

THE STORM RUNNER SERIES

By *New York Times* Best-Selling Author
J. C. CERVANTES



@READRIORDAN



MEET THE MAYA

The ancient Maya were a sophisticated society, developing, among other things, astronomy, calendrical systems, the concept of zero, and hieroglyphic writing. They were also noted for elaborate and highly decorated ceremonial architecture, all built without metal tools. Their farmers were expert and innovative, problem-solving water shortages by building sizeable underground reservoirs for the storage of rainwater. The Maya were equally skilled at crafts—they created intricate weaving and pottery, which they traded with distant peoples by clearing routes through jungles and swamps.

Do you even have enough brain space to absorb yet another new pantheon of outrageous gods? You might not have a choice . . . with the Storm Runner series arriving, it's time to meet the Maya.

DECOR

To prepare for your event, introduce the atmosphere of Maya landscapes and lush rain forests into your space. Using butcher paper, create backdrops of rain forests with tropical birds and flowers, or mountain ranges with volcanoes or cave openings to get attendees into the spirit of the journey Zane Obispo and his friends take in the Storm Runner series. Add to the scene with outlines of such Maya treasures such as the temples at Chichén Itzá or those in Tulum. Remember, balance the natural earth tones with colors as vibrant as this Maya mythology.

FOODS

Building a civilization (or being the gods worshipped by it!) in the hot and steamy climates of Mesoamerica is hard work, and refreshments are needed! Along with countless other contributions, the Maya helped the world discover the riches of cacao. Though its

preparation has changed significantly over time, today, thanks to the Maya, chocolate (served both hot and cold) is beloved around the world. Other staples of the Maya diet were corn products, beans, avocados, and lush fruits, so there is a wide variety to entice your partygoers with. Consider offering treats such as:

- A chocolate dipping fountain (EVERYTHING is better with chocolate!) or a hot-chocolate bar with toppings
- Fresh berries, melons, and other fruits, including bananas)
- Popcorn or a sweet-and-salty sample bar (a mix of milk and dark chocolates and flavored popcorns)
- Guacamole, salsa, corn relish, and corn chips
- Frosted sugar cookies in the shape of flowers, toucans, or jaguars

CRAFTS AND ACTIVITIES TO GET THE PARTY STARTED!

The following crafts and activities will put your partygoers into a Maya-inspired spirit!

GETTING CRAFTY

The Maya produced some of the finest art from Mesoamerica. They used a variety of materials, such as stone, wood, ceramics, and bone to decorate their buildings and to make objects that were either sacred or served specific functions. To get readers excited about the Storm Runner series and their introduction to Maya myths, consider the following craft projects or stations for your event:

MAGNIFICENT MAYA MOSAICS

Offer attendees a chance to create their own portrait using plastic tiles or small pieces of colored paper. Begin by having sheets of construction paper, pencils, and small handheld mirrors available. Remind readers that creating a perfect likeness isn't necessary—the focus should be on using the colored tiles or paper to create a unique look that captures their individual spirit.

**MAYA MASKS**

The ancient Maya made exquisite masks from stone, wood, gold, obsidian, and shell. These masks often contained many pieces of jade arranged in mosaic patterns. Maya royalty also had personal items

beautifully decorated in these patterns. Readers can make their own intricate mosaic masks in the style of the ancient Maya. Begin by sharing some mosaic and mask examples (images can easily be found online); then have participants draw and cut out a mask shape—with eyes, mouth, and nose openings—on an 8" x 10" piece of construction paper, oak tag, or cardboard. Next, cut out tissue paper "tiles," each no larger than an inch square. Then demonstrate how to glue the tiles one at a time next to each other on the mask. Once the glue is dry, invite participants to try on their masks.

MAYA POTTERY

The Maya were known for sand-colored pots made from Yucatán Peninsula clay. Begin by sharing images of Maya pots that have survived. Next, give each participant an easy-to-use and fast-hardening clay. Have them sculpt a small pot with their hands. Show them Maya examples where the exterior of the pot is painted with traditional designs. Discuss the colors they see most commonly (reds, blues, and yellows) and encourage them to create their own designs on the pot.

