

Fantasy

Not from Around Here

by Yvonne Morrin
illustrated by Scott Pearson



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PAIRED
READ

Kintaro, Friend of the Animals

STRATEGIES & SKILLS

Comprehension

Strategy: Visualize

Skill: Point of View

Vocabulary Strategy

Paragraph Clues

Vocabulary

acquaintance, cautiously,
complementary, jumble,
logical, scornfully, scrounging,
trustworthy

Word Count: 2,150



Education

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A



Essential Question

How can you make new friends feel welcome?

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CHAPTER 1

New Neighbors

“You’ve been inside all morning,” Luis’s mom said. “Why don’t you go outside and get some fresh air?”

Luis sighed. It was a scorching day. All his friends in the neighborhood were away at camp. The street was still and quiet. Luis went out onto the front porch. He didn’t like looking at the SOLD sign outside the house next door. It was a reminder that his best friend, Sam, had moved away.

Instead, Luis sat on the porch swing facing away from the neighbor’s house.

School had finished a month ago. Luis had read all his comics and played on his computer until he was tired of it. Now he almost wished school would start again just so he’d have something to do.



Luis finally turned around and looked at the tree house in the neighbor's yard. He and Sam had used it as a fort, spaceship, submarine, and spy headquarters. Now it was just a lonely old tree house, waiting for a new child to claim it.

Luis sighed and dragged himself from the swing. He would go and check his e-mail.

As Luis reached the front door, he noticed a car pull up next door. It was the real estate agent who had sold the house. Luis turned around and sat on the front steps. He was curious to see what she was doing.

The agent climbed out of her car and tugged on the SOLD sign. She wiggled it back and forth. When the sign was out, she put it in the trunk of her car. Then she fixed a wide smile on her face and spread her arms in welcome.

Luis looked down the street and saw a moving truck coming. It pulled in next door, and a man, a woman, a girl, and a boy climbed out. They greeted the real estate agent.

“Congratulations! I hope you’ll be very happy here,” Luis heard the agent say as she gave the man a key. Then the agent got into her car and drove away.

The family stood staring at her driving away.

“They look strange,” Luis thought.



CHAPTER 2

Luis the Spy

Luis dashed into his house. “Mom!” he yelled. “We’ve finally got new neighbors. There’s something weird about them, though,” he added scornfully. “They’re wearing hats and gloves in the middle of summer!”

His mom gazed up from her book. “Well, maybe there’s a logical explanation. They might have come from someplace really hot and find it a little chilly here.”

Luis raised his eyebrows. It was sweltering. “They’d have to come from Mercury or Venus to find it cold here!” he replied.

At this thought, he bit his lip. “Mercury or Venus ... aliens? Don’t be silly,” he thought. “Should I go over to say hi?” he asked his mom.

“Not yet,” she replied. “They’ve just arrived. Give them a day to settle in. Tomorrow we’ll go over together.”



Luis went to the window, grumbling. He didn't want to wait until tomorrow.

Luis stood looking over at the moving truck. He noticed that the father was peering at the truck's contents. He then looked carefully up and down the street.

No one was around except for Luis, and the man hadn't seen him.

The father began to wave his hands in a strange circular motion. At once, seven boxes appeared in the doorway of the van. The boxes floated out of the truck, through the front gate, and up into the house. They hovered a foot off the ground the whole way as the man waved his hands at them.



Luis gasped and stepped back from the window in case the man saw him. Now he knew there was *definitely* something strange about his new neighbors!

Luis raced through his house and out the back door. He cautiously scanned the neighbors' backyard. Seeing no movement, he squeezed through a gap in the hedge, sprinted to the tree house, and climbed up.

Luis was shocked to see Sam's old toy chest in the corner. In the rush of moving, Sam must have forgotten it.

Luis opened the lid. Inside was a jumble of all the things they had shared. There was a telescope, a magnifying glass, a secret code book, and lots of old cars. Luis felt sad, but then he remembered his mission. He snatched up the telescope and trained it on his new neighbors' living room window.



The mother and the two children were unpacking boxes in the living room. Luis was amazed to see that these objects were also being levitated to different places in the room.

The girl suddenly said something to her mom, holding up her hands and then pointing to her head. Her mom responded, and then all three removed their gloves and hats.

