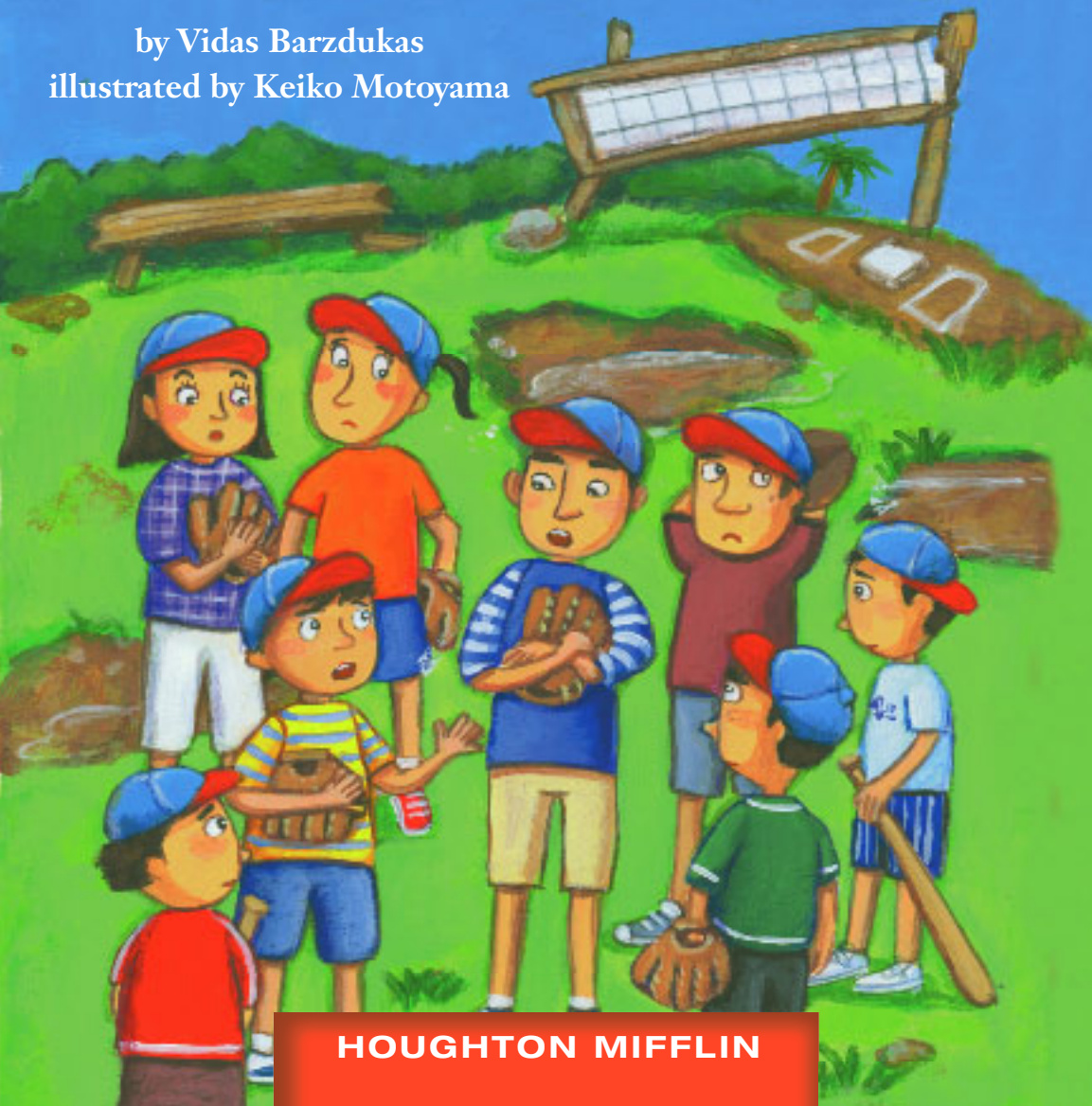




The New Field

by Vidas Barzdukas
illustrated by Keiko Motoyama



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN



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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT
School Publishers

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 Rain began to fall as Miguel hurried down the street holding his baseball mitt. He was late, but that was okay. His sister, Ella, promised she would save him a seat.

 “Miguel!” called Ella, as he ran in. “Good timing. You almost missed him.”

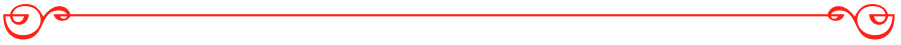
The crowd in the coffee shop suddenly cheered. Miguel looked at the TV and smiled.

Pedro Sanchez was at bat. Pedro had grown up in their village. Everyone in the Dominican Republic cheered for him. He was Miguel’s favorite baseball player.

 Pedro was the strongest, fastest, and best player in Major League Baseball. Some said he could throw a baseball across three football fields. Others said he was so strong he could hit a baseball into outer space. Miguel knew this talk was silly, yet sometimes he wondered if it could be true.







▶ Miguel watched Pedro step into the batter's box. The game was tied. It was Pedro's **final** time at bat. He put up his hand to the umpire, took a few **practice** swings, and then waited for the pitch. He looked like a tiger ready to pounce.

▶ Miguel knew the routine well. He had practiced Pedro's moves hundreds of times in the mirror. Sometimes Ella laughed when she saw him pretending to swing like Pedro, but he knew that she did the same thing, too.






