

## Short Story - The Neighbor

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There was a neighbor, in a village of unsolved mysteries, strange daily occurrences, and unordinary differences within almost everything. With how different everything in the village of Big Funk<sup>was</sup>, this neighbor in particular was the weirdest creature around. His appearance was said to be sickening, frightening to young children. He had four legs that functioned with crippling movement, two eyes colored blood red + black, eight scrawny fingers on each wrinkly/burned hand, and a hunch back that bent like St. Louis's arch. Nobody in Big Funk knew this sketchy neighbor's name. In fact, no one really knew why he was known as "the neighbor", considering he lived tucked away in an abandoned dome near the Old Peak.

(His name was just one of those things where you don't really know where it originated from, everyone just knew what it was when mentioned.) This neighbor reminded everyone of a spider, with his eight fingers and how he crept around. The neighbor had an uncoordinated lifeline. People say he would only creep out of his domain at night, causing everyone in the village, animals, and even dust bunnies tucked in the crevices of ally ways not to go anywhere after dusk. However, nobody truly knew what he did at night until a curious 14 year old girl peered out of her window. She hid behind the edge of her cloth curtain, peeking with one eye. She was amazed to see what he was doing, but also confused to the max.

The teenage girl saw him as she described boogying, He danced quite cheerfully around the dark streets. Swinging around the zig-zag shaped street light posts, and tumbling like an acrobat. She heard him singing his frightening heart out, making up the lyrics as he sung. The petite girl called her little sister up stairs to confirm that she was definitely seeing this scene correctly. After some thinking, she decided to make a brave choice to go outside and talk to the neighbor.

"Excuse me, Mr. Neighbor," the girl said.

"Oh no, please, I'm harmless," the neighbor shakily replied.

"We're not here to cause any trouble, sir, but we have to say, you're much different than we thought." the younger sister replied.

"You have a real audacious persona to be coming near me right now, but yes, it's what it looks like. What everyone's scared of isn't what it seems. I truly just love to boogie and sing up-beat songs in peace," the neighbor explained in his crackly, raspy voice.

Turns out, the neighbor really enjoyed dancing to the beat of his own drum. He loved dancing in peace and quiet, while people of Big Funk rested. He explained to the sisters that his odd features came from a deficiency ~~which~~ in which he was born with. However, his hunch back formed from his deficiency and not being able to stand straight. (But mainly because of not getting in a proper stretch before hours.

of dancing. He revealed that his actual name is certainly not "the neighbor", but instead it's Wilber Jones. The 14 year old girl and her 11 year old sister discovered that Wilber Jones was an amazingly gracious elder, just pursuing his passion while his days last. He also enjoyed cleaning up his village too, considering he was full of integrity. The three became very close friends, as well as a good dance/cleaning crew. After 19 years of making a difference and great nights, Wilber passed away due to old age. The sisters are now 42 and 39 years old and will surely never forget about their dear friend who lived to be 107 years old. The two will continue to share the story of the wonderful Wilber Jones.