

Transcript for Story On Podcast: Next-door Neighbors, Part 2 - Protagonists and Antagonists

Chapter 1: Opening

Hello friends and welcome to Story On!

I'm Laura, your host and I am so glad that you're able to join us here today.

This is episode 3 and today's story is part 2 of *Next-door Neighbors*.

If you haven't listened to part 1 yet, you should really stop here and go listen to episode 2 first!

If you're still with me, then you already listened to part 1. Yay!

(Laura): Today we have a special guest storyteller joining us to talk a little about characters in a story.

Would you like to introduce yourself and say something special about yourself?

(Jonas): Hi, I'm Jonas and I like lego!

(Laura): Awesome! Thanks for joining us today, Jonas! I like legos too! What can you tell us about Max and Chloe from Next-door Neighbors, Part 1?

(Jonas): Well, Max is the protagonist. And Chloe is the antagonist.

(Laura): I'm sorry, what? Protaga-huh? Antaga-woo???

Can you repeat those words again, and tell us what they mean please, Jonas??

(Jonas): Sure. Max is the pro-tag-o-nist. That means he's the good guy. And Chloe is the an-tag-o-nist. That means she's the bad guy.

(Laura): Oh yeah! That sounds about right!

Thanks for telling us about protagonists and antagonists, Jonas! And thanks for joining us today!

(Jonas): No problem! Bye!

(Laura): Bye!

Now, let's get back to our story. Max had just discovered a family of fairies building something in Chloe's bushes, which are right next to Max's house and just as Max was watching in amazement, Chloe surprised him with a water balloon attack!

Chloe is about to cause a big problem for Max. What do you think it may be? Do you think Max will be able to solve it? Let's find out and continue with Next Door Neighbors, Part 2!

[fading chimes]

Chapter 2: Story

Max felt his blood boil.

Of course Chloe would come and ruin this magical moment!

He wanted so badly to look again at the fairies. Had they heard the commotion? Did they get scared off? But he didn't dare draw attention to them.

He shuddered as he thought of what Chloe may do if she found out there were fairies in her yard.

He took a deep breath in and exhaled slowly. "Play it cool," he told himself. "The last thing I want is for Chloe to be suspicious." He forced a smile, "You got me Chloe. You got me real good."

Chloe smiled triumphantly. "What were you doing anyway? It was pretty easy to sneak up on you! Were you looking at something?" Chloe craned her neck, trying to spot anything unusual.

"Oh, just playing a game," Max answered quickly, gesturing to his binoculars and showing her his recorder, hoping she would lose interest.

"Oh. Want to have a water balloon fight?" Chloe wondered, chewing her gum loudly. "You could try to get me back. No guarantees though. I'm pretty good!"

(Max): "Oh, that sounds super fun but I'm actually pretty hungry. I was just about to head in for a snack. Maybe later though."

“Boooo” Chloe responded, scrunching her face and shaking her head slowly. “Ok, next time try not to be so easy to sneak up on,” she added as she turned to walk away.

Max rushed inside and up to his room to record his notes.

Max sat down at his desk with an enthusiastic thump. He reached in his vest pocket and pulled out his binoculars. He lightly patted his other pockets, feeling for his recorder. “Ah, here it is,” he said as he took it out and cleared his throat.

Pressing the record button he began: “Fairy log, June 23, 2021. This is Max Pumpnickle. Big things are happening next door. Big, unbelievable, magical things! Let me start at the beginning.

Yesterday, June 22nd around 7:30 pm, I noticed a light in the bushes next to Chloe’s house. Later, around 8:00, there were more lights, in a circle.

Today, around 9:00, this morning, I noticed a faint hammering sound and pounding motion that was barely visible to the naked eye. With my binoculars, I was able to see three tiny little fairies!

They look like a family. One younger girl fairy and her mom and dad and they looked like they were building a little fairy house in the same spot that the lights were last night!

I didn’t get to watch for as long as I would have liked. But I need to observe them more. I wonder what would happen if I tried to make contact with them.

If I talked to them, would that scare them away? Oh man, I wonder if they speak English, like me? Maybe they have their own special language! Could I learn how to speak fairy?

I have so many questions. I want to learn more about them. What do they eat?? What are they doing here? I have to watch them more. But I need to be careful because I do not want to put them in danger.

How incredible they are! I must try to contact them...there has to be a way.....”

Max stopped recording. Did he dare to look out the window? He didn’t want to risk Chloe seeing.....but he couldn’t resist trying to take a peak.

He slid out of his chair onto the floor. *Just in case she looks up here*, he thought, his elbows thumping softly on the floor as he crawled over to the window, army style.

