



Micah and Meriah

Who's My Neighbor?



Brigitte L. Hallum

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**To Tristan and Taylor—the first ones to call me GiGi
I Love You**

The big day had finally arrived! The Henries were moving to their new home!

It was a hot, sunny day. Daddy, Mama, and their twins Micah and Moriah were driving from their old house in their shiny, new red van. They left early because Mama and Daddy wanted to get there before the moving truck arrived.

“Ninety-four degrees? Man, it is hot today!” exclaimed Micah as he looked at the dashboard from the back seat. “I’m glad we have air conditioning!”

“You’re right, son. Ninety-four degrees is pretty hot,” Daddy agreed, as he looked at Micah through the rearview mirror. “The weather man said that it is the hottest day of the year so far.”

“Mama, does our new house have air conditioning?” asked Moriah.



“Yes, sweetheart, it does. You will be nice and cool once we get there and go inside,” Mama answered.

“Yay!” Moriah continued. “But I’m kind of sad to leave our friends. I hope we meet some nice friends to play with on our new street.”

“I’m sure you will,” Mama gently reassured. “Remember, we saw lots of children playing when we went to see the house. You and Micah will make new friends fast. You’ll see.”

“You know what I’m happy about?” asked Micah, who went ahead and answered his own question. “I’m happy that I will have my own room, and me and Moriah will not have to share and sleep in bunk beds anymore!”

“Moriah and I,” Mama said, correcting Micah.

“I mean Moriah and I.”



“What? You don’t like sharing a room with me?” Moriah asked her brother with her hand on her hip.

“No,” Micah said, wrinkling his nose as if he smelled something bad.

“You have your dolls and ballet clothes everywhere, and I don’t have enough room for my karate trophies or soccer stuff.”

“Well!” Moriah responded with a flip of her long braids.

“Me and my dolls—I mean—my dolls and I will have fun in our own room without you, mister!”

“That’s fine with me,” said Micah, scratching his head full of dark brown dreadlocks.

“Alright, you two. That’s enough,” said Daddy. “You are getting older, and it’s time for you two to have your own rooms. So, you don’t have to argue about it. Understood?”



“Yes, sir,” Micah and Moriah said.

“What’s the Henries’ family motto?” Daddy asked the twins.

“Ooh, I know!” Moriah eagerly raised her hand like she was in school.

“Moriah, you say the first part and let your brother say the last part.”

“We can disagree and still be kind,” Moriah recited proudly.

“And we respect one another, forgive quickly, and love always,” Micah said.

“Very good!” Mama said. “Now, let’s remember that.”



Just then, Daddy turned down a street that had lots of trees that blocked the sun a little. All the houses were brick and had big trees in each front yard. Micah and Moriah looked out of the windows and saw children playing basketball in their driveways and riding bikes on the sidewalk.

“Are we almost there?” The twins asked.

“Almost,” Mama replied. “Do you remember the name of our street?”

“Umm, Apple Cider Street?” Micah responded, unsure of his answer.

“Close. It’s Apple Valley Court—381 Apple Valley Court.”

“Three-eight-one Apple Valley Court.” Moriah repeated.

“Oh, I get it. Apples come from trees and there’s a lot of trees here, and our new house is in a court sac.”



Apple Valley
Court



“That’s a good way to think about it, Honey,” Mama laughed. “And it’s called a cul-de-sac, not court sac. It is a French word that means ‘dead-end street.’ Can you say that?”

“Yes. Cul-de-sac,” Moriah pronounced carefully. “I can speak French!” Mama and Daddy laughed at their daughter’s wit.

“Look, here we are now,” Daddy said as he turned into the driveway of a large white brick house with brown wooden shutters.

“Can we get out? Can we get out?” the twins asked excitedly.

“Okay, okay.” Daddy chuckled. “We’ll go into the house and look around, then we will start unloading the van before the movers get here.”



Once the movers arrived, it did not take them long to unload the boxes and furniture. It seemed like the movers put all the beds together at a rapid speed.

After they left, Mama ordered pizza for dinner. After they finished dinner, it was time to get ready for bed. Everyone was tired and tomorrow would be another big day.