HIEROGLYPH RUBBING OR GYLPH CREATIONS

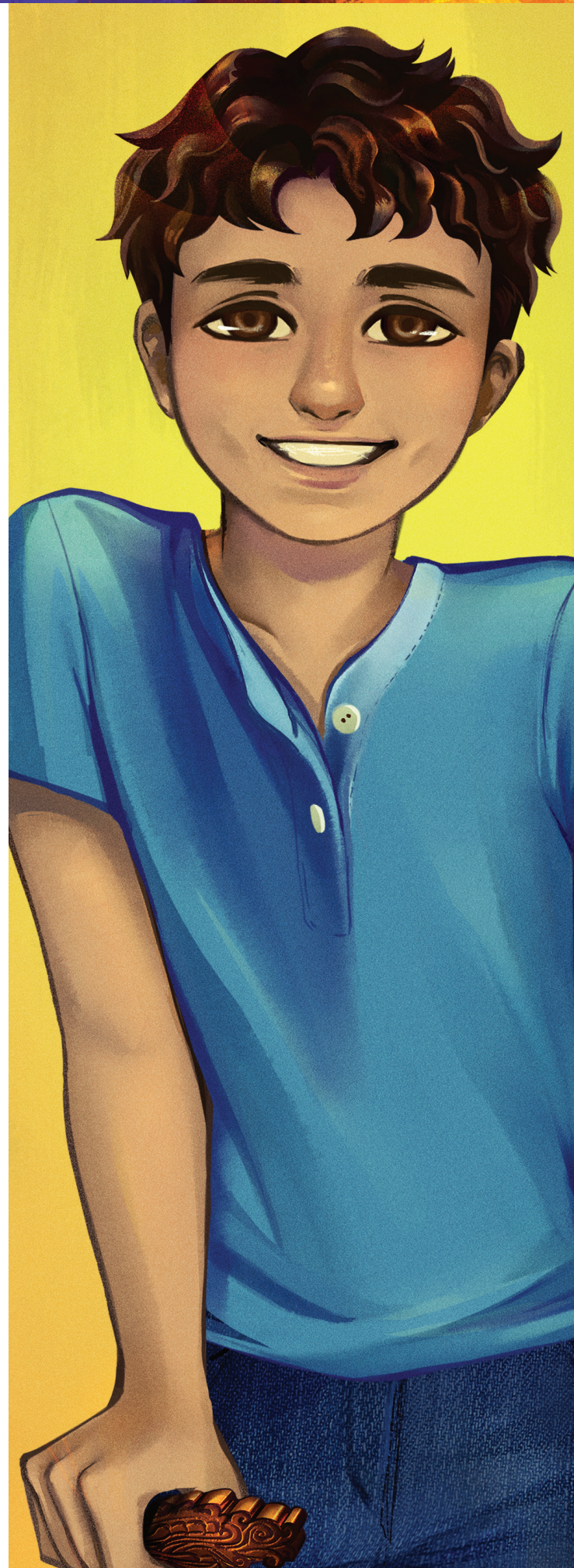
The Maya developed one of the most comprehensive hieroglyphic systems in the Americas. Use card stock to create picture messages for readers to discover and interpret. Tape cutouts of card stock on a wall to create a raised surface that participants can make a rubbing of by placing a piece of paper over the hieroglyph and rolling a crayon over it. Partygoers can then make predictions of what they believe the message states. Alternatively, using web resources, help readers create basic hieroglyphs of their own that are similar in style and design to those created by the Maya.

MACAW HEADDRESS PARADE

The Maya associated macaws with the sun god because of their vibrantly colored feathers. Rulers and high priests were often depicted in hieroglyphs wearing a macaw headdress. Be sure to have images available to offer context and provide inspiration. Invite participants to make their own colorful royal headdress with craft feathers and poster board. Readers can also draw the face and beak of the macaw and then attach colorful feathers to it. Once the assembly and drying are completed, offer readers a chance to adorn themselves with their headdress and model their work for those gathered.

AMAZING ANIMAL PENDANTS

For the upper-class and royal Maya, accessorizing with jewelry was important, and pendants shaped like animals were especially popular. In Maya artifacts, images such as macaws, deer, spider monkeys, rattlesnakes, jaguars, turtles, and crocodiles are often depicted. Ask readers to select an animal they either most appreciate or identify with. Give each reader a ball of self-hardening clay to shape into his or her chosen animal. After participants have finished their craft, ask for volunteers to show off their pendant and offer a brief explanation of why they selected the animal they did.



MAYA MATCH-UP

Read the descriptions below (we have provided hints using the gods you already know, love, and loathe) and then draw a line to the name of the correct Maya god.

