

"K"

By Mary Roberts Rinehart

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(Continued from last week.)
SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—At her home in the Street, Sidney Page agrees to marry Joe Drummond "after years and years" and talks to K. Le Moyne, the new roomer.
CHAPTER II—Sidney's aunt Harriet, who has been dressing with Sidney's mother, launches an independent modiste's parlor. Sidney gets Dr. Ed Wilson's influence with his brother, Doctor Max, the successful young surgeon, to place her in the hospital as a probationer nurse.
CHAPTER III—K. becomes acquainted in the Street. Sidney asks him to stay as a roomer and explains her plans for finishing her home while she is in the school.
CHAPTER IV—Doctor Max gets Sidney into the hospital school.
CHAPTER V—Sidney and K. spend an afternoon in the country. Sidney falls into the river.
CHAPTER VI—Max asks Carlotta Harrison, a probationer, to take a motor ride with him. Joe finds Sidney and K. at the country hotel, where Sidney is drying her clothes, and is insanely jealous.
CHAPTER VII—While Sidney and K. are dining on the terrace, Max and Carlotta appear. K. does not see them, but for some reason seeing him disturbs Carlotta strangely.
CHAPTER VIII—Joe reproaches Sidney. She confesses to K. that Joe knows now she will not marry him.
CHAPTER IX—Sidney goes to training school and at home relies more and more on K. Max meets K., and recognizes him as Edward's brother. A young surgeon, who has been thought lost on the Titanic, K.'s losing cases lost him faith in himself and he quit and hid from the world.
CHAPTER X—Carlotta fears Sidney's marriage. The hard facts of her new life puzzle Sidney.
CHAPTER XI—Max continued his flirtation with Carlotta, who becomes jealous of Sidney. K. coaches Max in his work, but remains a clerk in the sea office.
CHAPTER XII—Palmer and Christine move into rooms in Sidney's home. Sidney's mother dies. Palmer neglects Christine.
CHAPTER XIII—On a joy ride with Grace, a young girl, Palmer is hurt and Johnny, the chauffeur, seriously injured.
CHAPTER XIV.
By Christmas day Sidney was back in the hospital, a little wan, but vauntantly determined to keep her life to its mark of service. She had a talk with K. the night before she left. Katie was out, and Sidney had put the dining room in order. K. sat by the table and watched her as she moved about the room.
The past few weeks had been very wonderful to him; to help her up and down the stairs, to read to her in the evenings as she lay on the couch in the sewing room; later, as she improved, to bring small dainties home for her tray, and, having stood over Katie while she cooked that, to bear them in triumph to that upper room—he had not been so happy in years.
And now it was over. He drew a long breath.
"I hope you don't feel as if you must stay on," she said anxiously. "Not that we don't want you—you know better than that."
"There is no place else in the whole world that I want to go to," he said simply.
"I seem to be always relying on somebody's kindness—to keep things together. First, for years and years, it was Aunt Harriet; now it is you."
"Don't you realize that, instead of your being grateful to me, it is I who am undeniably grateful to you? This is home now. I have lived around—in different places and in different ways. I would rather be here than anywhere else in the world."
But he did not look at her. There was so much that was hopeless in his eyes that he did not want her to see.
"In one way, it will be a little better for you than if Christine and Palmer were not in the house. You like Christine, don't you?"
"Very much."
"She likes you, K. She depends on you, too, especially since that night when you took care of Palmer's arm before we got Doctor Max. I often think, K., what a good doctor you would have been. You knew so well what to do for mother."
She broke off. She still could not trust her voice about her mother.
"Palmer's arm is going to be quite straight. Dr. Ed is so proud of Max over it. It was a bad fracture."
He had been waiting for that. Once at least, whenever they were together, she brought Max into the conversation. She was quite unconscious of it.
"You and Max are great friends. I knew you would like him. He is interesting, don't you think?"
"Very," said K.
To save his life, he could not put any warmth into his voice. He would be fair. It was not in human nature to expect more of him.
"Those long talks you have, shut in your room—what in the world do you talk about? Politics?"
"Occasionally."
She was a little jealous of those evenings, when she sat alone, or when Harriet, sitting with her, made sketches

