

# Two Days in May

by Harriet Peck Taylor

Narrator 1	Sonia	Mr. Donovan	Carl Jackson	Isidro
Narrator 2	Mama	Mr Smiley	Steve Scully	Chester
Narrator 3	Papa	Mr. Benny	Ana Sanchez	
	Peach	Pigeon Lady	Yasamura sisters	

Sonia Early one Saturday morning in May, I went to our fire escape window and rubbed the sleep from my eyes. I looked down at the small garden I had planted behind our apartment building.

Narrator 1 Five animals were grazing on the new lettuce in the garden!

Sonia Mama! Mama! Come see what's in our yard!

Narrator 2 Mama hurried over to the window.

Mama Sonia, those animals are deer, but how did they get here? I'll run and tell Mr. Donovan.

Narrator 3 By the time Papa and I got out to the courtyard, a small crowd was gathering.

Sonia Papa, why are there deer in the city?

Papa The deer may have come all this way looking for food. They probably smelled your garden.

Sonia I have never seen such an amazing sight.

Narrator 1 Their fur was a golden brown, and they balanced on tiny hooves. They had nervous tails, and eyes that were big and black and gentle.

Narrator 2 Down the block a train rumbled by, but here life seemed to stand still. Pigeons and squirrels were almost the only birds or animals anyone ever saw in the neighborhood.

Sonia I recognized many neighbors.

Narrator 3 There was Isidro Sanchez and his sister, Ana. Standing near were Mr. Smiley, owner of Smiley's Laundromat,

Sonia and my best friend, Peach,

Narrator 3 and Chester and Clarence Martin and the Yasamura sisters from down the hall.

Sonia I saw Mr. Benny, the taxi driver, and the old Pigeon Lady, who was smiling brightly.

Narrator 1 Even neighbors who were almost strangers were standing close to each other and whispering in a friendly way.

Narrator 2 Well, everyone except Mr. Smiley and the Pigeon Lady, who were not on speaking terms. Mr. Smiley was angry because the Pigeon Lady fed her pigeons in front of his Laundromat, and he thought that was bad for business.

Narrator 3 Mr. Donovan, the landlord, approached Papa. They spoke in hushed voices.

Donovan Luis, I, too, think the deer are really beautiful, but we both know they can't stay here. They could be hit by a car. They belong in the woods, not in the city. I think we'd better call the animal control officers.

Narrator 1 Papa nodded solemnly, and they walked off.

Narrator 2 The Pigeon Lady came up to Peach and me.

Pigeon Lady Oh, girls, aren't they wonderful!

Girls Yes!

Pigeon Lady I think two of the deer may be smaller. Those are probably females, or does. The males are called bucks. I used to see deer many years ago when I lived in the country.

Narrator 3 Soon, Papa and Mr. Donovan returned with worried looks on their faces. They gathered the group together.

Papa The animal control office wants to shoot the deer. It's the law. The city is afraid the deer will starve.

Donovan There aren't enough woods left for all the deer to find a home. That's why the young deer wander far away. They're looking for territory of their own.

Narrator 1 Everyone was so quiet that all you could hear were street sounds: honking and beeping, rumbling and humming. Mr. Benny was the first to speak.

Mr. Benny We can't let them shoot the deer. There must be another way.

Yasamura Yeah. That's right!

Narrator 2 All around, people were nodding in agreement.

Chester They wouldn't shoot the deer in front of this many people. It would be too dangerous.

