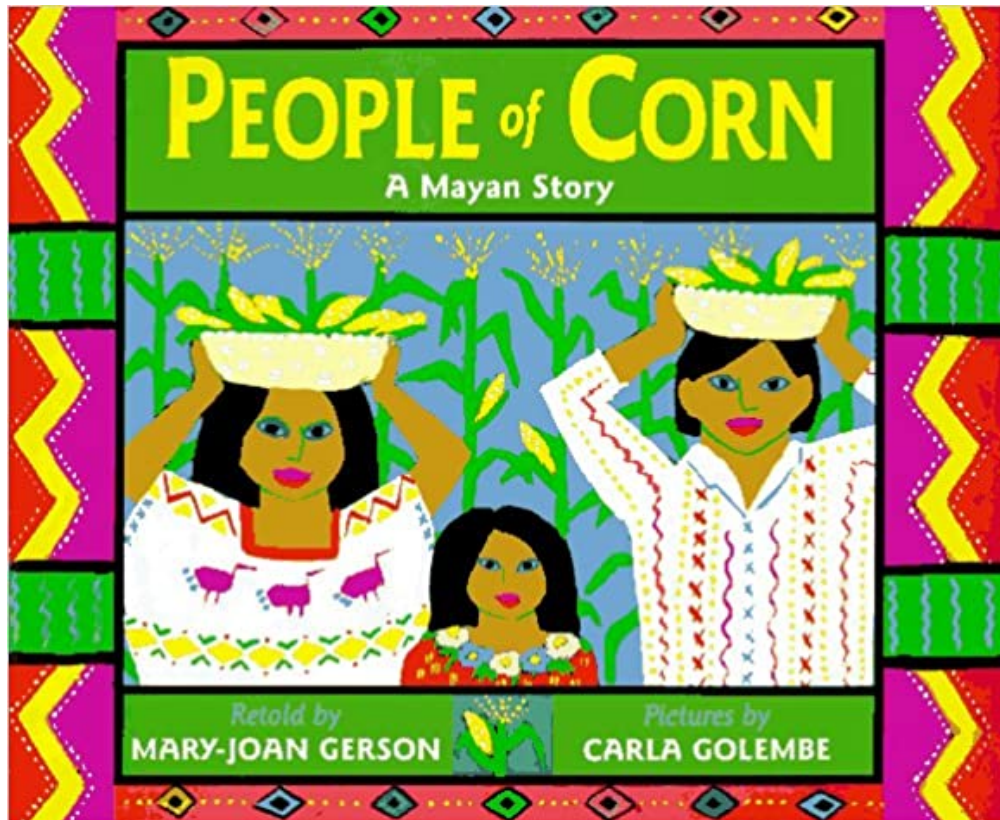




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People Of Corn: A Mayan Story



Synopsis

After several unsuccessful attempts to create grateful creatures, the Mayan gods use sacred corn to fashion a people who will thank and praise their creators.

Book Information

Age Range: 5 and up

Hardcover: 32 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Kindergarten-Grade 3?This Mayan creation myth opens in the present, depicting the importance of corn in the physical and spiritual lives of the people. Readers are then taken back to "the beginning," where the gods, Plumed Serpent and Heart of Sky, create life. Their first effort at living creatures results in animals; the second in wooden puppets. Unfortunately, the animals cannot speak and the puppets lack hearts: neither have what is needed to honor the gods. It is the gods' discovery of corn, "planted in mystery by the Grandmother of Light," that leads to the formation of the first flesh-and-blood Mayans, a people with the capacity to celebrate and remember their origins. A final act of the gods is woven seamlessly into current beliefs as the story returns to the present. The language is poetic, yet familiar. Those who have heard other creation stories (especially Genesis) will recognize the similarities. Gerson provides a brief, but well-chosen background of the Mayans as well as a source note. Golembe's flat gouache colors on black paper become even more brilliant and fanciful as the myth unfolds, yielding green and pink gods, magenta tree trunks, lavender temples. The colorful figures are in high contrast to their backgrounds, making this a good choice for group viewing. Borders based on authentic fabric designs decorate each page of text.

Use this title with David Wisniewski's Rain Player (Clarion, 1991) to explore further the role of corn in this complex civilization. It would also live up a fall program on the harvest. Wendy Lukehart, Dauphin County Library, Harrisburg, PA Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Ages 6⁺-9. For the Mayans living in the highlands of Guatemala, each full corn crop is welcomed as a miracle and harvested with grateful celebration because they believe that corn "is the spirit of life itself" and "that long ago when the world began, the first people on earth were actually made from corn." Beginning with the importance of corn in Mayan history and culture, Gerson weaves a rich tapestry as she tells the Mayan creation story of how the gods strove to create a people who would remember and honor their creators. Gerson's telling is radiantly complemented by Golembe's bold, vibrantly colored gouache paintings, which include borders and patterns taken from ancient Mayan glyphs and cloth. Mysterious and complex, ancient Mayan mythology has rarely been made so accessible and appealing, though primary-grade students will probably have some difficulty reading this by themselves. An opening author's note and closing source note contextually frame the story. Altogether, this Mayan myth is a multicultural treasure and another splendid contribution to folktale collections from the team that created *Why the Sky Is Far Away* (1992) and *How Night Came from the Sea* (1994). Annie Ayres

Received and enjoyed it.

I loved this book because I love Guatemala and Mayan stories. I wrote a blog post about this book here: [...]

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