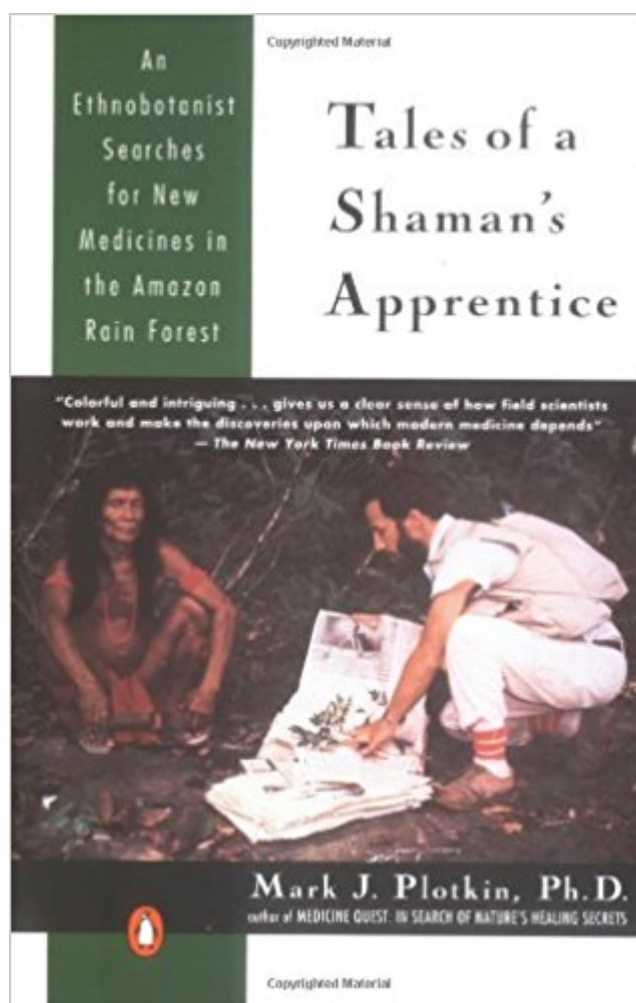


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Tales Of A Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnobotanist Searches For New Medicines In The Rain Forest



Synopsis

For thousands of years, healers have used plants to cure illness. Aspirin, the world's most widely used drug, is based on compounds originally extracted from the bark of a willow tree, and more than a quarter of medicines found on pharmacy shelves contain plant compounds. Now Western medicine, faced with health crises such as AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, and cancer, has begun to look to the healing plants used by indigenous peoples to develop powerful new medicines. Nowhere is the search more promising than in the , the world's largest tropical forest, home to a quarter of all botanical species on this planet— as well as hundreds of Indian tribes whose medicinal plants have never been studied by Western scientists. In *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice*, ethnobotanist Mark J. Plotkin recounts his travels and studies with some of the most powerful Indian shamans, who taught him the plant lore their tribes have spent thousands of years gleaning from the rain forest. For more than a decade, Dr. Plotkin has raced against time to harvest and record new plants before the rain forests' fragile ecosystems succumb to overdevelopment— and before the Indians abandon their own culture and learning for the seductive appeal of Western material culture. *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice* relates nine of the author's quests, taking the reader along on a wild odyssey as he participates in healing rituals; discovers the secret of curare, the lethal arrow poison that kills in minutes; tries the hallucinogenic snuff *epena* that enables the Indians to speak with their spirit world; and earns the respect and fellowship of the mysterious shamans as he proves that he shares both their endurance and their reverence for the rain forest. Mark Plotkin combines the Darwinian spirit of the great writer-explorers of the nineteenth century— curious, discursive, and rigorously scientific— with a very modern concern for the erosion of our environment and the vanishing culture of native peoples.

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Customer Reviews

A century ago, malaria was killing Washingtonians, Londoners, Parisians. Today HIV, along with various cancers, has taken its place among worldwide epidemics. Quinine, extracted from the cinchona tree of the rainforest, quelled malaria; alkaloids taken from trees in the West African rainforest may well yield a cure for AIDS. Yet those woods, Mark Plotkin tells us, are fast disappearing, along with the native peoples who know the powers of the plants that dwell there. His account of wandering through the rainforests focuses on local knowledge about plants, whose uses range from the mundane to the magical. The rainforests of the world, Plotkin notes, are our greatest natural resource, an intercultural pharmacy that can cure woes both known and yet unvisited.

