

## Additional Vocabulary and Comprehension Questions

Setting: Mayan village in Yucatan, Mexico.

Note: For unfamiliar words, please see the glossary at the back of the book.

Q: Who were the members of Dionisio's family? [chapter 1]

A: mother, father, sister, great-grandmother, and himself [three brothers had died earlier]

Q: Why was Dionisio called that and why was he nicknamed Tigre? [chapter 1]

A: his skin color resembled the Jaguar, and his personality was spirited, mischievous, curious, and lazy

Q: Why did the Mayan create a new cornfield every few years? [chapter 2]

A: while the soil remained rich, it contained many weeds to control; the land needed a rest

Note: The Mayan had two seasons—months of the sun then months of rain.

Q: Why does the great-grandmother believe Tigre should help his father in the field? [chapter 3]

A: to build his character—to learn to finish his tasks

Q: Why does Tigre travel to find the medicine man? [chapter 3]

A: the medicine man is also a bone setter and needs to set Father's broken leg

Q: Why does Tigre hesitate to go to the medicine man? [chapter 4]

A: the distance is far—17 kilometers, he will travel in the dark, and the bush contained evil winds, demons, monsters, and witches

Q: Why did Tigre attend school at night? [chapter 5]

A: the government required all children to be literate—if a family did not school their children, their family could receive a stiff fine

Q: How did Tigre plan to cover the family's extra financial burdens?  
[chapter 5]

A: he planned a larger field and planted beans, squash, and chili peppers

Q: How did Tigre's search of the chicken coop problem differ from his family's thinking? [chapter 6]

A: he carefully searched for answers, whereas his family accepted the dead chickens as fate

Q: Why does Tigre whistle in the milpa? [chapter 7]

A: to call the wind gods to spread the flames from the 3 fires he set

Q: How did Tigre spend his time before the planting? [chapter 8]

A: making a rope for the celebration, flying kites, playing ball, hunting a small deer

Q: Describe the Hetz Mek. [chapter 11]

A: a ceremony performed at 4 months for baby boys and 3 months for baby girls; each child is introduced to the tools he/she will use in life; the god parents attend and all feast afterward

In the desire to please the gods, the medicine man builds an alter and the people offer sacrifices of "sacred water," "sacred bread," wild animals, a ceremonial drink and a hen from each family. People that worship and fear the spirits work hard to please the spirits.

Q: How did the villagers deal with the drought? [chapter 12]

A: they lit candles, prayed, and made sacrifices to the village santos; after much prayer, the Mayan returned to their old gods and performed the Chac Chac ceremony

Q: Is the Chac a light, gentle rain? [chapter 14]

A: no; strong with thunder

Q: How did the Mayan store the corn? [chapter 15]

A: they roasted the ears in an earth oven