1. The skeletal god of death, aka the Stinking One. This god carries a violent grudge against other gods and is consumed with the desire to bring about their destruction. You'd think, after centuries of reflection, this guy would learn to let things go, but noooo.

(HINT: SIMILAR TO THE GREEK TITAN KRONOS AND VILLAINS BEFORE HIM.)

2. Goddess of the Blood Moon. Unlike many other divine moms, this goddess had a direct hand in raising her sons, Jun'ajpu' (HOON-ah-POOH) and Xb'alamkej (sh-bah-lam-KEH). They grew up to be two of the greatest champions in Maya history.

(HINT: THESE HERO TWINS COULD GIVE ARU SHAH'S PANDAVAS A RUN FOR THEIR MONEY.)

3. The god of wind, storm, and fire, and one of the two creator gods. This god is something of a craftsman. He's actually responsible for designing the human body, although it did take him four tries before he was satisfied. And because he wasn't quite happy with tentacles, you have thumbs!

(HINT: SIMILAR TO HEPHAESTUS ON MOUNT OLYMPUS.)

4. The other (some say cooler) creator god. This god shared his valuable knowledge with humans many years ago before eventually returning to the sea. Please don't tell Poseidon he's there—OI' Barnacle Beard would lose his mind if he found out an even more powerful god was currently residing in his domain.

5. The god of war. Big, burly dude who is never seen without his leather jacket and motorcycle boots. Loves a good fight and is known to be aggressive toward chosen heroes and demigods. Hey, wait a second . . . Where have we heard this before?

(HINT: HE'S A LOT LIKE ARES.)

ANSWERS

IXKIK'
(PRONOUNCED SH-KEEK)

NAKON
(PRONOUNCED NAH-CONE)

K'UKUMATZ
(PRONOUNCED KOO-KOO-MATS)

AH-PUCH
(PRONOUNCED AH-POOCH)

HURAKAN
(PRONOUNCED HOOR-AH-KAHN)





ARE THESE STATEMENTS MAYA FACT OR FICTION?

1. Nawals are powerful shape-shifters.

FACT or FICTION

2. Ah-Puch is depicted as incredibly attractive and has legions of gods and mortals hoping to garner affection from him.

FACT or FICTION

3. Jade is considered an incredibly powerful element in Mayan myths.

FACT or FICTION

4. The god Hurakan has one human-looking leg while the other is shaped like a serpent.

FACT or FICTION

5. The Maya are known for their scientific and mathematical contributions.

FACT or FICTION

6. Like other world mythologies, Maya mythology offers creation myths.

FACT or FICTION

7. Ixtab is described as wearing a white cape made up of small bones and hemmed with teeth.

FACT or FICTION

8. In Maya mythology, a god breaking the Sacred Oath is of no consequence.

FACT or FICTION

9. Ixtab and Ah-Puch are the best of friends.

FACT or FICTION

10. The calendar systems developed by the Maya are still influential today.

FACT or FICTION

1. FACT 2. FICTION Ah-Puch is a stinky, skeletal one. 3. FACT 4. FACT 5. FACT 6. FACT 7. FACT 8. FICTION A god breaking the Sacred Oath may be punished by death. 9. FICTION While being held in captivity, Ixtab has ruled over death. They are definitely enemies. 10. FACT

MATH MATTERS—MAYA STYLE

The Maya were incredibly influential in the areas of math and science, and they created a “vigesimal” math system, with a base of 20. Like our math system, it is positional, meaning the numeric symbol indicates its place in value. The following table illustrates the place value in its vertical format.

Number	Mayan Form	Number	Mayan Form
0		10	
1		11	
2		12	
3		13	
4		14	
5		15	
6		16	
7		17	
8		18	
9		19	

MATH MATTERS—MAYA STYLE

Working either in small groups or independently, use the Maya number chart to identify each of the following numbers:

1.  = _____

6.  = _____

2.  = _____

7.  = _____

3.  = _____

8.  = _____

4.  = _____

9.  = _____

5.  = _____

10.  = _____

Without looking at the chart, can you remember how to draw the Maya numerical symbol for each number?

11. 12 = _____

16. 20 = _____

12. 17 = _____

17. 6 = _____

13. 4 = _____

18. 13 = _____

14. 11 = _____

19. 9 = _____

15. 10 = _____

20. 0 = _____