

## Transcript for Story On: Next Door Neighbors Part 1 – Designing Characters

### 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!

Ok, so today I'm really excited about a story idea that I have! It's about [beeped] moving in next door!

Wait, did you guys hear that? Sounded like a beeping sound? Let me try that again.

Today I'm going to write a story about [beeped] moving in next door. Huh? There it is again. That's weird.

Anyway, I already have a general idea of what I want my story to be about today but I haven't quite figured out the characters yet.

They're who the story is about, so I want to make sure I think a lot about who I want my characters to be.

I know that the two main or most important characters in this story will be neighbors and I want there to be some conflict or problem between them. That will make my story more exciting.

I think I'll make one a girl, and one a boy. I'm just going to take out my purple writing notebook and jot down some words to describe them with my special writing pen for each of them real quick before I get started on my story. The more I think about their personalities, the more interesting my characters will be.

Ok, so this one I want to be mean, and very clever – always one step ahead of everyone, unpredictable. This one, I want to be super friendly, with a big heart (that means really caring) and a great problem solver.

Ok, I think I'm ready to start my story now that I've got my characters sorted out! I'm just going to zip off to write my story and I'll be right back! Hang tight!

[clock ticking]

[bell ringing]

IIIIII'm baaaack! Let's get to the story!!

[fading chimes]

## Chapter 2: Story

This is Next Door Neighbors Part 1

Squish, squelch, squish squelch! Max picked up one foot, then stomped it down quickly, spraying mud into the air.

“Haha! Take that, giant evil lizard-man!” He roared. “Get outta here or you’ll be sorry!”

Just then the back door opened and Max saw his mom poke her head out, “Five more minutes, Max. It’s almost bedtime.”

“Ok, mom. I’ll start cleaning up,” he answered. “We’ll pick this back up tomorrow, Lizard-man. Don’t get too comfortable cause you’re about to get a one-way ticket outta town!” Max grumbled.

He walked over to the hose. He knew he had to wash the mud off his boots and himself before heading inside. He turned the spicket [squeak, squeak, squeaaaak] and began spraying his boots. Max loved watching the mud dissolve and turn into murky water.

“Ahhh, so satisfying,” he thought.

Next he moved on to his arms and hands. The water felt cool and refreshing. It was a pretty hot evening. He used one hand to scrub the mud away from the nooks and crannies between his fingers.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw a glimmer of light.

“Fireflies!” he thought excitedly.

He LOVED catching fire flies and watching them crawl around on his hands and arms before they spread their wings and took off into the air again with a quiet buzz.

Max threw down the hose with a thud, ran to the tree near the edge of his yard and looked around eagerly for more little flashes of light.

The sun was starting to go down and the day was transitioning into night. It was dusk. Right when the fireflies started to come out but still light enough that their flashes are harder to spot.

Max scanned the yard again. “Hmmm where did that little guy go?” Max looked around more. His eyes darting this way and that. The firefly seemed to have disappeared.

Just as he was turning to go inside, flash! There it was again! Over in the bushes next to Max's neighbor's house. He started to run, towards it, then paused. That was Chloe's house.

He quickly turned away. A firefly wasn't worth the risk of running into her tonight. Max ran to his back door and stepped inside.

Before long, Max had finished his bath and was dressed, nice and cozy in his pajamas. It had gotten pretty dark by now.

He walked into his bedroom and over to his window to lower his blind. As he slowly lowered the blind, Max found himself looking around outside.

The moon was shining high up in the sky, shaped like a perfectly round cookie that someone had taken a bite out of.

"Nom nom nom," Max chuckled, pretending to eat a giant moon cookie. He rubbed his belly, "So much cookie..."

Something caught his eye next to Chloe's house (his bedroom window faced the side of her house).

It was in the same area where he'd seen the firefly at dusk. Only this didn't look like a firefly light. It was brighter. And steady. Not switching on and off like a firefly's. It was still pretty small, especially from up here. But it was definitely different. "Hmmm," thought Max, "maybe that firefly broke it's off button".

He continued pulling down the blind, his eyes fixed on the light. Just as the blind reached the bottom of the window, a handful of other little lights came on together, all spaced out in a circle.

