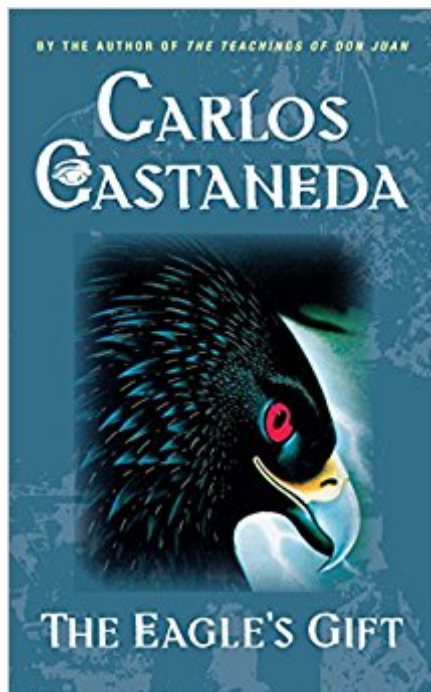


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The Eagle's Gift



Synopsis

Carlos Castaneda takes the reader into the very heart of sorcery, challenging both imagination and reason, shaking the very foundations of our belief in what is "natural" and "logical." His landscape is full of terrors and mysterious forces, as sharply etched as a flash of lightning on the deserts and mountains where don Juan takes him to pursue the sorcerer's knowledge—the knowledge that it is the Eagle that gives us, at our births, a spark of awareness, that it expects to reclaim at the end of our lives and which the sorcerer, through his discipline, fights to retain. Castaneda describes how don Juan and his party, left this world—"the warriors of don Juan's party had caught me for an eternal instant, before they vanished into the total light, before the Eagle let them go through"—and how he, himself, upon witnessing such a sight, jumped into the abyss.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for the groundbreaking work of bestselling author Carlos Castaneda "Extraordinary in every sense of the word." (The New York Times) "An unparalleled breakthrough... Remarkable (Los Angeles Times) "Hypnotic reading." (Chicago Tribune) "It is impossible to view the world in quite the same way." (Chicago Tribune) "Excquisite... Stunning... Fresh, unexpected visions with the logic of dreams." (Detroit Free Press) "Taken together [Castaneda's books] form a work among the best that the science of anthropology has produce." (The New York Times Book Review)

Born in 1925 in Peru, anthropologist Carlos Castaneda wrote a total of 15 books, which sold 8 million copies worldwide and were published in 17 different languages. In his writing, Castaneda describes the teaching of Don Juan, a Yaqui sorcerer and shaman. His works helped define the 1960's and usher in the New Age movement. Even after his mysterious death in California in 1998, his books continue to inspire and influence his many devoted fans.

I was a big fan of Castaneda when his first books came out. I was in college then. Two years ago, I set out to read all of his books, first to last, in order. I highly recommend that exercise. This was one of the better Castaneda books. It's always dicey to write about Castaneda and the "r" word: did this really happen? I am inclined to say yes, but not in the usual way. I know that some might see this as a cop out, but I do believe that we all live in our heads and in a world that we create in there. No one else really has access to our experience except us. What we perceive is what we imagine to be the world out side of us, and our thoughts and feelings inside of us. Castaneda's experiences are as real as anyone's. Did he make it all up? I don't know, nor can I ever know. If he did make it all up, he was a genius. Who knows? Maybe Plato made up Socrates. Sure, there was a person named Socrates, and maybe there was a don Juan Matus. In the time of Plato and Aristotle, it was quite common to write dialogs about famous thinkers and write what they should have said, or write what they might of said, what was characteristic of their thinking. If the original never actually said that was not a problem. This wasn't our sense of history and truth that we have today. Ultimately, there is being, what is, and what is not. Truth, falsity, right, wrong, good, and evil are all of the mind. If you stick to facts, what is, you won't find any of the above. "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." Shakespeare. For me, Castaneda, don Juan, and don Genaro are great beings. I enjoy their mystery a great deal.

Whether Carlos was in touch with Don Juan for an extended period of time or whether he simply used the Datura techniques of the first book to have these kind of experiences is unclear. Having had experiences remarkably similar to those described by him I do think that he probably continued his association with Don Juan for quite some time. The differences between the books are comprehensible when you understand the changes Carlos went through in his understanding. At first he thought Don Juan was a quaint cook who he went to so he could learn about peyote and become a distinguished anthropologist... Which worked marvelously for him. Then he realized something very strange was going on and his very concepts of reality had to be abandoned in the wake of his experiences. Then the barriers between what is considered waking states of

consciousness and dreaming came apart and all he could do is tell the story of what took place. At any rate this is a very entertaining book and a very fun experience.

It is difficult to think of this book by itself; The Eagle's Gift is the sixth of Castaneda's series of eight books on his apprenticeship as a sorcerer. I suggest that the books be read in the order written; each refers to events which have been described earlier, but each book contains Castaneda's heightened awareness of those events. This book is special for two reasons: first, it is largely about Castaneda's interactions with other apprentices, and gives us readers further insight as Castaneda's actions and thoughts are as seen by the others. Previously related events take on new meaning as the others, some more advanced than Carlos, some not, reflect on his thoughts, personality and progress into sorcery. Also, it has been pointed out many times, that the sorcery of the ancient seers was quite different from that of the modern seers. Modern seers seek -total freedom- don Juan tells Carlos that "Freedom is the Eagle's gift to man". To understand just what this means, you will have read the book. It is a 'must have' .

To write this series off as merely fiction is a sad act of ignorance. There is no way of writing a review that could possibly come close to encompassing the soul shattering effects that truly attempting to grasp this knowledge has had on my life. I have been tumbling down this rabbit hole for over a decade, and I can tell you there have been moments I have deeply questioned my own sanity because of this author. Start at the beginning and read through to the end. A simple google search will give you the chronological order of the books. This is not the place to start AT ALL.

If you loved his time with don Juan and Genaro, it gets even more exciting after they are gone.

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