

Who's Next Door Pitch (Children's Book Pitch)

From Oscar winning Storyboard Artist Pearl Low, of Hair Love and Emmy nominated series Craig of the Creek, “WHO’S NEXT DOOR?” Is a debut book about learning how to embrace change, and honouring your own pace moving through it all.

After moving into their new apartment, Daniel starts to feel like everything is overwhelming. The house is new, the next door neighbours are strangers, and he has no friends in the building! He wishes things could go back to how they were.

But when Daniel’s next door neighbour introduces themselves and offers to take Daniel on an adventure in the building, Daniel learns that although change can be scary, it can also bring you wonderful surprises, perhaps even a new friend.

Story Arc

ACT I

Daniel and his mom move into their new apartment. Everything is different! The windows stretch upwards like mountains letting in golden sunlight, the wooden floors, creaky like ancient trees, and the smell of the house is as crisp as autumn air.

Daniel’s mom says to Daniel that this apartment has lots of charm! It’ll feel like home, in no time. She suggests unpacking is the first step to making things feel cozy! Daniel doesn’t feel the same, and wishes he could go back to his old home. He doesn’t even have a single friend here.

ACT II

There’s a knock at the door! Daniel opens the front door to find another kid, dressed head to toe in a cute red outfit! They have come bearing cookies.

Daniel’s mom comes to the door, introduces Daniel and herself and thanks them for the cookies. The kid’s name is Sasha, and says it’s no problem at all—they are next door neighbours after all! Sasha says that they were wondering if Daniel would like to come on an epic adventure around the building! It’s Lunar New Year and there’s tons of stuff happening in the building, and who knows what they’ll come across! Shy, but excited at the sound of an adventure, Daniel asks mom if it’s ok to go with Sasha, and the answer is yes! Have fun.

Daniel and Sasha head down a corridor, when Daniel stops in front of a fancy 1930s elevator. “Where does this go?” Asks Daniel. “ Ooh this elevator is real special. There’s no level 4! Apparently it’s bad luck” Says Sasha, they push a button to go to the 5th floor.

The 5th floor is quiet and no one is around. This is the floor where a tiny neighbour lives... “Cake”, the resident cat! Nobody knows who it belongs to. Daniel and Sasha see Cake sitting on

a window sill in the hallway. Sasha suggests they go up to Cake to pet it. Daniel takes a step and the floor creaks. Cake looks around as if scanning for danger. "Oh no, these are the same creaky floors in my house! We'll never get close to Cake making this much noise" says Daniel. Sasha says, this is why they have to be sneaky like SPIES! "Follow me!". Daniel and Sasha tip toe carefully towards Cake, but when Daniel reaches out to pet the cat, he steps on a creaky floor board a little too heavily. Creak! The cat meows and runs away. Sasha and Daniel laugh. Oh well, maybe we'll have better luck talking to humans. Next stop: the stairwell.

Sasha and Daniel head down the stairs from the 5th floor and see a bunch of kids in the stairwell! They're putting up decorations for Lunar New Year and eating some Lunar New Year candies. Sasha says hi to a couple of kids they know, and Daniel introduces himself saying he's new to the building. The stairwell kids invite Daniel to hang up some paper cuttings (zin2 zi2) on the window. "You can put decorations on windows?" Daniel says, looking up at the giant glass panes, that resemble the windows in his own home. The sunlight filters through the decorations, and illuminates their red colour so brightly! Two teenagers help Daniel up a small ladder to tape a paper cutting onto the window. Daniel fumbles with the paper cutting and drops the tape on one of the teenager's head! He also accidentally ripped the decoration in half. Sasha then suggests maybe they make their way to the courtyard instead, to see "The Auntie Alliance"!

Daniel and Sasha arrive at a brightly lit courtyard. The maple trees are golden yellow, and a group of aunties are sitting at the tables and chairs set up underneath them. Sasha approaches one auntie and says, "Hi Yi-yi, hi auntie! This is my new friend Daniel". Daniel introduces himself and says he's just moved in. The aunties invite Daniel and Sasha to join folding dumplings! Daniel has never folded dumplings before, and asks if he can just watch, he hasn't had much luck trying new things today... but Sasha insists that he should give it a try!! The aunties give Daniel a quick folding lesson, but Daniel is still confused. Fold, where? Pleat, how? Sasha chimes in and beams, "Don't you love the smell of cooked dumplings and the smell of fresh air?". They take in a deep breath in and out, and their breath takes the shape of a circle! Daniel giggles and tries to blow a shape too. "How are your dumplings looking, Sasha?" Auntie asks. Sasha presents their nicely folded dumplings. Auntie looks at Daniel's dumplings. They are all... quite uniquely shaped. The aunties chuckle and Daniel gets embarrassed. He knew it would've been better if he just watched... Nothing he's trying is going right, says Daniel! He can't fold dumplings, he can't hang paper decorations. He can't even pet a cat!

He walks over to a bench and sits by himself.

ACT III

Sasha sits beside Daniel, asking what's wrong. Daniel thanks Sasha for showing him all around the building, but trying all these new things on top of it, has been a lot for him. Sasha knows the building, everyone, and how to do *everything*, but Daniel doesn't. He's trying his best to participate, but it's hard. He thinks he needs to take his time adjusting to all this change.

Sasha apologizes. They didn't realize that *everything* is new for Daniel. They ask what Daniel would like to do next. Daniel says he would actually like to go home, and eat the cookies Sasha brought. Hanging just the two of them is what he actually looked forward to, the most. Sasha smiles.

We're back at Daniel's house. The floors creak as he walks in, but Daniel enjoys the sound. The giant windows let in a warm glow, and the house smells fresh, just like out in the courtyard. Daniel and Sasha sit at a table. Boxes labeled "fragile" are stacked near them. They grab a couple of cookies and mom gets them some milk. Daniel's mom, standing in the kitchen, says she's surprised at how many cool new things Daniel has done today! Daniel looks at Sasha and then back at mom. He says they have done a lot of cool things, but being in his new *home* and sharing cookies with a new friend is what feels good right now. His mom smiles.

We end on Daniel, Sasha cheers-ing cookies.

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