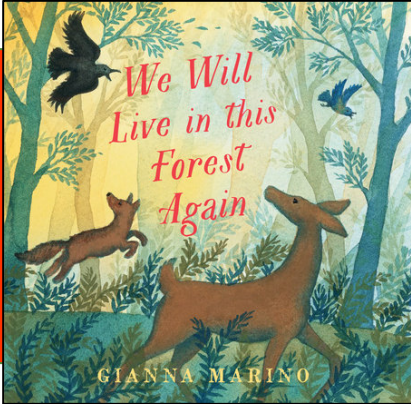


HOLIDAY HOUSE | EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



NEAL PORTER BOOKS

We Will Live in this Forest Again by Gianna Marino

HC: 9780823446995 • Ages 4–8

★ “Reassurance about the **resilience** of the natural world.”
—*Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review*

About the Book

When a thriving forest is swallowed by wildfire the animals brace themselves, then look to new beginnings.

At first, they didn't notice the spark flying above the dry treetops. But then the smoke blew from the north, and the flames began to grow. Author/illustrator Gianna Marino uses lush watercolors to explore the bitter-sweet cycle of burning and rebirth in the forest. Readers follow a lone deer as it sees its only home scorched by flame.

A Northern California resident herself, Gianna witnessed the 2017 Sonoma wildfire firsthand when it came within inches of destroying her property. Her personal experience is palpably reflected through her portrayal of dignified animal silhouettes and stark, ashen landscapes in the wake of the fire. The book closes with an essay describing her encounter with the wildfire.

Discussion Questions

- Think about the title of the book. How does the title and the cover illustration suggest the setting of the book? What does the word “again” imply? How does the cover illustration reveal the characters in the book? Why do you think the animals are running and looking behind them? Flip over the book and look at the back cover illustration. Discuss how the back cover reveals the problem or conflict.
- How does the reader know which animal is telling the story? Describe the forest in the first double-page spread. How does the illustrator make the forest look dense? How many shades of green do you see? What other colors are used to paint the forest? Take note of how the colors of the forest change as the story progresses. What are the colors of autumn?



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- The deer says, “I used to think the forest would always be our home.” How does this statement help define the conflict, or the problem? Note the direction the animals are running. How does this create a line that leads readers to the next page?
- Point out the spark that causes the problem. Why don’t the animals notice it? How do they smell smoke before they see it? What does the wind contribute to the problem? How do the colors of the forest change as the fire gets closer? As the fire approaches, the animals look like silhouettes. How does this create a feeling of fright? Why are the trees like shadows? How else does the illustrator reveal a dark mood and chaos in the forest?
- Define *fragile*. The deer thinks that the mountain lion is the “fiercest” animal in the forest. How does he become fragile as the fire grows? Explain how the artist transforms the lion from fierce to fragile.
- *Personification* is a literary element that gives an object human qualities and emotion. Read the following passage: “Fire snapped at our fur and feathers and hooves and paws, swallowing our trees and blackening our sky.” What is being personified in the sentence? How does this use of personification create a strong image of what is taking place? *Verbs* are parts of speech that show action. “Snapped” is a verb in this sentence. Find other verbs used in the text of the book.
- Take a look at the illustration where the animals stop running. Why is this illustration painted in black and gray? In literature, the *climax* is the turning point in the story. Debate whether this page is the climax of the story. How do the animals look sad and defeated? Explain the following sentence, “But we were stronger.” How does this suggest hope? Explain how the illustrations become lighter and brighter as the forest is returned to the animals. Read the title of the book once more. Connect the word “again” to the hope suggested on this page.
- Read the Wildfire Facts at the end of the book. Not all wildfires are started by people, but most are. Discuss what everyone can do to prevent forest fires.

Guide prepared by Pat Scales, retired school librarian and independent consultant, Greenville, South Carolina.

About the Author



Photo Credit: Lisa Kristine

Gianna Marino, author-illustrator of *We Will Live in this Forest Again*, has written and illustrated numerous articles for travel and leisure magazines. Her children’s books include *Zoopa: An Animal Alphabet*, *One Too Many*, *Meet Me at the Moon*, *Too Tall Houses*, *Following Papa’s Song*, and *If I Had a Horse*. She also created the illustrations for Chelsea Clinton’s *Don’t Let Them Disappear*. Though she still wanders the world, Gianna now lives in Northern California and works full-time writing and illustrating.

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