He raised cautiously up to his knees. His fingers gripped the windowsill as he slowly, very slowly pulled himself up. "Sudden movements are more likely to attract attention," he told himself.

Carefully, steadily, he began to pull himself up. He could see outside. He scanned the yard quickly.

"Whew! No, Chloe." He breathed a sigh of relief. He peered down to the bushes at Chloe's house. Too many leaves. He couldn't see anything.

"This won't do." Max shook his head. "I have to get closer," he whispered, determined.

Max saw movement at Chloe's house again, but this time, it was in her driveway. He took down the binoculars. The van slowly backed out of the driveway onto the street. Max grabbed his binoculars and looked quickly through the window of the van.

Chloe was in there! She was wearing her gymnastics leotard! She was going to gymnastics class!

"Yes!!!! This will buy me some time!" Max cheered.

He grabbed his binoculars and recorder and ran downstairs, eager to get back outside as quickly as possible.

In no time, Max was back outside, sneakers laced up, pockets full, heart thumping as he hid behind the first tree. He glanced at the bushes. He didn't see any thumping motion. He listened carefully. Just birds singing. Crickets chirping.

Oh man, I hope they didn't get scared away! he thought, tears forming in his eyes. "Don't think like that just yet." He reassured himself. "I need to get to the third tree."

He darted quietly and cautiously to the second tree, caught his breath, then took off for the third tree, the one with the good view of the bushes where he'd seen those incredible fairies earlier.

He pressed his back against the rough tree trunk. He took the binoculars out of his pocket, his heart pounding so loudly it felt like it would fly out. He touched a

hand to his chest. Thump thump, thump thump. He felt his heart. He looked at his hands, they were shaking with excitement.

He tried to steady his fingers as he raised the binoculars and carefully peaked out from behind the bumpy trunk. He sighed, disappointed. He didn't see any fairies. No signs of any structure, either.

"Don't tell me they did get scared away!" he whispered, sharply. *Maybe they moved somewhere more sheltered*, he thought, not ready to give up yet.

He sat down heavily on the ground and leaned his head back against the tree.

Then he heard it, those same faint hammering sounds! "They have to be nearby!" he silently cheered!

Now to find them. He had to get closer. Max scanned the area for trees or bushes he could hide behind.

There was another pine tree closer. But it was very close. Maybe a little too close....but it was really the only option.

"Here goes nothing." Max stood up, took a deep breath and bent down as he sprinted quietly across the yard to the tree.

He stood still and quiet as could be with his back pressed against the trunk for what felt like eternity. Thump thump, thump thump. There was his beating heart again.

"I hope the fairies can't hear that!" He held his breath and slowly peaked out around the trunk with the binoculars over his eyes, searching for a sign of the fairies.

"There it is on the inside of the bushes, next to the house!" He peered closer. He was able to make out a tiny structure.

It did look like a house! Made with the branches they'd been moving earlier. It blended in nicely with the bush. It looked like a small round hut. The walls and roof were made from branches and woven leaves. The door was made from a hollowed out pinecone and was open just a crack. Very easy for humans to overlook.

“Expert design,” he thought admiringly. “Those fairies know how to blend in!”

Max began scanning for the fairies. He saw a flutter of a swirly wing coming from the back left side of the hut. One of the parents. He watched in amazement as the father walked around to the front, opened the pinecone door, and stepped inside.

Seconds later, he returned. This time with his daughter. They were holding hands as they walked to the side of the hut. They seemed to be admiring their work. They smiled at each other happily.

He saw that their mouths were moving, but he couldn't hear their voices. “I need to get closer!” he thought desperately. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity. He had to see if he could find the answers to his questions. But how? “Think, think, think!!!”

How could he get to know the fairies? There was only so much he could learn without actually trying to talk to them.

He thought about what he would try to do if he was trying to connect with an animal that wandered into his yard. How would he show the animal that he was a friend?

“Food! I need to offer them food. That way they will know that I mean them no harm!” But what do fairies eat? Most people don't even know that fairies are real, let alone know what they eat!

“I know! The Internet! There's an answer for everything on the Internet!” Max had to get to his tablet.

He quickly but quietly made his way along the trees as he snuck back inside and ran up to his room.

He opened his desk drawer and picked up his tablet, he held in the home button.

(Tablet): “What can I help you with?”

(Max): “What do Fairies eat?”

(Tablet): "Here's what I found on the web. There is debate about whether fairies are real or not but among the believers, there is agreement that fairies likely eat small bugs like fire flies and ants, a variety of berries and green leaves, as well as warm milk with honey for a special treat."