"What the?!" Max whispered and quickly pulled the blind back up. Suddenly, all the lights went out.

Max's mother walked into the room. "Ok Mr. Max. Close that blind and it's time to start reading," she instructed as she turned on his lamp. "It's getting late."

Max reluctantly got into bed. Reading quickly reminded his eyes that they were very sleepy after a long day outside in the heat and before he could return to the window for a second look, he was fast asleep.

"Wakey wakey! Eggs and Bakey!!!!!" yelled Max's dad from down in the kitchen the next morning. "Time to get up, Max!"

Max practically jumped out of bed and opened his blind with a loud vrrrrmmmmpppp! He looked anxiously out the window, pressing his forehead against the cool glass. He studied the same area that he'd seen the strange lights last night intently.

"Nothing unusual," he muttered under his breath with a heavy sigh. Something about the way those lights had shone last night just seemed different. Max shook his head. "Maybe it was just a weird reflection or something," he thought.

He sensed movement to the right of that area and shifted his gaze. There was Chloe letting her dog, Rufus, out to pee. And she was looking right at him.

Max waved stiffly and forced a smile. Chloe stuck her tongue out at him. "Typical Chloe," thought Max, shaking his head as he turned away and jogged downstairs for breakfast. He didn't want those eggs to get cold.

It was the last week of June and the second official day of Max's summer vacation. He was looking forward to taking it easy this week and enjoying some unstructured time at home before his summer got more scheduled with camp and other activities.

As an only child, he was pretty good at entertaining himself, especially with two working parents. Max's mother worked from home and was usually only available to him during emergencies.

He spent a lot of time playing outside in his backyard, which felt a lot like a forest with lots of really tall pine trees and bushes and wild grasses scattered around.

After quickly eating breakfast, Max hurried back upstairs to finish getting ready to start the day. He wanted to get outside ASAP to continue his game in the mud.

Up in his room, Max grabbed his portable sound recorder. Maybe he would record some of his game in the mud. Or maybe he would begin some kind of investigation into the strange lights from last night. "Good to have options," Max smiled to himself.

He scurried downstairs, grabbed his fresh clean boots and headed out the backdoor into the humid and peaceful yard.

He walked back to the area where he'd made the mud pit, put his recorder down on the nearby chair and began searching around for the small plastic figurine he used for lizard-man.

As he was bent down, Max twisted his neck towards Chloe's house. Something had drawn his attention that way, but he wasn't exactly sure what it was. He squinted.

He was about 20 feet away but when he looked very closely, he could see some kind of movement.

As he watched, silently and totally still, he realized that there was a tiny sound that matched up with the movement. It was a very faint tapping sound and a hammering motion.

“What is that?” he wondered. “That looks to be the same place I saw the light last night...I need to get closer. And I need to get my binoculars”.

Before long, Max was back outside, ready to investigate. He had his trusty binoculars and handy recorder and was wearing a brown fishing vest for camouflage (and lots of pockets).

He'd also changed from his clunky and kind of squeaky rubber boots into his sneakers. “Perfect for sneaking,” he whispered, determined to get to the bottom of what was going on in the bushes next door.

Edging slowly and quietly away from his backdoor, Max scurried to hide behind a thick pine trunk.

As he moved, he reminded himself of the way the neighborhood cats slinked around when hunting birds. “Meow,” he whispered, chuckling to himself as he imagined his tail wagging slowly behind him.

He kept his eyes fixed on the bushes, the movement and faint little hammering sound continued. Max ran noiselessly to the next tree. “Now to take out the binoculars,” he thought, reaching into one of his vest pockets.

He peaked through the binoculars and adjusted the focus. “Rats,” he grumbled. There was a tree trunk right in his line of vision. *Gotta keep moving*, he thought as he tucked his binoculars back into his pocket.

He scurried to the next tree and peaked out from behind the trunk. *I should be able to see now*, he thought, nodding silently to himself.

He hid behind the tree again and took out his binoculars. He positioned the binoculars over his eyes and peered slowly around the tree, searching for the movement. “Chloe’s house, ground, nothing in that bush, oh, there, I see the movement now.”