🔊 CRACK! Sanchez blasted the first pitch out of the park. The crowd **roared** as the ball went up and up. It seemed to go on forever. Maybe he *could* hit the ball into outer space.


🔊 “Did you see that hit?” Miguel asked his sister after the game. “I think the ball hit a plane.”

“You’re so silly,” she said with a grin.
“Nobody can hit the ball that high.”






 The rain had stopped, but Miguel and Ella had to jump over the puddles next to the curb. Their friends were already waiting for them at the baseball field. The grass was long and thick. The stands were in bad shape. Even the old scoreboard looked like it was about to fall over. Miguel hated what had happened to the field.

 Rico walked over to them. “No game today,” he said, shaking his head.

“What?” said Miguel. “Why not?”

“There’s a giant puddle in the outfield,” said Rico. “Someone could slip and fall. They could really get hurt.”

 Miguel sighed. He knew the field was in bad shape. “When is someone going to fix up that old baseball field?”

“This village is full of farmers, Miguel,” said Rico. “People don’t have extra money to fix a baseball field.”







🔊 Suddenly, there was a yell from across the field. It was their friend, Ivan. He was carrying a newspaper.

🔊 “Look!” was all Ivan could say when he reached them. He handed Miguel the newspaper and smiled. “Read it!”

🔊 Miguel read the story aloud as the others crowded around him. In a few weeks, Pedro was coming home to fix the baseball field. It would have dugouts, a fence, and a scoreboard built by workmen. The children in the village were asked to help, too.



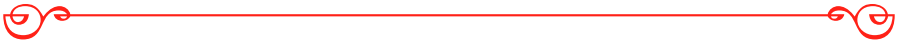


🔊 The next few weeks went by quickly. During the day, the workmen and the children worked on the field. They cut the grass. They took down the old scoreboard and stands.

🔊 Miguel was so excited that he could not sleep or eat. He didn't want to watch television. He lay in bed and imagined what it might be like to meet his hero.

🔊 Finally it was time for Pedro's visit! Miguel and Ella woke up early. Then they grabbed their baseball mitts and hurried through the village.






🔊 Rico, Ivan, and the others were already at the field. A few children from another village had joined them. Nearby, a few of the workmen emptied dirt, tools, and building materials from the back of some pickup trucks.

🔊 A black car slowly drove up to the field. The children stood in a long row and waited. The car door opened.





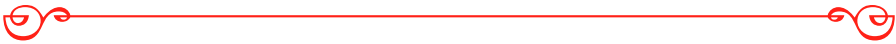
 Pedro stepped out and waved to the children. *“Hola, amigos!”* he said with a grin.

Miguel was too excited to say anything at first. Pedro was even bigger in person than he was on TV.

“Are we ready to get to work?” asked Pedro.

“Yes!” the children all shouted.





▶ Miguel and the other children worked hard all week. They put dirt in the infield. The workers put up a new fence and scoreboard. Then Miguel and the children painted them.

▶ Finally, they were finished. The children sat on the grass and wiped the sweat from their eyes. It had been a long week.

▶ Pedro walked over to the children. He smiled at the group. “Who wants to play a game of baseball?”





🔊 The children jumped up and cheered. They ran onto the new field. Then they chose teams and took their **positions** on the baseball diamond. Pedro gave the children batting tips and cheered them on as they hit the ball and ran around the bases.

🔊 Several hours passed. The sun sank lower in the sky. Finally, it was the ninth inning. The score was tied.





▶ Miguel took a deep breath and stepped into the batter's box. Pedro stood nearby, watching him. Miguel put up his hand, took a few practice swings, and crouched like a tiger, just like Pedro. He looked back to see Pedro smiling at him.

▶ Then the pitcher threw the ball. Miguel swung the bat.

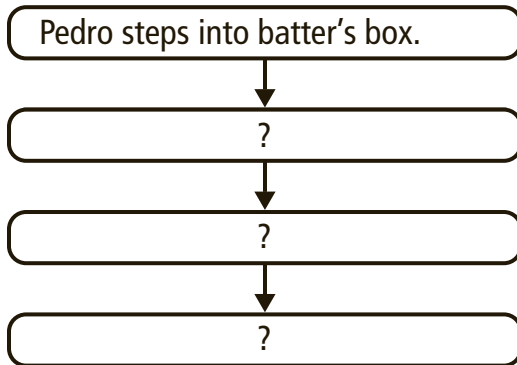
CRACK! The ball went up and up. It seemed to go on forever.

Responding



TARGET SKILL Sequence of Events

What does Pedro do before he hits the ball? Copy the chart below and list the other steps that Pedro takes.



Write About It

Text to Text Pedro and his sister help fix up a baseball field. Write a fictional narrative paragraph about two children who help fix something. Tell what they fix, why they fix it, and how they feel when it is done.



TARGET VOCABULARY

cheered
curb
extra
final

hurried
position
practice
roared

EXPAND YOUR VOCABULARY

imagined
league
major

materials
umpire



TARGET SKILL

Sequence of Events

Tell the order in which things happen.



TARGET STRATEGY

Visualize

Picture what is happening as you read.



GENRE Realistic fiction is a story that could happen in real life.

Level: M

DRA: 28

Genre:

Realistic Fiction

Strategy:

Visualize

Skill:

Sequence of Events

Word Count: 945

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