After breakfast and more unpacking was done, the Henries decided to introduce themselves to the neighbors who lived in the cul-de-sac. There were two houses on their left and two on their right.

“Where should we start?” asked Daddy.

“Let’s start there,” Moriah said, pointing to the first house on the right. It was a white brick house with black shutters. “I like their red door!”

Daddy rang the doorbell, and a lady with short blond hair and a nice smile answered the door.

“Hello, my name is Elijah Henries, and this is my wife, Joy and our children, Micah and Moriah. We just moved in yesterday and wanted to introduce ourselves to some of our neighbors.”



“Oh, hello! Yes, we saw the moving truck yesterday and wondered when we would get a chance to meet you. I’m Michelle Roberts. Please come in. My husband and children are in the backyard.”

“Thank you so much,” said Mama. “We aren’t planning to stay long but we would love to meet your family.”

“Wonderful. Follow me,” Mrs. Roberts said as they walked to the back door.

“Honey,” Mrs. Roberts said to her husband, “these are our new neighbors—the Henries. They moved in yesterday.”

“Hello, great to meet you. I’m Marcus,” Mr. Roberts said as he reached out to shake Daddy’s hand.

“Thank you. I’m Elijah. Great to meet you as well.”



“I’m Joy. Nice to meet you,” Mama said as she shook Mr. Roberts’ hand. “These are our twins, Micah and Moriah.” Mr. and Mrs. Roberts looked at each other with a surprised look and big smile.

“Oh, my goodness! We have twins, too!” exclaimed Mrs. Roberts.

“How old are you, Micah and Moriah?”

“Eight,” the twins responded in unison.

“You will not believe this, but our twins are eight years old, too.

Their birthday is February first. When is yours?”

“February fifth,” Moriah said with a big smile. “Micah is two minutes older than me!”

“Wow! Tristan! Taylor! Come here, please. We want you to meet our new neighbors.”



Just then, a boy and girl with light brown curly hair raced towards their parents.

“I beat you, Tristan!” Taylor said, out of breath.

“Only because I let you!” said Tristan, who seemed annoyed by his sister beating him.

“Okay, that’s enough you two,” Mrs. Roberts said with a giggle. “I would like you to say hello to Mr. and Mrs. Henries and their children, Micah and Moriah. They are eight-year-old twins just like you.”

“Hello,” Tristan and Taylor both greeted with a smile.

“Hello, young man and young lady,” said Daddy.

“Nice to meet you, Tristan and Taylor,” said Mama.



“Hi,” said Micah.

“I like your trampoline!” Moriah exclaimed excitedly as she waved hello.

“Thanks. Do you want to come jump?” asked Tristan.

“Sure! Can we, please?” Micah asked, looking at his parents for permission.

“Only for a few minutes. We are going to go meet our other neighbors before it gets too late,” said Daddy.

“Yay!” all the children exclaimed as they ran towards the trampoline.

“Be careful!” Mama yelled after them.



“They will be fine. We constantly stress safety,” Mr. Roberts reassured. “I’m just glad for them to have more children their age to play with.”

“There are a lot of children in the neighborhood, though. It’s very kid friendly. That’s why we chose to live here,” said Mrs. Roberts.

“Where will Micah and Moriah be going to school?”

“Cedar Creek Elementary. It’s near the church where Elijah is pastor,” said Mama. “What about Tristan and Taylor?”

“Pastor? That is wonderful! We go to St. Vincent’s Church, and that’s where the children go to school. They have been going there since pre-school.”

“Oh, that is great! Well, even though they won’t be in school together, from the looks of things, it seems like they will be good friends,” Daddy said as all the parents looked and laughed at the four kids having fun on the trampoline.

“I hate to break up their fun, but we better get going, Elijah,” Mama said.

“You’re right, Honey. Micah! Moriah! It’s time to go!” Daddy called to the twins. Micah, Moriah, Tristan, and Taylor all came running.

“Aww! Do we have to go already?” asked Moriah. “We were having fun!”

“Yes, remember I said you could play for a few minutes. We are going to honor our commitment as a family and then get prepared for church tomorrow.”