He leaned forward and squinted again, holding his breath. “Is that? No, it can’t possibly be!” Max stood frozen; he couldn’t believe his eyes.

He squeezed his eyes shut and took a deep breath. Were his eyes playing tricks on him? He opened his eyes again and shook his head slowly in awe. There in the bushes was a teeny, tiny little.... fairy.

She wore a little dress, made of bright blue flower petals and her black hair was pulled back in a loose braid. Her wings were white and sparkling, kind of like a wet spider web shines in the sunlight. She was barefoot, standing in the grass and holding a little rock that she was using as a kind of hammer. She appeared to be making something. Some kind of...structure?

Max watched in disbelief as she put down the little rock and wiped her forehead with the back of her hand. It looked like she was wiping the sweat from her forehead. Her wings fluttered.

Amazing!!

She turned to her right and he saw her lips moving. It was as if she were talking to someone.

He slowly scanned the area nearby with his binoculars and soon spotted another fairy. This one was a male. He looked to be older. "Perhaps her father?" Max wondered, still in shock.

This fairy wore orange brown pants that were made of dried leaves and his brown fuzzy shirt looked to be made out of animal fur. He was also wearing a hat made out from a tiny acorn.

The male fairy was standing on a leaf in one of the bushes. He was holding a thorn and seemed to be sawing a branch with it. As he worked, he tossed the branches down to the ground. His white wings fluttered as he worked. Max noticed a beautiful spiral pattern in his wings. "Astounding!"

As Max looked at the little pile of branches on the ground, he saw a tiny arm pick up a branch and start pulling it. Max gasped. "Another fairy!" She looked to be older. "The mother!" he predicted.

She had long curly brown hair the color of pinecones. Her dress appeared to be made out of pink flower petals and her wings were white with the same kind of swirly pattern as the fathers. Max watched as she pulled the branches, one at a time, over to her daughter.

"Are they making a little fairy house!?" Max wondered, bewildered. He felt his forehead. "Do I have a fever??? Am I hallucinating!?" he wondered. He felt normal. "This has to be real," he reasoned. "Fairies are real! Who would have guessed that!?"

Max was so transfixed and focused on the little fairy family next door that he didn't notice he had company.

He didn't notice them get closer, and closer as they crept silently behind him.

All of a sudden, Max was shocked to feel his back being pelted with cold bursts of water.

First one, then another and another. He let out a sharp screech [ahhh!] and turned quickly just in time to see a blue water balloon flying through the air as if in slow motion.

Max froze as he watched the balloon soar closer and closer to his face, the water shaking around inside. It reminded him of jello.

Then, splash! Contact. The water balloon landed right on his forehead and water exploded all over his face.

He quickly wiped his eyes with his shirt sleeve and looked frantically around to see who would do such a thing to an unsuspecting kid. "Chloe," he said between clenched teeth.

She stood in front of him, doubled over in a fit of laughter. [hahaha!] "Your face!" she gasped between laughs. "You should have seen your face!!!"

### **Chapter 3: Discussion**

Ahhh what a magical discovery that Max just made! Fairies living next door! Can you imagine how exciting that would be!?

Oh, I'm so sorry, friends, but we are almost out of time for today! We're going to have to pick this story back up in the next episode!

Before I go, let's think back to my plan for my characters. Do you have any idea of who the mean character may be? What about the kind one?

Can you draw a picture of any of the characters from this story?

If you'd like to share them, send them to [laura@storyonpodcast.com](mailto:laura@storyonpodcast.com)!

We so enjoyed having you here for Nextdoor Neighbors, Part 1. I can't wait for you to hear what Max and Chloe get up to in part 2!

Tune in soon for the rest of the story!

That's our show for today! Thanks for joining us!

If you are enjoying Story On and would like to help us out, I have some ideas for you!

You can leave us a five-star review wherever you get your podcasts, you can tell your friends about us, or you can head on over to our website for other ideas. You can find us at [storyonpodcast.com](http://storyonpodcast.com).

And remember, we love to see your pictures or hear your stories! You can even share character ideas with us! I bet you have some great ones!

Until next time!