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# Five Weeks In The : A Backpacker's Journey: Life In The Rainforest, Ayahuasca, And A Peruvian Shaman's Ancient Diet



## Synopsis

A Modern Quest for an Ancient Remedy.... If you enjoy a fast-paced read and a true story, *Five Weeks in the* is the book for you . It's packed with humor, full of unexpected twists and there is never any way to know how it will end. Author Sean Michael Hayes has written a book in a similar style to current blockbuster success, Cheryl Strayed's "Wild". His adventure puts him face to face with universal problems that we all must overcome in life. His search is a desperate attempt at something he has fought for since first being diagnosed with depression--how to live a happy life. Hayes presents solutions which seem like wins not just for himself, but for the reader that's right there with him. Want to find out what happened to a backpacker that hiked alone into the jungle to live with a shaman? EXCERPT "At the beginning of the ceremony, nobody knows how the Ayahuasca will react, for them or anyone else. Even though I couldn't see anybody else in the dark room, I could sense overtones of apprehension among the group. We were sitting there, waiting for the Ayahuasca to do its magic, wrapped in the darkness of the night. With no warning, an explosion of sound and light shook the entire house. The startling interruption made someone gasp, and I heard a quick squeal from somebody else. The sky crackled to life. I knew at that moment why long ago people thought the thunder came from the sounds of the gods fighting. I imagined Zeus' sword crashing through the clouds. The small room became lit again and again by blasts of purple light. Thunder exploded at the same instant as the lightning flashed and I knew the storm was right on top of us. The storm shook the wooden house with every strike towards the Earth it took. I could feel the sky's energy and I looked across the room. Through the door, I could see the jungle illuminated with each white-hot flash of light. The room was still electrified and loud, and the Ayahuasca made its presence known. People started purging, Otilia started singing, and all the sounds mixed together..."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I was ready to read a backpacker travel book with wonderful stories about living in the , but what I read was about an amazing journey of a man that discovered two overwhelming jungles: the and the one that lies within himself. It was about self awareness, awakenings and the search for wisdom within oneself. It made me laugh and made me cry, but most of all, made me think about the truth we all hide and bury deep inside, about the pain and the things we all have to let go in a healing process, the power within ourselves and that being happy is our choice. Never got bored while reading. The Prologue and the Introduction were quite intense. The first chapters, in Lima and the initial arrival to the jungle, were fine and easy reading. But I really got hooked at Otilia's, when the Ayahuasca ceremonies started and with it, all the inner findings and discoveries. In a certain way, I identified myself with it (self-sabotaged my success). I think this time it has been the youngest (Sean) who taught the elder (me) about strength and courage.

An engaging story of the author traveling to the to find himself. After a troubled past, he gradually begins searching inside of himself for true happiness. Vivid details of his travels in a few cities, then he meets a Shaman, Otilia. While she speaks no English, she understands some and the author (Canadian) speaks only a smattering of Spanish. The author provides good insight of what it's like to travel, alone, to countries where a foreigner has difficulty communicating. He also talks of his drug use, loneliness and the excitement of new experiences. One of his new experiences was participating in an Ayahuaska ceremony. Ayahuaska is a South American vine, the use of the bark is a hallucinogenic alkaloid used by Indians. Downfalls, While the book is well written, there are a few typos, words in the wrong place, a double period that I noticed, however it doesn't detract from the story. I'll read this again and look for books by the same author.

When I first came across this novel, I thought it was going to be a story about exploring, not only the jungle but about one man's journey in exploring himself and what it means to be at peace with your demons. Sean Michael Hayes's story does just that, except it goes deeper. As I was reading, I couldn't help but believe that *Five Weeks In The* was a love story. It's not a new romance or a tale about finding love; it's about realizing who you're in love with and, just as importantly, learning how to love yourself. While love is scary and overwhelming, so is trying to overcome your own fears and past pains. Although there are serious elements that he discusses, Sean mixes humor so naturally into his story that it's almost as if he's right in front of you telling it all himself over drinks. That's what actually kept me reading, feeling like I was being told a story straight from him instead of just reading words on a page. I'm not one to read biographies and exploration books, but I'm very glad I took a chance on Sean's novel. Not only did I learn about what it's like to spend five weeks in the , but I learned that someone else out there knows what it feels like to hit a wall and not have any good explanation for why you feel the way you do. I know how that feels, and it's comforting to know that someone else does, too. I highly recommend this novel to anyone wanting a good, entertaining, and insightful read. Looking forward to more stories from this author.

I enjoyed this book. I spent 10 years living in Lima, Peru and I can attest that this book represents a large part of the true Peru experience. Sean Michael Hayes is very brave in his honesty in this book. Much of the book reads as if it were taken directly from his journal while on vacation in Peru, which lends a certain raw truth to the tale. However, using that material also means that the book doesn't feel as "polished" as some of the other tales out there. Personally I liked the rawness. It reminded me of emails I've received from friends when they're in the midst of some challenging, joyous, terrifying adventure. But it also means that the whole tale isn't wrapped up neat and tight in a fancy little narrative bow. I think that's part of why there's such a diverse reaction to this book here on the reviews. As some of the other reviewers said, yes, there is a fair amount of profanity (but not at all excessive I would say) and a fair amount of drug use (not Hunter S. Thompson proportions, but quite a bit). I always find it bizarre how self-righteous individuals will be so intolerant of a person who swears and indulges every now and then. Give me the person who swears, drinks, and smokes every day of the week over the "squeaky clean" one who chastises everyone. When the day comes

to open everyone's closet, the greatest horrors will be found in those of the later. When I was the editor of LivingInPeru.com, I remember that we'd occasionally run an article on Ayahuasca and we'd instantly be overrun by comments of people claiming how "terrible" it was. The fact of the matter is that Ayahuasca is the traditional medicine of the people indigenous to the . Have a little respect. Also, I think it's bizarre how Americans in particular can be completely accepting of people who treat depression by ingesting the toxic pharmaceuticals routinely prescribed in the US (some of which have been known to make people suicidal). The belief that the "bad" things pharmaceutical drugs do to you are "side effects" is one of the greatest cons the general public has ever fallen for. They're "effects" people, there's no distinction. Hayes details a relatively short, but intense period in his life when he lived on a small commune in the outskirts of Iquitos and participated in regular Ayahuasca ceremonies. He's not shy about mentioning that he was suicidal before the trip, and based on this work, the treatment seems to have helped. I've been to the , and although I never participated in an Ayahuasca ceremony, I have found just being in that wonderful place does have a magnificent positive effect on your psyche and sense of well-being. Depression is a real thing, and telling people to "take a trip" is one of the few ways to divert a person from a path of self-harm. I applaud anyone who recognizes they have something not working in their life who then takes steps to change those things, even when the steps are reckless. This is a nice book. Read it and think not so much of yourself, but think of the people in your life who might need to hear the words between these covers.

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