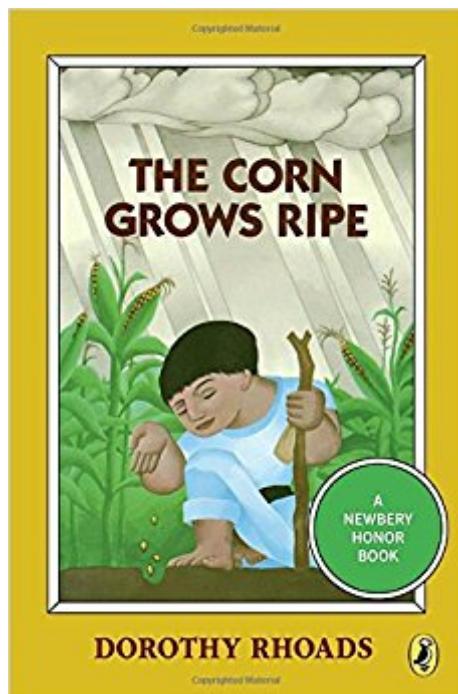


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# The Corn Grows Ripe (Puffin Newbery Library)



## Synopsis

A Newbery Honor Book  Can Tigre find the strength and courage to support his family?  When Tigre's father is badly injured in an accident, the family is thrown into turmoil. Who will plant and harvest the corn that they need to survive and to please the Mayan gods? The neighbors have fields of their own to tend, and Tigre's mother and grandmother cannot do it on their own. Twelve-year-old Tigre has never done a man's work before. Can he shoulder the burden on his own, and take his father's place?       A book of special artistic distinction, with its well-told story rich in Mayan folkway and custom and its boldly appropriate drawings.                     <

Thumbs Up.

We used this for a unit study of the early American cultures including the Mayans. My 10 yo really enjoyed reading it. Includes elements of Mayan religion and daily life.

I read this book with my children, which is a Newbery Honor Book. The story takes place in a Mayan village in the Yucatan. Dionisio is a young 12-year old boy. His nickname, Tigre, which means jaguar, suits him because he is "spirited and mischievous and curious...and lazy too." A tree falls on Tigre's father, and he is lucky that he suffers only a broken leg. There is no bonesetter in the village, so Tigre must travel 17 kilometers through bush. Tigre brings the bonesetter back to his home, and the medicine man sets the broken bone and puts a splint on the leg but says it will take a long time before he recovers and it will not be until harvest time. This renders him unable to bush, burn, and plant the corn. Tigre realizes that it is up to him to perform the laborious work, but his family is skeptical that lazy Tigre is up to the task. I love to learn about other cultures and beliefs, but this book fell a little flat for me. I thought it was a little boring and dry. I did appreciate that Tigre learns some responsibility, and I think that was this book's saving grace for me! MY RATING: 2 stars - Meh, it was just "ok." My 9 year-old daughter liked it a little more than I did and gave it 3 stars. She thought the book became more interesting towards the end.

This is one of the best "cultural studies" type books I have read. Dorothy Rhoads has struck a perfect balance between imparting information and telling a good story. Plot-wise, the book shares your typical coming of age story. Tigre, the 12 yr old hero, must suddenly take on new responsibilities when his father is injured. We see his journey as he become more mature and responsible. What sets this book apart is the wealth of rich detail regarding the Mayan culture and way of life. We see Tigre and the villagers and the unique routines, festivals and rituals of the Mayan way of life. The importance of the weather and rain in the society may be eye opening to children who are used to running water and sprinklers, with a foreboding drought providing most of the tension in the story. The characterization in this slim tome is very good. Tigre, his parents, and especially his critical but loving grandmother are all well-crafted. The cultural detail is outstanding, and even better, you get a real sense of how everything related to the community as a whole. The dichotomy in a culture where the Christian church is important enough that all children are named after Saints, but animal sacrifices are still made to the old gods is especially fascinating. It would be a great springboard for discussion on other religious beliefs. I especially enjoyed a small subplot of

Tigre learning more about the world around him through studies with a caring teacher- knowledge that helps him find out the reasons for problems instead of claiming the "will of the gods." I'd have liked more on this subplot. I was also pleased that the author didn't feel the need to stick in some sort of obligatory tragic death to show kids how good they have it now that we have modern medicine. That's not always needed. The book was written in 1956, so I was a little surprised at the environmental overtones. However, they have the ring of authenticity showing the traditional Mayan culture in tune with nature and the land. I read this book and immediately read it again. My only complaint is that it is too short. It is a VERY slim book, only about 80 pages. It does have small type, so it's not like many of the "chapter books" aimed at making young children feel like they're reading longer books. This book simply told its story, and ended when it was over. The book is simple and easy to read, although there are a large number of Mayan and Mexican words (dictionary is provided in the back.) It's appropriate for all ages, although I would guess that around 4th grade would be the target age. As an educator I can immediately think of hands-on activities to go along with the book, especially things involving the all important corn. There is a great deal of discussion of the Mayan gods, so I imagine that Christian families would definitely want to plan on discussion if giving to younger children. Highly recommended!

Tigre's father breaks his leg and tigre has to do all the farm work at only the age of 12. Will he survive??? This book is amazing it's suspenseful and exciting probably for ages 10+. peace out yo!!  
-ESchraf, age 10

I am a fourth grade teacher who recently read this book with my reading class. I chose it because it showed that an ordinary child was faced with a seemingly impossible challenge that he overcame with perseverance. Throughout the story, the children watched Tigre slowly take on more and more responsibility and become successful at his tasks. Although some of the vocabulary was above them, they enjoyed watching the boy mature.

The Corn Grows Ripe is a great book. I like this book because it relates to my life. It's a foreign, modern day-book written in English. The author gave me the idea of how the people lived with their country, religion, and cultures. I would recommend this book to anybody who likes to learn about foreign cultures. Since they don't have technology like us, it's interesting to read about how they solve medical and governmental problems. That's why I would recommend this book to them.

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