

# In the Neighborhood

Ahn vigorously scrubbed windows, a tedious necessity for her family's new Vietnamese restaurant. They had turned the building from homely to gorgeous, but everything had to be absolutely perfect: unique decorations, skillful employees, and fabulous traditional food. Then customers would adore the place, making the business a success.

Ahn shifted her vision to look outside the restaurant as a girl about her age, with abundant red hair, strolled up the street. Ahn's family had recently moved to this neighborhood, so she had few friends.

The girl paused to study the sign announcing their opening and then looked directly at Ahn with a friendly smile. Ahn smiled back shyly and lifted a hand, accidentally waving with the cleaning cloth. The girl laughed at her amusement and waved back in acknowledgment.

Ahn hesitated, not accustomed to initiating friendship, but she felt courageous, so on a whim she opened the door. "Hello," she said, adding the first thing that entered her head, "do you like Vietnamese food?"

"I don't know, but I like to try new things," the girl remarked, and then she introduced herself as Gabriela.

Ahn could not think of additional conversation until she had a sudden idea. "Please wait here," she requested, "and I'll be right back." She ran into the adjoining kitchen and explained her idea to her father. He was sympathetic, so seconds later Ahn presented a small package to Gabriela. "Some Vietnamese candy for you to try," she explained. "If you enjoy it, I hope you'll return to the restaurant sometime, or even visit after school when I'll be here preparing for the dinner service."

"Excellent, I'll see you around soon." Gabriela headed down the street, glancing back with a cheerful wave. Ahn spent the remainder of the afternoon hoping Gabriela really would return and not think Ahn's gift was weird.

The following day, Ahn assembled bouquets of artificial flowers, orchids that would never wilt. She was admiring her accomplishment when she heard unexpected tapping and turned to see Gabriela beckoning to her with a plate covered with transparent plastic wrap. Ahn grinned with enthusiasm and opened the door with a cordial greeting.

Gabriela presented the plate and said, "I brought biscuits made from my grandmother's recipe to thank you for the delicious candy."

"Come in, and we can have some biscuits right now," Ahn stammered, happy inside.

Gabriela entered and rotated to scan the room with its picturesque landscape mural. "Thanks, they really are wonderful, and I'm fascinated to see your restaurant."

As they snacked on the treats, Ahn fumbled for conversation and considered an offer. "Are you good with vocabulary?" she inquired. "I intend to design a publicity pamphlet for the restaurant, and I could use some

assistance."

"Certainly!" Gabriela said, adding, "I'm delighted you moved into the neighborhood and thrilled I have a new friend."

Ahn grinned, now positive that the restaurant would make a wondrous impression on the community, that customers would be plentiful, and that she was going to enjoy life here immensely.

**Questions**

1. Gabriela says she does not know if she likes Vietnamese food. What is the most likely reason she doesn't know the answer to this question? What clues in the text suggest the reason?
2. What point of view is used to tell the story, and how can you tell?
3. Ahn chooses to greet a girl she does not know. What results from this decision?
4. This story is about two girls beginning a friendship. What do they do to become friends? Include several examples from the text.

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**Vocabulary List**

Each of the vocabulary words below are used in the reading passage. As you read the passage, pay attention to context clues that suggest the word's meaning.

1. vigorously
2. tedious
3. homely
4. abundant
5. initiating
6. beckoning
7. cordial
8. picturesque
9. intend
10. immensely

## Context Clues

Using context clues from the sentences in the passage, underline the correct meaning of the word in boldface.

- 1) "Ahn **vigorously** scrubbed windows, a tedious necessity for her family's new Vietnamese restaurant"  
a. carefully    b. with great force; energetically    c. slowly; lazily    d. angrily; crossly
- 2) "Ahn vigorously scrubbed windows, a **tedious** necessity for her family's new Vietnamese restaurant"  
a. tiresome or dull    b. costly; expensive    c. pretty or attractive    d. required by law
- 3) "They had turned the building from **homely** to gorgeous"  
a. cozy; like a home    b. acceptable or satisfactory    c. casual; informal    d. ugly or unattractive
- 4) "a girl about her age, with **abundant** red hair"  
a. brownish    b. put into a bun    c. bright; glowing    d. large quantity; full
- 5) "Ahn hesitated, not accustomed to **initiating** friendship"  
a. pledging; promising    b. beginning or starting    c. having; making    d. foreign
- 6) "Gabriela **beckoning** to her with a plate covered with transparent plastic wrap"  
a. throwing; tossing    b. explaining    c. gesturing with invitation; signaling    d. offering
- 7) "opened the door with a **cordial** greeting"  
a. shy or bashful    b. friendly; welcoming    c. traditional; classic    d. brief or quick
- 8) "the room with its **picturesque** landscape mural"  
a. charming or pleasant    b. framed    c. surreal; dreamlike    d. painted or drawn
- 9) "'I **intend** to design a publicity pamphlet'"  
a. might; should    b. have been asked or instructed    c. plan; aim    d. be unable or unfit
- 10) "she was going to enjoy life here **immensely**"  
a. very much; tremendously    b. soon; quickly    c. reasonably    d. forever; eternally