



THE

DEER



by Rob Arego
illustrated by Robert McGuire

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT



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Carlos and his mother move to a new home.



Carlos missed the playground. He missed playing basketball with his friends. He missed going to the corner store. He even missed the sound of traffic honking on the avenue every morning and afternoon during rush hour.



It had been four weeks since Carlos and his mother had moved to this town. He knew that his mother had gotten a good job at the college. He knew that they were going to have more money to live. But couldn't she have gotten a job in a place that was a little more interesting?

🔊 The big woods behind his new house may have excited his mother, but it seemed like a wasteland to Carlos.

“It’s so peaceful,” Carlos’s mother told him.

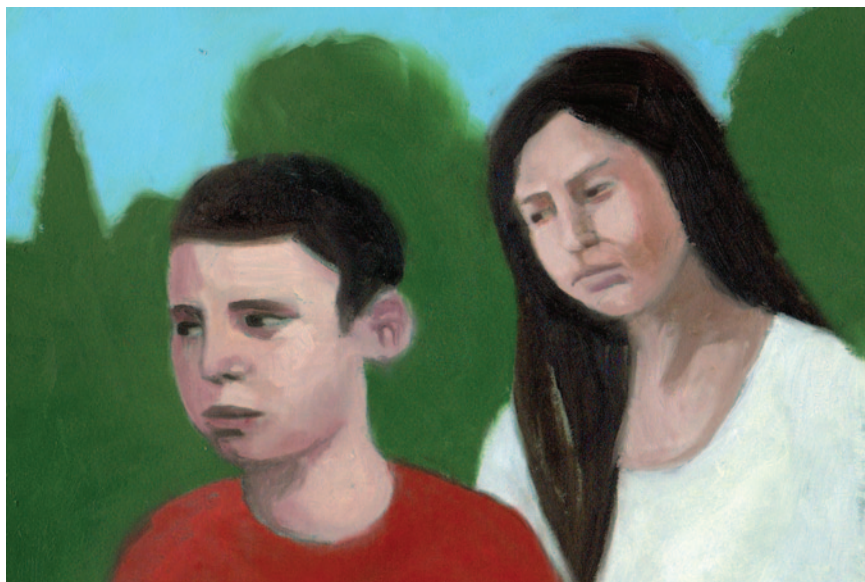
“Peaceful, maybe,” Carlos replied. “Boring, definitely.”

“You should spend time exploring back there,” she urged him. “There are many amazing...”

🔊 “Amazing what?” he cut her off. “Trees?”

Carlos’s mother shook her head. This move wasn’t going that well. Carlos seemed so different than her happy son back in the city.

🔊 Carlos doesn’t like his new home.





Carlos is bored.



Carlos had made a few friends at school, but after class he always went straight back home.

“Why don’t you join a club after school?” his mother asked him. “That’s a good way to meet other kids.”

Carlos shrugged and asked his mother if he could watch some TV before dinner.


His mother felt guilty about the move. “Okay,” she gave in. “But just for a half hour.”


🔊 One day after school, Carlos was making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich in the kitchen. The counter faced out the big window into the backyard and the big woods beyond. Carlos had walked back there with his mother once. She was so excited about everything they saw. He was so excited when they turned and headed back home!


🔊 As Carlos sliced his sandwich, he saw something move out of the corner of his eye. At first, he didn't pay attention. But suddenly, he spied it right in the middle of the backyard. It was a big deer!

🔊 Carlos sees a deer in his yard.

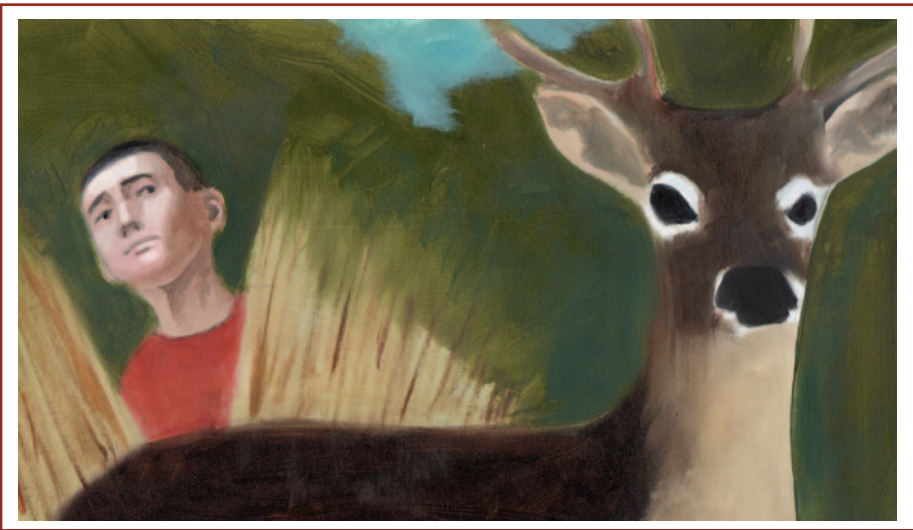


 Carlos watched the deer as it nibbled on one of the rotting apples that had fallen from a tree. As it chewed, the deer's **piercing** eyes flitted back and forth across the yard, watching for danger.