Ethnobotanist Plotkin details the alternative medicines he discovered during an apprenticeship to the shamans of the rainforests. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This real life tale of an ethnobotanist learning from indigenous South American tribesmen and shamans is a jewel of a book. I didn't want it to end, though it ends in a way that fills me with hope and promise for the human race. Plotkin shares his experiences with native tribesmen as he learns the plants and medicines that they have relied upon, and gives the medicine men a voice at a time when Western Culture begins to dominate tribal life.. He paints a respectful portrait of the cultures and individual personalities in a way that takes you inside his circle of subjects, people who gave freely of their knowledge of the forest plants and their healing combinations and recipes. It's no surprise that I have given this book many times as a gift.

This book was assigned for one of my anthropology classes. I first thought it was going to be one of those books with information like an English book from a high school English class, but as I started reading it, it took me into the story all the way to the end.

The audio version of this book is a double edged sword, on the one hand it is fabulous to hear the author read his book, on the other it's a bit of a pain to convert to something that can be used in the classroom or played on most normal CD players. This is an incredible book. There are wonderful reviews of this book, and I'd encourage you to read about the content here, [A Book of Nature & Ecology](#) > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Botany

Shaman's Apprentice: An Ethnobotanist Searches for New Medicines in the Rain Forest. As a companion to the book, I was interested in this audio book. Mark Plotkin reads a slightly abridged version of the book. Mr. Plotkin is not a professional voice, he does a decent job reading his own work. At times his voice sounds a bit strained trying to add some emotion. He also has a bit of trouble maintaining his breath and pace during longer passages. But, his voice is pleasant, and he articulates each word very clearly. The down side to this CD, it is a CD with 8 MP3 files. If you have an MP3 capable CD player, wonderful, this disc will work perfectly. However, if you only have a normal CD player, these files will have to be converted. Fortunately iTunes can do this fairly easily. Other audio programs can do the same thing. The step by step instruction: If you only have one CD/DVD drive, you will have to temporarily copy the MP3 files to your computer. Insert the MP3 CD, copy the 8 MP3 files (ignore everything else on the disc) titled 01 through 08.MP3 to your desktop. If you are lucky and have two CD/DVD drives, simply insert the MP3 CD into one of your two drives. Now open iTunes. In the file menu, choose 'import files'. Once that menu is open, click on browse and either go to your desktop for the copied files (01 through 08.MP3); or browse your computer to find the CD drive and highlight the MP3 files (10 through 08). Click on OK. iTunes will now add 8 song files to your library. Now you need to create a playlist (Audio CD's can only be burned from a playlist). Go up to the File menu and select, create a new playlist. Rename that playlist to something familiar like Shaman. Now highlight your 8 new songs from the CD (you can use 'date added' to float those 8 files to the top of your music library) and drag them over to the newly created playlist. Now you are ready to burn 3 Audio CD's. Click on the new playlist - only 8 songs should be visible. Highlight all 8 files. Click on Burn in the lower right hand corner of the iTunes screen. If you have two CD/DVD drives, select the one not containing the MP3 CD. iTunes will be a little confused for a second and ask if it's OK to burn these Audio CD's on more than one CD. Simply click on Yes and the software will prompt for each consecutive blank CD. To clean up your iTunes library, assuming you don't want this book cluttering up your library (although you could listen to these on an iPod just as easily); highlight the 8 tracks in iTunes and press the delete key. Go to your desktop and highlight the 8 MP3 files there and delete them. All traces of this MP3 craziness is now gone from your computer. The entire program requires 3 audio CD's. Three parts will fit on one CD. Enjoy this fabulous book. The audio version is a great companion. You have to be a bit tech savvy to get these files moved over to an audio CD for listening. But it's not that hard in the end (free tools will work just fine).

I bought this book because of the documentary- both are fantastic. It gives a new sense of

appreciation of why we shouldn't support the drug companies and their "need" for capitalism. And it's odd- I just read on CNN about how an ancient remedy may actually kill the MRSA superbug- good timing, especially for the review of this book!

This wasn't exactly my type of book, but I had to read it for my Plant and Society class. But, I have to say it was a great read! It turned out to be a pleasure to read it, it is very interesting and you learn a lot. I kept it on my kindle and perhaps will read it again, without having to do an assignment along with it.

Take a journey...And Learn Something New Along The Way...IMHO...Go Organic And Natural...In My Own Journey From Pharmaceutical Driven Medicine To Total Reverse Of Health Issues...Natural And Plant Based Medicine Works...

This has been an interesting read. The delivery and service was efficient and timely with no problems encountered. I am happy to own this book as the sadness is in the diminishing culture of the wise men, trees, animals and knowledge from the and I have a personal account of the last of the wise people from an ancient culture hopefully being able to pass onto next generations.

Very interesting topic and book. Hard to put down. Would like a better understanding of the common or species names of some of these plants but it may have been difficult to sort all of them out since most are specific to the region and described in the language of the 'natives'.

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