Luis barely noticed that the objects were now moving faster and more accurately. He was more concerned with what he had just seen. The tips of his neighbors' ears were the color of lilacs and as pointy as a cat's. Their fingers had sky-blue webbing between the knuckles. They reminded him of the otters' paws at the zoo.

He shook his head in disbelief. This was incredible!



CHAPTER 3

An Alarming Discovery

Luis watched his neighbors head to the basement. Desperate to see what would happen next, he quickly climbed down from the tree house and sprinted to a low window that looked into the basement. Tucking himself behind a bush, Luis peeked in at the family.

The father was levitating an especially large box into the room. He stared at it, and it burst apart. Inside was a serious-looking machine. It was short and squat with a opening at one end. The father pressed a button, and puffs of steam flew out of the machine, accompanied by a hissing noise.



Luis quickly pulled away from the window. “Aliens,” he thought. “They’ve come to take over Earth!”

Luis had to tell someone. He ran back home.

“Mom!” he shouted. “The neighbors are space aliens! They’re going to attack Earth!”

Luis's mother peered up from her book, frowning. "Luis, I'm not in the mood for games."

"It's not a game," Luis insisted. "They really are aliens, and ..."

She raised her hand. "I said not now."

Luis realized it was his own fault. He had played so many games of space explorer in the past—why should she believe him now? But he had to do something.

Then Luis thought of the police. They were supposed to help people in trouble, and the station was only two blocks away.

"I'm going for a bike ride!" Luis yelled to his mother as he ran to the garage. He hurriedly put on his helmet and jumped on his bike. Then he began pedaling furiously down the driveway.

Suddenly Luis felt the handlebars twist as his front tire hit the curb. He was flung off his seat and began tumbling over the handlebars. He braced for the terrible impact.

Time seemed to slow, and astonishingly, Luis came to a halt, floating just inches above the sidewalk. He drew in a shuddering breath, turning his head to look back at the bike. It too hung in the air, balanced on just the front wheel.



Slowly the rear tire lowered to the ground, and Luis felt himself being lifted and gently put back on his bike.

“Luis!” he heard his mom yell.

Shaking, Luis turned to look at the neighbor’s house. The boy was standing in the front yard, waving his hands. He quickly lowered them, and Luis felt the bike return to his control.

A Secret Revealed

“Luis!” his mom yelled again, running out the front door.

“I’m fine,” he replied. Then he turned to the boy. “You saved me!”

“How did you do that?” his mom exclaimed. “Who are you?”

“Please don’t tell anyone,” the boy whispered. “No one is supposed to know what we can do.”

Just then the boy’s father appeared. “You’d better come over,” he said to Luis and his mother. “I’ll explain inside.”

Luis looked at his mother.

“We don’t mean any harm,” the father assured them. “My name is Alpha, and this is my son, Delta.”

They followed the boy and his father into their house. Soon the mother and girl joined them. They were introduced as Beta and Gamma. The family explained that they were indeed aliens. They had been visiting Earth as tourists when their spaceship broke down. Stranded until they could make repairs, they decided to make the best of the situation.

The parents had found work as inventors so they could share their technology with Earth.

“What’s that machine in the basement?” Luis asked.

Beta told him that it was a rainmaker. It could produce rain in drought-stricken lands. “People on Earth will never be without fresh water!” she declared.

Luis was impressed. “That’s awesome!” he said. “Everyone needs to know about you!”

The family frowned. “No,” Alpha said. “They wouldn’t understand. You must keep our secret!”

“I’m not sure,” Luis’s mother said.

“Come on, Mom,” Luis pleaded. “They don’t mean any harm. They’re trying to help our planet.”

She paused before saying, “Okay, Luis. I think they are trustworthy.”

“Thanks, Mom,” Luis replied. “One thing, though,” Luis said. “If you want to pass for a regular family, you’ll need to stop wearing winter clothes! As for your names ... how about calling yourselves Alfred, Betty, Jenna, and Del? Of course, you’ll need a normal last name too.”

“Sounds good,” said Alpha. “I shall be Alfred Normal.”

“How about Alfred Smith instead?” Luis suggested.

Luis and Del soon became friends. Luis taught Del how to appear more human, and Del showed Luis some amazing technology.

A week after they had moved in, the “Smith” family came to Luis’s house for dinner. Luis was happy to see they had taken his advice. Alfred and Del



wore sporty headbands, and Betty and Jenna had tied their long hair back over the tops of their ears. On their hands, they wore fingerless gloves.