“Can we come back tomorrow after church, please?” asked Micah.

“Please?” asked Tristan.

“We’ll see,” said Daddy.

“It’s fine with us,” said Mrs. Roberts. “We are usually home before lunch on Sundays.”

“Yes, yes, yes!” Moriah and Taylor both cheered, jumping up and down together.

“Well, it was so nice to meet all of you. Thank you so much for the warm welcome,” said Mama.

“Yes, thank you,” Daddy said as he reached out to shake Mr. Roberts’ hand. “I’m sure we’ll be seeing more of each other.”

“We would love that,” said Mr. Roberts.



“We certainly would,” Mrs. Roberts agreed. “Say goodbye, kids.”

“Bye!” Tristan and Taylor said.

Micah and Moriah waved as they said goodbye and went with their parents to meet more neighbors.



The next day, Micah and Moriah could hardly wait to get home from church. They looked forward to going outside to play with their new friends, Tristan and Taylor. Once they got home, they spent the whole afternoon jumping on the trampoline, playing basketball, and riding bikes. They had so much fun that they were not ready to come inside when Mama called them in for dinner.

The dinner table was lively with much talking. Micah and Moriah were excited to tell Mama and Daddy all about their new adventures and friends.

“Oh, and you know what?” asked Moriah excitedly.

“No, what?” Mama asked with a laugh.

“Taylor has a gigantic dollhouse in her backyard that we can play in!” Moriah used her arms to show Mama and Daddy the size of Taylor’s dollhouse.



“Is that right?” asked Daddy. “That’s pretty big.”

“Yes, and we had a tea party and everything!”

“What did you and Tristan do, Micah?” asked Daddy.

“Me and Tristan were still shooting hoops when they went to play dolls,” Micah rolled his eyes like he couldn’t believe the girls stopped playing basketball to go play with dolls.

“Tristan and I,” Mama gently corrected.

“I mean, Tristan and I.”

“Did you and Tristan invite your new friend Ethan over to play basketball?” Daddy asked Micah.



“No sir, we didn’t.”

“Why not?” asked Mama. “Remember when we met them yesterday, his grandmother said that he didn’t have a lot of friends yet because he and his mother had just moved in with her.”

“Well,” Micah dropped his head as he spoke, “Tristan said that he always gets into fights with the other kids, so we shouldn’t play with him either.”

“And why not?” asked Mama in a concerned tone.

“Ooh, I know!” Moriah was eager to give the answer.

“Moriah, I did not ask you. I asked Micah,” Mama responded sternly.

“Tristan said that the other kids teased him because he lived with two moms, so Ethan would punch them,” Micah said in a low voice.



“It doesn’t sound like the other children were very kind,” said Mama.

“Micah, do you think your actions were kind?”

“No, ma’am.”

“Micah, you are not a follower. You are a leader,” Daddy interrupted.

“And leaders do what?”

“Lead.”

“That’s right. And what else?”

“Leaders do the right thing even if no one else does.”

“What did you learn in Sunday school today?” asked Daddy.

“I know! I know!” Moriah raised her hand excitedly.

“Okay. Tell us, Moriah.”

“Luke 10:27. ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself,’” Moriah recited proudly.

“Very good, Moriah,” Daddy said. “Micah, what do you remember about this lesson?”

“Well, this lawyer dude asked Jesus, ‘who was his neighbor?’, and then Jesus told him a story about a man that helped someone who got robbed and beat up when no one else did the right thing to help him.”

“Excellent!” said Daddy. “So, the man that needed help was his...what?”

“Neighbor!” the twins said at the same time.

“Very good!” exclaimed Mama.

“Yes, and remember that loving your neighbor means being kind, caring about others, and doing things that will help them,” said Daddy.

“Ethan’s grandmother told me that his dad got very sick and died last year, so Ethan and his mom moved in with her. Ethan might be very sad about not having a dad and not having any friends.”

“It probably hurt Ethan’s feelings when the kids teased him, and that’s why he punched them!” said Moriah.

“That may be true, Moriah,” Mama said, smiling at her daughter.

Realizing what he did, Micah felt bad about refusing to play with Ethan. Micah imagined how he would have felt if other kids treated him the way he treated Ethan.