under the lamp to the accompaniment of a steady hum of masculine voices from across the hall. Not that she was ignored, of course. Max came in always, before he went, and leaning over the back of a chair, would inform her of the absolute blankness of life in the hospital without her.
And K. would stand in the doorway, quietly smoking, or go back to his room and lock away in his trunk the great German books on surgery with which he and Max had been working out a case.
So K. sat by the dining-room table and listened to her talk of Max that last evening together. When the bells announced midnight, Sidney roused with a start. She realized that for



She Stopped and Kissed His Cheek Lightly.

some time neither of them had spoken, and that K.'s eyes were fixed on her. The little clock on the shelf took up the burden of the churches, and struck the hour in quick staccato notes.
Sidney rose and went over to K., her black dress in soft folds about her.
"He is born, K."
"He is born, dear."
She stooped and kissed his cheek lightly.
Christmas day dawned thick and white. Sidney left the little house at six, with the street light still burning through a mist of falling snow.

The hospital wards and corridors were still lighted when she went on duty at seven o'clock. She had been assigned to the men's surgical ward, and went there at once. She had not seen Carlotta Harrison since her mother's death; but she found her on duty in the surgical ward. The older girl greeted her pleasantly.
"We were all sorry to hear of your trouble," she said. "I hope we shall get on nicely."
Sidney surveyed the ward, full of overflowing. At the far end two cots had been placed.
"The ward is heavy, isn't it?"
"Very. I've been almost mad at dressing hour. There are three of us—you, myself and a probationer."
The first light of the Christmas morning was coming through the windows. Carlotta put out the lights and turned in a businesslike way to her records.
"The probationer's name is Wardwell," she said. "Perhaps you'd better help her with the breakfasts. If there's any way to make a mistake, she makes it."
It was after eight when Sidney found Johnny Rosenfeld.
"You here in the ward, Johnny!" she said.
Suffering had refined the boy's features. His dark, heavily fringed eyes looked at her from a pale face. But he smiled up at her cheerfully.
"I was in a private room; but it cost thirty plunks a week, so I moved. Why pay rent?"
Sidney had not seen him since his accident. And now the work of the ward pressed hard. She had only a moment. She stood beside him and stroked his hand.
"I'm sorry, Johnny."
He pretended to think that her sympathy was for his fall from the estate of a private patient to the free ward.
"Oh, I'm all right, Miss Sidney," he said. "Mr. Howe is paying six dollars a week for me. The difference between me and the other fellows around here is that I get a napkin on my tray and they don't."
Before his determined cheerfulness Sidney choked.
"Have they told you what the trouble is?"
"Back's broke. But don't let that worry you. Dr. Max Wilson is going to operate on me. I'll be doing the tango yet."

Sidney's eyes shone. Of course, Max could do it. What a thing it was to be able to take this life-in-death of Johnny Rosenfeld's and make it life again!
Sidney fed him his morning beef tea and, because her eyes filled up with tears now and then at his helplessness, she was not so skillful as she might have been. When one spoonful had gone down his neck, he smiled up at her whimsically.
"Run for your life. The dam's burst!" he said.
As much as was possible, the hospital rested on that Christmas day. In the afternoon, services were held in the chapel downstairs. Doctor Max, lounging against the wall, across the chapel, found his eyes straying toward Sidney constantly. How she stood out