 Carlos had never seen a real, live deer. He wanted to take a closer look. He slowly cracked open the back door and slid out onto the porch. The deer knew he was there immediately. It bounded off into the woods, its white tail flashing through the brush like a light as it ran away.

 The deer runs away.





Carlos sees the deer in the woods.




Carlos **descended** the stairs and walked to the edge of the woods. He took several steps inside, peering out to see if he could see the deer.


The deer was nowhere to be seen. But then, as the soft breeze swayed the bushes in one direction, he caught sight of the deer. It was not more than thirty yards away.

“It must be waiting for me to go,” he thought to himself.



Carlos backed his way out of the woods. Then he looked at the remains of the apple the deer was nibbling. That gave him an idea. “I bet the deer will come back to finish that little **delicacy**,” he told himself. “This time I’ll be waiting for it.”

 Carlos quietly walked to the other side of the yard and hid behind some bushes. He stayed as still as he could. Then he peered in the direction from which he thought the deer might reappear. He waited and waited, but the deer didn't appear.

 Just when Carlos was about to give up, he saw the deer nose its way out of the woods. It glanced one way and then the other. Sure that it was safe, it stepped out into the light and found the apple again.

From where he was, Carlos could see its body **quivering**, as if it was a Geiger counter that picked up signs of danger near it. Its dark eyes never seemed to rest as it nibbled. Then a second later, the deer ran off again into the woods.

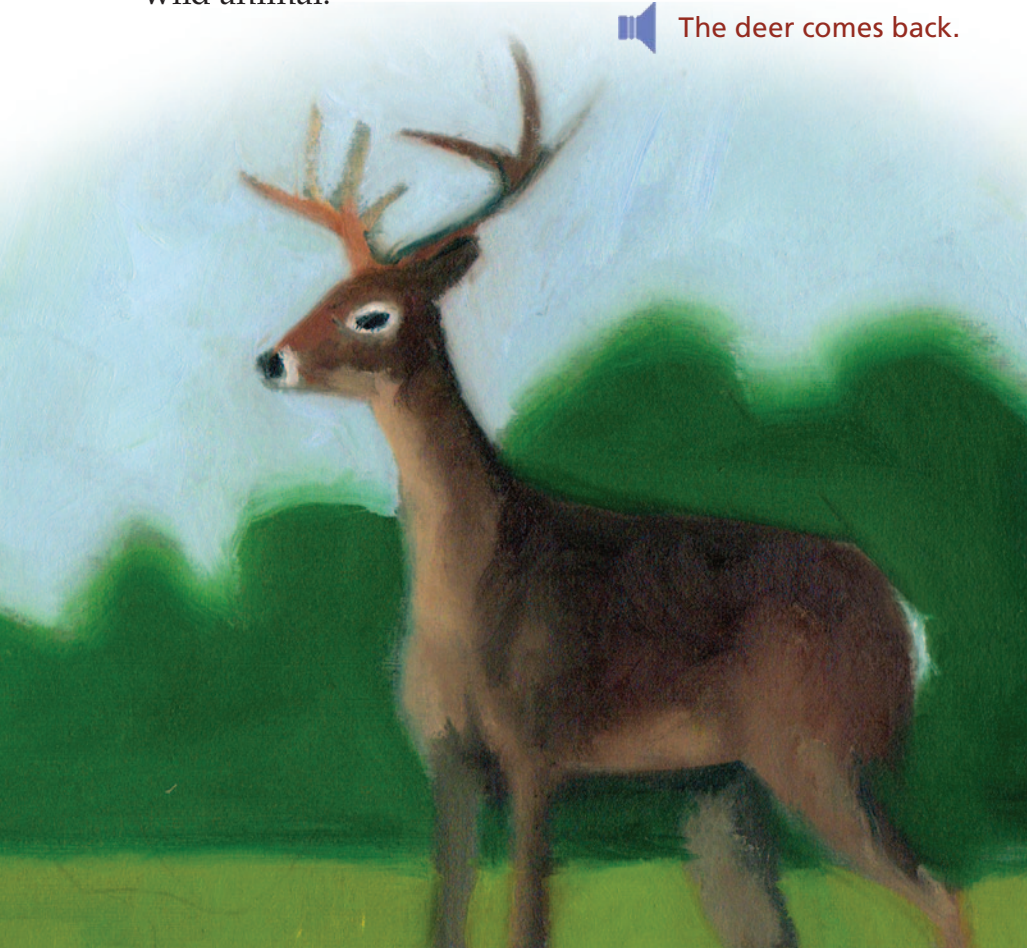




Carlos went back inside the house. His heart was racing a little. At first, he thought it was just because he had become chilled as the cold dusk started to fall. But then he realized that it was the deer that had made him so excited. In the city, the only animals that he had ever seen were the pigeons and squirrels at the park. This was a real wild animal!



The deer comes back.





The deer comes back for apples.