When it was time for dessert, Betty presented Luis’s parents with a platter. On it were seven small squares that looked like crackers.

“Imagine your favorite dessert, everyone, then eat a square,” Del said.

Luis imagined strawberry shortcake. He popped a square on his tongue. Immediately his mouth was filled with the flavor of strawberries.

“Yum! Chocolate mousse!” his mother exclaimed as she ate hers.

Then Luis’s father cried out, “Lemon meringue pie!” He looked quizzically at their new neighbors.

Luis just smiled.

Respond to Reading

Summarize

Summarize how Luis becomes friends with the new neighbors in *Not from Around Here*. Your graphic organizer may help you.

Details
↓
Point of View

Text Evidence

1. How do you know that *Not from Around Here* is fantasy? **GENRE**
2. What is the point of view in this story? Use an example from the text to explain how you know. **POINT OF VIEW**
3. What does the word *sweltering* on page 5 mean? Use clues in the paragraph to help you figure it out. **PARAGRAPH CLUES**
4. Write the scene where Del stops Luis from falling off his bike from the point of view of Del. **WRITE ABOUT READING**

Compare Texts

Read about how a boy made some unusual friends.

Kintaro, Friend of the Animals

A long time ago in Japan, a fortune teller told a young woman that one day, she would have a strong and handsome son who would protect people.

“But beware!” the fortune teller added. “People will be jealous of his strength and good looks.”

Some years later, the woman gave birth to a boy. She named him Kintaro. Worried about the fortune teller’s prediction, she decided to raise her son in the mountains, far from other people.

Kintaro made friends with all the animals in the mountain forest.

Kintaro was very strong. His favorite hobby was sumo wrestling, which he learned by wrestling bear cubs. He could easily push even the largest adult bears out of the ring.



Although he was strong, Kintaro was admired by even the smallest animals in the forest because of his complementary quality of gentleness.

He enjoyed scrounging for nuts with the tiny squirrels. He took care of injured animals.

Kintaro liked to use his strength to help his friends. When a landslide blocked the entrance to Mother Bear's cave, Kintaro hauled away the heavy rocks to free her cubs.

Another time, when Snake was trapped on the wrong side of a river, Kintaro uprooted a tree and made it into a bridge.

The years passed, and Kintaro became a young man. One day while he was wrestling with Papa Bear, he realized he was being watched. Kintaro had never seen another human apart from his mother and his reflection in the river.

The man was dressed in armor with many overlapping pieces.



“Hello. My name is Hajime,” the man said.

Although it felt strange hearing a new human voice, Kintaro remembered to be polite.

“My name’s Kintaro. I’m pleased to make your acquaintance.”

The man explained that he was a samurai warrior. He was on his way home to his village. He had been looking for warriors to help his people defend themselves against their enemies.

“I have never seen anyone as strong as you,” he told Kintaro. “Will you join me as a warrior?”

Kintaro realized that it was his destiny to help defend people in need. So Kintaro and his mother left the mountain together to live in the human world again.

The mountain animals were very sad to see him go, but Kintaro never forgot his forest friends and visited them every year.



Make Connections

Why is Kintaro able to make friends with the animals? **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

What things do the aliens in *Not from Around Here* and Kintaro in *Kintaro, Friend of the Animals* have in common? **TEXT TO TEXT**

Focus on Genre

Fantasy Fantasy fiction has features that wouldn't happen in real life. Some fantasy fiction is set in ancient worlds with dragons and treasures. Other fantasy stories have a modern setting and include talking animals or unreal creatures that have special powers.

Read and Find Reread the descriptions of Luis's new neighbors and the amazing things they can do. How believable is the alien family and the reason they are on Earth?

Your Turn

Work in a group to turn a scene from *Not from Around Here* into a drama. You'll need to figure out how to show the aliens' ears and hands—and how to make things move around. Focus on the way Luis and the aliens get to know each other and share their different abilities.

Literature Circles

Fiction

Thinkmark

Characters

Who are the main characters in *Not from Around Here*?

How did Luis's point of view change from the beginning to the end of the story?

Setting

Where did *Not from Around Here* take place?

When did it take place?

Sequence of Events

What happened first, then, next, and finally in *Not from Around Here*?

Plot

Why was Luis worried about his new neighbors?

What did Luis do? What happened in the end?

Make Connections

What other stories does *Not from Around Here* remind you of?

Friendship

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