from the others! What a zest for living and for happiness she had!
The Christmas morning had brought Sidney half a dozen gifts. K. sent her a silver thermometer case with her monogram. Christine a toilet mirror. But the gift of gifts, over which Sidney's eyes had glowed, was a great box of roses marked in Doctor Max's copper-plate writing, "From a neighbor."
Tucked in the soft folds of her kerchief was one of the roses that afternoon.
Services over, the nurses filed out. Max was waiting for Sidney in the corridor.
"Merry Christmas!" he said, and held out his hand.
"Merry Christmas!" she said. "You see!"—she glanced down to the rose she wore. "The others make the most splendid bit of color in the ward."
"But they were for you!"
"They are not any the less mine because I am letting other people have a chance to enjoy them."
Under all his gawdiness he was curious and diffident with her. All the pretty speeches he would have made to Carlotta under the circumstances died before her frank glance.
Sidney eyed him, half amused, half hurt.

"What have I done, Max? Is it bad for discipline for me to be good friends?"
Carlotta was watching them from the chapel. Something in her eyes roused the devil of mischief that always slumbered in him.
"My car's been stalled in a snow-drift downtown since early this morning, and I have Ed's Peggy in a sleigh. Put on your things and come for a ride."
He hoped Carlotta could hear what he said; to be certain of it, he maliciously raised his voice a trifle.
"Just a little run," he urged. "Put on your warmest things."
Sidney protested. She was to be free that afternoon until six o'clock; but she had promised to go home.
"K. is alone."
"K. can sit with Christine. Ten to one, he's with her now."
The temptation was very strong. She had been working hard all day. The heavy odor of the hospital, mingled with the scent of pine and evergreen in the chapel, made her dizzy. The fresh outdoors called her. And, besides, if K. were with Christine—
"It's forbidden, isn't it?"
"I believe it is," he smiled at her. "And yet, you continue to tempt me and expect me to yield!"
"One of the most delightful things about temptation is yielding now and then."

After all, the situation seemed absurd. Here was her old friend and neighbor asking to take her out for a daylight ride. The swift rebellion of youth against authority surged up in Sidney.
"Very well; I'll go."
Carlotta had gone by that time—gone with hate in her heart and black despair. She knew very well what the issue would be. Sidney would drive with him, and he would tell her how

lovely she looked with the air on her face and the snow about her. The jerky motion of the little sleigh would throw them close together. How well she knew it all! He would touch Sidney's hand daringly and smile in her eyes. That was his method; to play at love-making like an audacious boy, until quite suddenly the cloak dropped and the danger was there.
If she could get Sidney out of the hospital, it would simplify things. She surmised shrewdly that on the Street their interests were wide apart. It was here that they met on common ground.
Carlotta gave the five-o'clock medicines. Then she sat down at the table near the door, with the tray in front of her. There are certain thoughts that are at first functions of the brain; after a long time the spinal cord takes them up and converts them into acts almost automatically. Perhaps because for the last month she had done the thing so often in her mind, its actual performance was almost without conscious thought.
Carlotta took a bottle from her medicine cupboard, and, writing a new label for it, pasted it over the old one. Then she exchanged it for one of the same size on the medicine tray.
Throughout the dining room busy and competent young women came and ate, hastily or leisurely as their opportunity was, and went on their way again. In their hands they held the keys, not always of life and death perhaps, but of ease from pain, of tenderness, of smooth pillows, and cups of water to thirsty lips. In their eyes, as in Sidney's, burned the light of service. The supper room was filled with their soft voices, the rustle of their skirts, the gleam of their stiff white caps.

When Carlotta came in, she greeted none of them. They did not like her, and she knew it.
Before her, instead of the tidy supper table, she was seeing the medicine tray as she had left it.
"I guess I've fixed her," she said to herself.
Her very soul was sick with fear of what she had done.
(Continued next week.)

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Japanese Yearn for Americanization.