(Max): "That's it! Milk and honey! If I offer that to them, maybe they will trust me!"

Max exhaled shakily. He felt like he could explode with excitement. "Not until I talk to those fairies!" He ran downstairs to get the milk ready.

Outside, armed with a small bowl filled halfway with warm milk and honey, Max stood at the tree closest to the fairies.

He set it down at his feet and looked through his binoculars to see what they were doing. He didn't see any sign of the fairies, but the door to their little hut was shut tightly. "Maybe they're inside," he thought.

This was a good chance to put down the milk for them without scaring them away. He slowly and quietly stepped over to the bushes and bent down with the milk, being cautious not to spill, as his hands trembled with excitement.

As he was gently taking his fingers off the bowl, something incredible happened. The little pinecone door opened, and the girl fairy walked out. Her head was turned, looking over her shoulder behind her, so she did not see that Max was right there. He froze. She was even more magical looking up close.

"How could something so amazing be real??" Max wondered, as he watched her in awe.

She closed the door and then noticed the bowl of milk. She sniffed the air and made a very quiet clicking sound. She turned her head and froze when she saw Max. They both stood perfectly still, eyes locked, motionless.

Max spoke in a quiet and calm voice, "Hi, I'm Max. I brought you some milk," he smiled, trying to be very gentle and calm and show her that he was friendly. He remained perfectly still except for his face. Any sudden movements would scare her.

The little fairy girl continued to look at Max, her eyes studying him closely. She looked him over slowly. Her body seemed to relax a little.

She opened her mouth “Chirp, chirp chirrrrrrrrp,” she responded.

“She does have a special language!” Max thought excitedly, smiling wider at her. What a fascinating creature. He gestured slowly towards the milk. “Do you like milk?” he asked softly.

“Crick, crick, tweet,” she responded, moving closer to the milk while keeping a watchful eye on Max. She sniffed the milk as she knelt down next to the bowl and her face lit up. She looked absolutely thrilled.

Holding her hands on the side of the bowl, she lowered her face and began lapping up the milk with her tongue like a little kitten. It was adorable.

She paused and flashed Max a big smile before continuing to drink. She made tiny little slurping sounds. “It’s working! She likes it!!!” he thought excitedly.

Just then, he heard a van door slide open, then shut. Other doors boomed closed. Footsteps. Chloe! She must be back from gymnastics!

“Please don’t let her have seen me!” Max pleaded under his breath. The footsteps grew closer. Closer still.

He ran back to his yard, glancing back at the little fairy girl. He hadn’t had time to grab the bowl of milk.

“Go back inside!” he whispered. She just looked at him blankly, tilting her head to one side. She didn’t understand. She fluttered her wings.

Chloe appeared around the corner. “What are you doing in my bushes!?” she demanded. “Are you playing a game? Did you find something?”

Max hoped the bowl of milk was hidden well enough. If she got any closer she would see it for sure. Max patted his pockets for his binoculars. Found them. Pulled them out. “I just dropped these when I was running by,” he said dismissively.

Chloe looked puzzled. She started walking toward the bushes as she eyed Max suspiciously.

“Hey, how about that water balloon fight!?” Max suggested, desperately.

She froze. “You got it!” She turned and ran the other way to get the supplies. Max let out a huge sigh of relief.

That was way too close, he thought, blinking back tears of relief. *I need to come back later for that milk bowl, before she finds it.* He shook his head and tried to make his worries fall away.

He ran around to the front after Chloe.

It was now mid-afternoon, hours after Chloe had almost caught him talking to the little fairy girl and he was just now about to get back outside for the milk bowl. He had played with Chloe, then his mother had called him for lunch and asked him to do some cleaning around the house.

He hurriedly laced up his sneakers and ran into his backyard, his heart pounding quickly. “Please let it still be there!” he pleaded. This time, he walked directly over to the bushes.

He was holding a ball just in case Chloe came out again. He would pretend to be playing with the ball. “Totally believable,” he nodded to himself, satisfied.

Looking down into the bushes for the little fairy family, he gasped. The milk bowl was gone. The fairy hut was gone. The fairies were gone. All signs of the magical creatures had disappeared! Tears welled in his eyes. Did he scare them away? Did Chloe find them?

He wiped away a tear and sniffed. He had to find out. But how? He looked around desperately. There must be a sign somewhere. Some kind of clue.

Max took a few steps back and took a long, deep breath. “Stay calm. You can figure this out,” he told himself.

