

PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

Miranda dazzled by money from Airbnb

MIRANDA decided to transform her parents' old Southgate bungalow into an Airbnb.

"But where will you live?" asked her friend Valerie.

"I haven't figured that out yet," said Miranda.

"Are you going to sleep in your car?" Valerie teased.

"Well," said Miranda, "I could buy Carl's Winnebago, then park it in my driveway, and sleep in the driveway, while I rent out the house." She was only half joking.

"That makes you a homeless person," said Valerie.

"Not really," said Miranda, "Just retired and on the road." Then Miranda added, "We're all homeless, Valerie. Don't forget that the material world is an illusion."

This is part 50 of a 72-part fictionalized serial appearing in the Daily Post, written by John Angell Grant.

Those remarks annoyed Valerie. Because Miranda never raised children, Valerie felt she did not understand the meaning of family responsibility.

Miranda had, however, crunched the numbers and was shocked at how much money she could make by renting out her Southgate bungalow as an Airbnb.

With the shortage of housing in Palo Alto, and the high cost of hotel rooms, her friend Peach told her she could easily get a \$1,000 a day for her place, renting it out to families who came to town for graduation ceremonies at Stanford, or weddings, or other events.

Peach, in fact, had turned her own Palo Alto family home into four small

Airbnb units, and was now grossing more than \$10,000 a month.

Further, Peach advised Miranda, if she wanted to rent out the Southgate bungalow for a full academic year to a visiting Stanford professor and family, she could charge \$8,000 a month.

"That's real money," thought Miranda. The only problem was to figure out where she would live if she rented her place out.

Moving one step at a time, Miranda did some modest home remodeling, and then tried an experiment: She rented her bungalow out for a long weekend, while treating herself to three days at the Ritz Carleton in Half Moon Bay.

When that seemed to work well, Miranda tried a longer rental of her Palo Alto home — this time for a week, while she spent her time at the Mount Madonna spiritual retreat in Watsonville. That went well also.

So at the end of the month, Miranda found herself \$2,000 richer for the long weekend, and \$5,000 richer for the Mount Madonna retreat — minus expenses for her own getaways.

Examining her house carefully for any wear and tear, after the rentals, Miranda found that the only things missing were a cordless mouse for her computer; and an old family vase — one she liked, which had no monetary value, but which was something her mom had bought that had emotional value.

Both items, apparently, had grown feet and walked away while Airbnb tenants were staying in her house.

But on the plus side, Miranda was \$7,000 richer.

"Pinch me," she said to herself. "This could work."

More tomorrow.