Not with the view of making the best of an unwelcome condition, but, rather, with the manifest purpose of making the most of a welcome opportunity, Miss Michie Tanaka, a Japanese lady of Honolulu, Hawaii, in the Star-Bulletin of that city, presents a curiously strong though graceful plea in behalf of the Americanization of her people now on the islands or the mainland of the United States, says the Christian Science Monitor. There is not visible in her communication the slightest tincture of regret as to any loss which the Japanese immigrant may suffer as a consequence of his merging into another nationality, but there is much in the nature of congratulation that, at so small a sacrifice as any that may be entailed, he may enjoy the advantages that are opened to him through acceptance of the language and ideals of his adopted country. The Japanese believe, she says, that in the United States, where people from many nations are gathered together in the enjoyment of the inestimable blessings which America offers, the English language and the customs of the country should be supreme.

At a time when the question of a dual nationalism has so often been thrust into public discussion in the United States, and with frequent attempts at justification, it is refreshing to learn from this lady that the people in whose behalf she speaks "are full of gratitude that the broad-minded of this country are giving the rising generation every opportunity of assimilating American ideals. They think that with the American and Japanese ideals combined, the Hawaii-born Japanese should become the kind of citizens who leave the world a little better than they found it."

According to Miss Tanaka, the Japanese have come to realize that English is positively indispensable, and so are encouraging the study of it. They appreciate, she says, the difficulties encountered by the public school teachers in handling so many nationalities, each with a different language and peculiarity of pronunciation. But learning English has become an essential, and rather than burden America altogether with the task of imparting it, the schools of Japan are teaching it. In the effort to get into closer touch with Western ways, the Japanese, she says, are gradually changing their method of writing from characters which originated in China, and are substituting therefor a phonetic system which simplifies the recording of their language.

This is interesting, but the most important thing is the assurance from Miss Tanaka that the Japanese in Hawaii are aiming, not at continuing to be Japanese, but at becoming good American citizens, in so far as they are given opportunity. The agencies to which they resort for training are employed to this end. Every effort is made, that is to train the Japanese girls and boys on the islands for the duties of citizenship; "to create in them respect for honest and efficient public service, and to interest them in the work of making Hawaii a better, greater, and more beautiful country in which to live."

Disappearing Bed Hidden in Ceiling of Room.

For those who own small bungalows or cottages which lack guest rooms, some form of disappearing bed usually is convenient when emergencies arise. Certain advantages are apparently to be found in one which is hidden in the ceiling of a room when it is not in actual use. This arrangement does not usurp wall, closet, or floor space. Two false panels are employed, so that the place of concealment is always covered. When the bed is lowered to the floor one of these panels descends and seals the opening. The other one, which is held below the bed, fits into place when the latter is raised. The bed is held in a box installed between the ceiling and the floor above. Cables attached to its four corners pass around pulleys mounted in the retaining box, extend through channels cut in the joists, and are made fast to a winding drum fitted in one of the side walls. Access to this is given by a small, neat door and by turning a crank the bed is raised or lowered.

—The Young Women's Christian Association believes in out of door good times, for they give healthy bodies and help to give healthy minds. Last summer there were ten county camps conducted by county Young Women's Christian Associations. These camps had tents full of jolly girls who worked delightedly for honors which were given for many things, learning to swim, to play tennis, to make baskets, working with the other girls for a fine camp spirit and team play. Then there are good times around the camp fire when some one tells stories or talks of the things girls like to hear. A girl sat before the fire one evening with the light on her face. "Girls," she said, "I've learned something in these two weeks I have never known before, life is not just for oneself, but for all of us together."
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George V Rigid Abstainer.

London.—It is no longer, according to etiquette, to place any wines or liquors on the table whenever King George is a guest at military messes or with the fleet, says the "Spectator," which is conducting an active campaign for prohibition during the war. The King's order barring the use of alcoholic beverages in his palaces during the war is being adhered to rigidly. No wine is served even at dinner parties at Buckingham Palace or Windsor.
The "Spectator" recalls the fact that after the King's accident in France, when he was thrown from his horse, his physicians prescribed a small amount of wine. As soon as the doctors' orders were withdrawn, however, the King renewed his abstinence.

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