“I don’t want Ethan to be sad, Daddy. I can ask him to play basketball,” said Micah.

“I can, too!” exclaimed Moriah.

Daddy laughed. “Yes, you both can, and I am very proud of you for thinking like leaders and good neighbors.”

“Daddy, do you have to go to your office tomorrow?” asked Micah.

“No, not tomorrow. We are all going to get more boxes unpacked before Mama has to go back to work at the hospital.”

“Yes! Can we please put our basketball hoop up tomorrow? I want to invite Ethan over to play with us,” said Micah eagerly.

“I believe we may be able to do that, Micah. I’m proud of you for wanting to be a good neighbor.

After breakfast, we will do our chores and then we can put up the hoop. Why don't you invite Ethan over to help us put it together and then you all can play," Daddy suggested.

"Thank you, Daddy! I'm going to get up super early and get my chores done so we can play!" Micah declared with excitement.

"We can invite Tristan and Taylor over to play, too!" said Moriah eagerly.

"I don't want to invite Tristan. He didn't even want to play with Ethan today," Micah said.

"And you didn't speak up either, Micah," Mama reminded her son. "Remember that Tristan is your neighbor, too. How would you feel if you weren't invited to play? So maybe this will be a good time for you to show him what a leader and a good neighbor looks like."

"Yes, ma'am."

“Then we can all be friends!” Moriah exclaimed while doing her happy dance.

“Very good,” said Daddy. “Let’s get cleaned up and ready for bed. Tomorrow will be an early day.”

“Yes, sir!” said the twins.



Monday morning was bright and sunny. It was a great day for playing basketball.

After Micah and Moriah finished their chores, they went over to Tristan and Taylor's house to invite them over to play basketball and to go with them to ask Ethan to play, too.

"Yay!" Taylor shouted with excitement.

"I want to come to your house, but I don't know about shooting hoops with Ethan," Tristan said, wrinkling up his nose and shaking his head.

"Bruh," Micah said, looking at Tristan. "It's not fair to not play with Ethan just because of what the other kids said or did. We don't even know him, and we gotta think about how we would feel if no one wanted to be our friend."



With a big sigh, Tristan said, “You’re right, Bro. I’ll go with you.”

Micah was proud that they were doing the right thing. He gave Tristan a fist bump as they all started to walk next door to Ethan’s house. Micah was the first one to reach Ethan’s front porch and rang the doorbell. Ethan and his grandmother answered the door.

“Oh, hello, Micah. Hello kids,” Ethan’s grandmother smiled as she greeted everyone. Ethan waved as if he was surprised to see the children.

“Hi, Mrs. Gonzalez. Hi, Ethan. Um, can Ethan come over and play basketball with us?” Micah asked bravely.

“I don’t see why not,” said Ethan’s grandmother. “Ethan, would you like to go?” Ethan’s face beamed with happiness.



“Yes, ma’am!” Ethan exclaimed as he ran to get his shoes and bolted out the door. Ethan’s grandmother laughed as she saw the happiness on Ethan’s face.


“Have fun!” Ethan’s grandmother waved goodbye and watched all the children run to the Henries’ home.

Ethan, Tristan, and Taylor helped Micah, Moriah, and Daddy put the basketball hoop together. Daddy was impressed to see how all of the children worked well together. After they finished, they played a game of three on three while Mama made sandwiches for lunch.

Everyone had fun—especially Ethan—who now has four new friends. It was great day for basketball and a great day to love your neighbor.

The End.





Moving into a new neighborhood and making new friends can be exciting and scary at the same time! After the Henries move into their new house, Micah and Moriah discover that someone in their new neighborhood had been treated unfairly. This discovery will teach Micah, Moriah, and their new friends about the importance of justice, empathy, and bravery.

Follow the twins, Micah and Moriah, as they learn what being a good neighbor really means.

“I really enjoyed how relatable this story is in various ways. The lessons that Micah and Moriah learn - empathy and compassion for others, friendship, and leadership - are the same lessons I want to instill in my children, and this book provides great examples they can learn from!”

-Brittney, mother of three