and philosophy. In each chapter, Castaneda provides weekday, month, day and times that events allegedly took place. Dates specificity is not really needed and often doesn't match up to the narration. The



diary format coupled with the introduction that refers to his other two books is supposed to contribute to credibility. However, it does strike incongruous that in this book, Don Juan doesn't want to talk about hallucinogenic plants. The main action in his first two books cover his peyote, Jimson weed and mushrooms experiences and take place during the same ten year period between 1961 and 1972. Why does Castaneda report that Don Juan doesn't want to talk about plants, if he's already written two books on the topic as guided by Don Juan? It is possible that he wrote of his experiences out of sequence.

It is difficult to know why the author made the first part of this book so long, and the second so short. In Part Two, Castaneda reaches the pinnacle of experience after an arduous climb and proves well equipped to handle what he encounters.



Quotes

"Plants are very peculiar things... They are alive and they feel." Page 22 (1972 edition)

"Little by little you must create a fog around yourself; you must erase everything around you until nothing can be taken for granted, until nothing is any longer for sure, or real. Your problem now is that you're too real. Your endeavors are too real; Your moods are too real. Don't take things so for granted. You must begin to erase yourself." Page 33

"What you saw was not an agreement from the world,... Crows flying or cawing are never an agreement. That was an omen!" Page 39

Death is our eternal companion... It is always to our left, at an arm's length. It was watching you when you were watching the white falcon, it whispered in your ear and you felt its chill, as you felt it today. It has always been watching you. It always will until the day it taps you. Page 54

The thing to do when you're impatient is to turn to your left and ask advice from your death. An immense amount of pettiness is dropped if your death makes a gesture to you, or if you catch a glimpse of it, or if you just have the feeling that your companion is there watching you. Page 55

"Your resolutions injure the spirit" Page 63

"The trick is to feel with your eyes... Your problem now is that you don't know what to feel. It'll come to you though, with practice." Page 75

"A hunter leaves very little to chance. I have been trying all along to convince you that you must learn to live in a different way. So far I have not succeeded. There was nothing you could've grabbed on to. Now it's different. I have brought back your old hunter's spirit, perhaps through it you will change." Page 78

He looked at me with calm and collected eyes. I avoided his gaze. And then he began to talk. He enunciated his words clearly. They poured out smoothly and deadly. He said that I was pimping for someone else. That I was not fighting my own battles but the battles of some unknown people. That I did not want to learn about plants or about hunting or about anything. And that his world of precise acts and feelings and decisions was infinitely more effective than the blundering idiocy I called "my life."

After he finished talking I was numb. He had spoken without belligerence or conceit but with such power, and yet such calmness, that I was not even angry any more. Page 81

I laugh a great deal because I like to laugh, yet everything I say is deadly serious, even if you don't understand it. Why should the world be any as you think it is? Who gave you the authority to say so? Page 84

I whispered to don Juan that the wind had stopped and he whispered back that I should not make any overt noise or movement, because what I was calling the wind was not



wind at all but something that had a volition of its own and could actually recognize us.
Page 86

"Not-doing is very simple but very difficult, he said. "It is not a matter of understanding it but of mastering it. Seeing, of course, is the final accomplishment of a man of knowledge, and seeing is attained only when one has stopped the world through the technique of not-doing." Page 233

At first I paid no attention to it but then I realized that the flicker had been to my left. I turned again suddenly and was able to clearly perceive a shadow on the rock. I had the weird sensation that the shadow instantly slid down to the ground and the soil absorbed it. Page 294



Topics for Discussion

Assess the relationship between Don Juan and Carlos Castaneda.

To what do you attribute Castaneda's hallucinatory experiences, when he has not yet completed his apprenticeship?

What is the purpose and advantage of erasing one's personal history?

When Don Juan refers to death as always being on your left, did you feel compelled to look to your left? What did you feel, if anything?

This book is way ahead of its time, in its focus on respecting nature, because everything in nature has equal importance. List some examples of how Don Juan imparts this lesson to Castaneda.

What is your opinion on Don Juan's contention on "not-doing"? Is it doable?

Don Juan lessons appear far-fetched. In essence, he asserts nature should be thanked and respected. (Catch 5 quails, let three go because two is enough) Does this idea depart from that of most major religious philosophies, i.e. "do unto others,"?