- Papa It's true. We can form a human wall around the deer without getting too close.
- Isidro Right on! We'll stay here until we can figure out what to do.
- All Narr. And that was the beginning of our peaceful protest.
- Mr. Benny I remember reading a few months back about an organization that rescues and relocates animals that are stranded or injured. A fox had been hit by a car but wasn't badly hurt. This outfit took it in until it healed and then found a new home for it far from busy streets. I'll go see if I can find the number.
- Narrator 3 A little while later, Mr. Benny returned.
- Mr. Benny The wildlife rescuer isn't in at the moment, but I left a message for him to call. I said it was an emergency.
- Narrator 1 When the animal control officer arrived, he saw the crowd surrounding the deer and decided not to take any chances.
- S.Scully If you don't mind, folks, I'll just hang around until you've all had enough and gone home.
- Narrator 2 No one was leaving.
- Narrator 3 They stayed all afternoon, waiting anxiously, hoping to hear from the rescue organization. They got to know one another better, and learned more about the deer. Peach's eyes were wide and bright.
- Peach Look how they rotate their big soft ears to the left and right.
- Clarence We studied deer in science. Their hearing is very sharp. It helps them detect enemies approaching from far away.
- Mr. Benny I sometimes see this kind of deer at night, in the headlights, when I drive way past the city limits. When they're startled by the taxi's lights, their tails go up like flags. The tails are white underneath, which means the animals are white-tailed deer.
- Narrator 1 The deer grazed and slept cautiously, always alert to danger. They watched with curious, intelligent eyes.
- Narrator 2 The people made them uncomfortable. These really were wild animals. The neighbors tried to keep their distance and not make any sudden movements.
- Narrator 3 When evening came, the crowd grew. They talked quietly and told jokes while keeping watch over their silent friends. They ordered pizza from Giuseppe's. Ana Sanchez spoke to the animal control officer.

Sanchez      Would you like a slice of pizza?

S. Scully     Thanks so much. My name is Steve Scully, and I understand how hard this must be for all of you. This is the part of my job I dislike. The problem is population growth. We've built towns and highways where there were once forests and streams. Now there is very little habitat left for the deer. There is no easy solution.

Sonia         I begged Papa to let me sleep outside all night, since almost everyone was staying. Mama came out with my baby brother, Danny. She brought blankets, a quilt, a jacket, and even my stuffed dog, Hershey. Mama sat close and draped her arm across my shoulders.

Mama         Are you sure you'll be warm enough, Sonia?

Sonia         I'm sure.

Narrator 1   They all sat silently together, admiring the deer.

Mama         I have to go put Danny to bed.

Sonia         She kissed me on the top of my head.

Mama         Sweet dreams, pumpkin.

Sonia         I slept like a bear cub, curled in a ball against Papa's broad back.

Narrator 2   The next morning, she awoke with the sun in her eyes and city sounds buzzing in her ears. Papa hugged her.

Papa         How did you like camping out?

Sonia         I dreamed I was sleeping with the deer in cool forests under tall trees.

Papa         You were, Sonia! But not in the forest. I looked at the deer.

Sonia         Has the wildlife rescuer called back?

Papa         Yes, Sonia. The organization called late last night and hopes to get someone out here this morning.

Narrator 3   The group was quiet as everyone continued to wait.

Narrator 1   Later that morning, a rusty orange truck pulled up. The man who got out had a friendly, open face. All eyes were on him.

C. Jackson   Hi, folks. My name is Carl Jackson, and I'm with the wildlife rescue organization, I need to put the deer in crates in order to take them to our center. Don't be alarmed I'm going to shoot them with a small amount of tranquilizer to make them sleep for a little while.

Narrator 2 Then, as they wobbled on unsteady legs, he grabbed them gently and guided them toward the wooden crates. Carl turned to the crowd and smiled.

C. Jackson I'm an animal lover, too, and all of you should feel proud for helping save these deer. I'll find a home for them in the woods, where they'll be safe and happy and have plenty to eat.

Narrator 3 Steve Scully came forward and extended his hand to Carl.

S. Scully Glad you came, man.

Narrator 1 A cheer went up from the crowd. People slapped each other on the back. Isidro high-fived everyone, including Mr. Donovan and the Pigeon Lady.

Sonia Peach and I hugged each other.

Narrator 2 Papa shook hands with Carl and Steve.

Sonia I said good-bye to Teresa and Sandy Yasamura and to Mr. Benny. I even saw Mr. Smiley shake the Pigeon Lady's hand.

Mr. Smiley Maybe you can feed the pigeons behind my Laundromat. I have a little space back there.

Narrator 3 The Pigeon Lady smiled.

Narrator 1 A few days later, Papa got a call from Carl. One of the does had given birth to two fawns! And Carl had found a home for all seven deer in a wooded area northwest of the city.

Sonia Sometimes, when I'm sitting on the fire escape, watching the flickering city lights, I think of the deer. In my mind, they're gliding silently across tall grass meadows all aglow in silver moonlight.