

## A Nosey Neighbor

One day Sam received another kind of a visitor. When he went to his living-room door to answer a sharp rat-a-tat-tat he saw a little woman with coal-black hair and snapping black eyes looking up at him with the most interested inquiring look on her face. "I'm your neighbor," she said, first house to the right a quarter of a mile down the road. "You are a new-comer, and we, my husband and I are also. My husband is up here for his health."

She walked past him and plumped herself down in the rocking chair. "My husband and I have been wondering about you. I told my husband that maybe you was a Senator or Congressman

71.

who got into trouble down in Washington and came back here to get out of the limelight. "

She paused to give him a chance to clear himself, and when Van only smiled, and made no answer, she went on -

"We know you're not a farmer, and you must be in comfortable circumstances to drive a Cadillac and hire your work done"

Her eyes darted here and there taking in every article in the room. She looked down at the rug in front of her, then leaned forward and examined the rug closely. "Well I never, - an Isfahan Prayer-Rug!" With her forefinger she traced the plant forms of rose, lotus, tulip, and iris.

She looked at Van with wonder in her eyes, then walked around the room looking at the other oriental rugs on the floor. "To think," she muttered to herself, "these rugs back here in the sticks!" Her eyes found the kitchen door open on a crack and she walked over to it.

"How nice!" she exclaimed, as she stood looking around the kitchen. "How very clean and orderly, and a rocking-chair in here too. I love rocking chairs. You have a very comfortable home I must say," she chattered as she passed in front of Van to reach the living-room rocking-chair.

"Come a little closer," came the words as plain as light.

The little woman looked startled as she plumped herself down in the chair.

She stared wide-eyed at Van.

"Hello Sweetie - Kiss me." There was a pause, then, "I love you dear."

The woman bounced up in her chair and looked at Van wildly. Van motioned for her to turn and look at his parakeet. He couldn't trust his voice at the moment. She turned to look at the bird she had not seen before. Beautiful Trix was looking at himself in the little mirror that was fastened to one side of his cage. He was bobbing his head and talking with scarcely a pause.

"Sit down!" said Trix. "What a girl!" The little woman looked at the parakeet bewildered, and then back at Van.

"Should you happen to be a ventriloquist?" she asked.

"Be quiet," said Trix.

"I don't know what to think," said the woman.

"Spank me," said Trix. "Scratch my head. You're an angel."

The woman looked from Van to the parakeet and back again. Trix talked on.

"Are you tired? Go to bed. Time to eat. What's cooking. Smells good. I want some. Watch your step."

"I know!" exclaimed the little woman staring at Van with big eyes. "You're a professional ventriloquist - you got tired of going from place to place so you retired back here where no one knows you."

"No, I'm not a ventriloquist,"  
said Tom. I have an unusual bird.  
He belonged to a Filipino boy who  
worked for me. The boy started to  
train him to talk when he was six weeks old.

The little woman was not convinced  
it was plain to see. She gave a long last  
look at the bird, then made for the front door.  
Tom opened the door for her, smiled, and  
politely bowed her out. Before he could  
close the door Trix called out -

"Aloha, Aloha, Aloha." The little  
woman fairly scuttled up the walk.

When the woman was out of hearing  
Tom sat down in his easy chair and laughed heartily.

Sibe knocked, then walked in.

"Good gosh! What did you do to our neighbor?" he laughed. "She looked like a little wet hen with her feathers ruffled."

"Ask Trix," said Tom when he could speak. The little devil went on a talking spree as he always does when he perches in front of his mirror and looks at himself. That woman thinks I'm a ventriloquist and did all the talking."

The two men roared.