Pet Friendly Neighbors

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“Have you seen Charles, my cat?” Jeremy asked, craning his neck to peer around the neighborhood as he spoke.

George gulped and took a stabilizing breath. “Hi Jeremy. How are you?” He gave a weak smile.

Jeremy glanced up in surprise before guiltily looking away and exclaimed, “Oh! Hi George. I didn't know it was you.” He gave a sort of half-laugh, half-groan and repeated, “Have you seen Charles? I haven't seen him in a couple of days.”

A brief flash of surprise registered on George's face before he answered, “The last time I saw your cat was a few days ago over by Mr. Johnson's fence.” He waved vaguely toward the area in question.

“What would Charles be doing over by Mr. Johnson's fence?”

“I'm sure I, uh, haven't got a clue. Maybe...the, uh, old man has mice...”

“Hmm...”

“What?”

“Oh I was just thinking that the last time I saw Bud he was... you know...by the fence, too...” Jeremy's words trailed off and he felt his blood rush to his cheeks.

“You saw Bud?” George asked with sudden panic. “Over by Old Man Johnson's fence, you saw Bud? When?” His voice broke on the last word.

“Oh a few days ago...” Jeremy replied. He swallowed hard and looked toward the fence with a long face. “Such a beautiful dog,” he said under his breath, then shot a flustered look toward George. If I'm not careful, he thought, George will find out.

“What was that?”

“I was just thinking about that time Bud chased Charles up the tree at the end of the block,” Jeremy lied. “You remember? I thought Bud was going to eat Charles.”

George paled.