

Good neighbors: a short story creative writing example

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



Nice and peaceful. Just the way I like it.

I set the shovel to one side and wiped the sweat from my brow. I will just wash away the traces of dirt that smeared by face as the mud-stricken gloves accidentally brushed my flushed cheeks. I looked around one more time just to make sure that nobody saw me. At 3: 00 am on a cold October dusk, I could never be sure. Teenagers nowadays stay awake nibbling on their laptops. It was hard work but well worth it, considering the consequences of not doing it. My hand reached for the nalgene bottle that lay to one side. I gulped a greedy sip and sighed wearily.

My family and I moved into this new neighborhood about a year ago. I still recall the day when the Movers 'R Us guys off-loaded the furniture into my new house: a white Victorian inspired house in the middle of urban Chicago. The manicured lawn was replete with daffodils, yellow and white with contrasting cups of red fiery orange. There were shrubs and vines just beneath what seemed to be a century-old mahogany. I looked around and smiled. I can actually see a pair of hummingbirds nestled on one of the tree's magnificent branches. It was almost like a dream come true—a chance to leave the past behind and start over with my kids in relative peace and safety. I could forget the ghosts of my past and just enjoy life in relative anonymity.

Too bad it didn't take long for our new neighbors to grate on my nerves.

Brandi, Kara and Alicia all came to visit me once I had settled down. Brandi was my next door neighbor: about 45 years old with bright auburn hair and deep blue eyes. She was exceptionally dressed in bright pink color-

coordinate outfit. Kara and Alicia lived farther along the same street. Kara seemed to be shy at first. I suspect she was about 35 years of age with blond hair and deep brown eyes that gaze to me like dazzling marbles. Alicia was the most condescending. At about 50 years of age, she immediately prodded me to join the home association where she was the president. They brought an assortment of cookies, cupcakes and bread to welcome their new neighbor. They seemed nice.

My kids and I were delighted at first. It felt good to feel welcome again.

At least for a while.

We engaged in random chit chat—mostly about where they lived, what they did for a living and what their kids were live. They seemed so pleasant at the time that I invited them back several times.

Too late, I realized. That was a big mistake.

It didn't take long for me to realize how utterly superficial they were.

Whenever they visited, they grew found of making idle comments about how things were. For example, Brandi would pick out something "wrong" with the furniture and food in the house. Kara would insinuate things about her husband having a high paying job, her family being better off and having more comforts in life. Alicia would question the behavior and raising of my kids—my kids!

"Hello dear," Brandi quipped. "I have guests coming for dinner and was in the middle of baking. I suddenly found out I ran out of sugar and it would take me hours just to go to the convenience store. Can you please lend me just one cup of sugar and I would definitely return it as soon as I can." What

else could I say when she was already ravishing through my kitchen.

She said she would reimburse me. She never did.

Kara came over in the middle of the night and asked for some Tylenol for her sick child. She dropped by the very next evening after that asking for the same thing. And the next evening. And the next.

Alicia also came over and gossiped about Brandi and Kara. She warned me that Brandi had the bad habit of borrowing things without having any intentions to return; while Kara's husband was actually having an affair. I listened intently but said nothing. "It'll be our secret," she said. The next thing I knew, people all around the neighborhood were casting disapproving looks my way.

My patience eventually wore thin after a few weeks of this nonsense. The straw that broke the camel's back came in the form of a bruise on the head of my youngest, apparently "accidentally" caused by "a poorly-aimed baseball" thrown by Brandi's eldest son. Word around the neighborhood has it that "accidents" of this sort tended to happen to the kids of other families as well.

That was it. I had to do something or suffer for the rest of my life.

I considered the cost of moving again. No, that was out of the question. I had barely been here for a few weeks. I also considered confronting them nicely about it, yet they could always deny it and I was never that diplomatic, anyway.

That left me with one other option. I swore I would never do it again after what happened last time, yet if it came down to a choice between my peace of mind and the well being of my kids versus the risk of getting caught, the

choice was clear.

The complaints of my sore muscles snapped me back to the present. I took the towel wrapped around my waist and wiped the blood and dirt from my hands. I then took a sheet of paper on the table next to my bottle and glanced at the first name on my list. It read " Brandi". I took my pen, crossed it out and heaved a sigh of relief.

One down, two to go.

My shoveling lasted all through the night.