He looked up at the sky. Just a beautiful clear blue sky. He looked around the nearby bushes. Just regular leaves. He focused on the noises he could hear. Bird songs, cricket chirps...the same kind of noises the fairy girl had made. But

he couldn't figure out where they were coming from or if they were fairy or animal noises. "Keep going," he encouraged himself.

He took a few steps away from his house. Something in the back of Chloe's yard caught his eye. Something pink, in the grass. He took out his binoculars and looked through them. A pink flower petal. Could that be a clue?

He remembered the fairy mother's pink flower petal dress. He scanned more grass with his binoculars. More pink flower petals. A blue one. Some animal fur. It looked like a trail. And it led right to Chloe's shed.

Max's stomach did a somersault. She did find them. And she took them. But hopefully he could still help them. Hopefully it's not too late.

He had to get to the shed. But it was too risky now. Chloe would see him. He had to wait until dark.

For now, he would just keep an eye out. If he saw Chloe heading for the shed, he would stop her. Stall her. Anything to keep her away from the fairies.

He sat down against a trunk with a good view of the shed and pretended to practice tossing the ball in the air. "Come on, nighttime," he muttered.

After a very long afternoon, the sun was starting to set. "Finally!" Max smiled as he saw the first flickers of fireflies starting to fill the air.

He thought back to last night, when he had seen the mysterious lights for the first time. "I will set them free," he told himself, determined.

As the sun sunk lower into the sky, the air darkened, shadows began to form around the yard. This seemed to be a good time to approach the shed. It was still light enough for him to see, but dark enough that Chloe was less likely to spot him crossing her yard. He set down his ball and ran to the back of his yard.

Taking a deep breath, he began making his way across the back of Chloe's yard, pausing to hide behind each big trunk.

He was getting closer to Chloe's shed, which was near the back of her yard and surrounded by trees. As he got closer, he noticed a small, familiar light shining from a crack inside the shed. The fairies!!!!

He ran to the back window and peered in, barely breathing. "Please let them be ok!"

He exhaled with relief at what he saw. The fairy mother, father and daughter were all standing together, talking. They looked scared.

They were each missing parts of their clothing. The father wasn't wearing his hat. The little branch hut was there too. Chloe was nowhere to be seen. "Perfect!"

Max tapped softly on the window. The fairies all jumped, startled and huddled together. He waved and tapped again. The daughter fairy saw his face in the window. She looked relieved. She said something to her parents. They all slowly let go of one another and looked together at Max in the window. They looked hopeful.

They know I'm here to help them, he thought. He needed to open the door. It was around the front of the shed, facing the house. Certainly not ideal, but his only option to free the fairies.

Max readied himself and ran around to the front of the shed, unhooked the door and opened it just a crack.

Then, without hesitating, he ran straight to his backyard. He didn't want to risk drawing Chloe's attention.

Leaning up against a tree, he watched as the three fairies snuck out of the crack in the door one by one. They ran along the side of the shed in a single file and jumped into the air at the back, flapping their wings towards a tall maple tree nearby.

Max watched in astonishment, surprised by the speed and strength at which they flew.

Suddenly, the girl fairy paused, looking around while her wings fluttered in place.

Her eyes fixed on Max. She smiled, raised a tiny hand and waved, before following her parents and disappearing out of sight. Max grinned, relieved.

A wave of calm washed over his body. He knew they would be ok now. He just knew they would be alright.

A firefly buzzed as it flew just in front of him. Max smiled. He didn't try to catch it. He just watched as it flew away, buzzing as its light flickered on and off as if to say goodnight.

The End

Chapter 3: Discussion

I hope you liked my story about fairies moving in next door!

What did you think of my characters Max and Chloe?

It was fun to write about Chloe and the bad things she did.

Would you like to write a story about fairies or other magical creatures?

Oh! What about dragons moving in next door!? That would be an interesting story!

Next time you create a story, pay special attention to the characters. What will they be like? What will they do? Will they be helpful? Will they cause trouble? Will they get along or will they have a conflict?

Creating characters is something I really enjoy because it's like you are designing your very own people! How neat is that.

Don't forget, we would love to hear your stories! As always you can send them to us laura@storyonpodcast.com.

Today we'd like to say a special thank you to the fairies that live next door to our house! We see you fluttering around from time to time and want to thank you for inspiring this story!

To our other, non-fairy listeners, thanks for joining us today!

And special thanks to Jonas for helping out today!

We hope you'll all come back to listen again soon. If you'd like to support Story On, please leave us a five star review wherever you get your podcasts or help us spread the word by telling your friends about us!

Don't forget to visit our website storyonpodcast.com! Until next time!