The next day after school, Carlos made a beeline to his backyard. He shook one of the lower branches of the apple tree until a few apples plunked to the ground. Then he picked himself a good spot from which to wait for the deer.



At first, he didn't think the deer was coming. Then sure enough, it returned. It poked its head out of the brush and glanced in both directions. Then it walked out to the apple tree and nibbled on one of the apples on the ground.

Carlos was a lot closer now. He could see the deer's chest **heaving** as it breathed. It's brown fur rose and fell around its ribs.



"I wonder how close I can get," Carlos wondered. He crawled towards the deer, trying to stay as quiet as possible. But the deer sensed he was there and bolted away.


That gave Carlos an idea. "What if I were a deer?" he thought. "If someone were sneaking up to me, I would be afraid. I would think he'd be trying to hurt me. But if someone was right out there in the open, I wouldn't be so scared. I would think they weren't trying to hurt me."



Carlos tries to get close to the deer.






 The next day, Carlos shook a few more apples out of the tree. This time he didn't hide. He sat in the middle of the yard and waited. It seemed to take forever before the deer finally appeared.

At first, the deer wouldn't come out of the woods. But the lure of the apples was too much for it. Step by step, it made its way out of the woods. Carlos could see that its body was coiled tight like a spring, ready to bolt at the slightest movement by him. He tried to stay as still as he could.

 Inch by inch, the deer moved to the apples. Then finally, with one eye still looking at Carlos, it bent down to take a bite. Carlos could swear that he saw the deer relax a little before its body tensed up again. After a few bites, it was off again.




 Carlos gets close to the deer.

 Now Carlos moved even closer, sitting with his back against the tree. The half-eaten apple was not more than ten feet from him.

A short while later, the deer was back. It nervously approached the apple. Two steps forward, one step back.... One step forward, two steps back....

Finally, the deer bent its neck down to nibble on the apple. Carlos sat there, watching its teeth crunch through the apple skin.


 Just then, Carlos heard the back door open. His mother peered out, “Carlos,” she called.

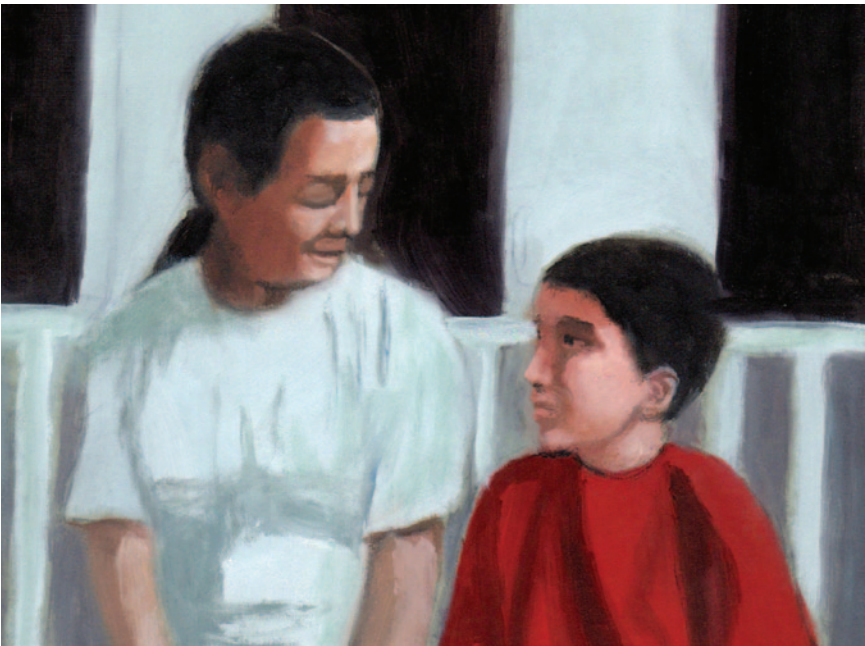
The deer shot off into the woods.

“I’m sorry,” she said to him, once she realized that she scared away the deer.

“It’s okay, Mom,” Carlos replied. “I know the deer will be back.”

Carlos’s Mom smiled as well. She hadn’t seen Carlos smile in weeks.

 Carlos and his mother talk.





Responding

**TARGET SKILL****Story Structure**

Who are the characters in *The Deer*? Where does the story take place? What problem does the main character have? How does the problem get solved? Copy and complete the chart below.

Characters: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carlos• Mom	Setting: a boy's backyard
Problem:	
Solution:	



Write About It

Text to Self In *The Deer*, Carlos is excited to see a deer in his backyard. Think about a time when you saw a wild animal for the first time. Write a paragraph that tells what happened. Describe what you thought and how you felt.



TARGET VOCABULARY

delicacy

descended

diminishing

fitful

heave

marveling

piercing

quivered

rhythmic

savage



TARGET SKILL

Story Structure Examine details about characters, setting, and plot.



TARGET STRATEGY

Question Ask questions about the story before you read, as you read, and after you read.



GENRE

An **adventure** story has exciting events that are full of risk and danger.

Level: P

DRA: 38

Genre:

Adventure

Strategy:

Question

Skill:

Story Structure

Word Count: 1,248

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