

THE BED NEXT DOOR

A Dramatic Reading

by
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It was so close to Rosie's that she could almost have reached out and touched the patient in it, if there had been a patient. But the bed "next door" was empty--lonely empty, Rosie thought. She waked up every morning wishing that there would be somebody there.

Then one morning Rosie, worn and tired after a painful night, drifted into a kind little sleep. When she drifted out again there was someone in the bed next door.

The little stranger spoke first. "I'm broken--what's the matter with you?"

"Oh," Rosie sighed, "I was broken, but now I'm knitting. It takes me a great while." She laughed softly. "I'm a pretty poor knitter."

The new patient was a little, dark creature, with curls tumbling all over the pillow. To plain Rosie she was very beautiful, and a pang of envy crept in among the old pangs of "knitting." Perhaps the Plan never would have begun at all if the next-door patient had been homely, with pale, straight hair in a thin little braid.

Rosie, in her hard little vigil that night lay and planned; it helped out the long night. In the morning she was ready.

"You awake?" she called softly.

"Yes. You? What'd you want to know for?"

"Oh--oh, I was just lonesome for somebody. I was missin' havin' my mother come an' kiss me up in the mornin'. Did yours kiss you up?"

"No-o, she never."

"It don't seem as if I could wait to get home! Where--where there's lace curtins an, mince pie an'--an' inches o' cream on the milk. Did you have inches on yours?"

"No-o, not inches."

"Then I don't s'pose you miss hearin' your mother say: 'Have another mugful, darlin'--have every mite you want'--mercy me how I miss! Seems as if I couldn't knit quick enough when I think of it!"

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---