



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Kid

Abbie Phillips Walker

Kid was one of those little boys who seemed to have grown up on the streets of the big city where he lived.

He never remembered a mother or a father, and no one ever took care of him. His first remembrance was of an old woman who gave him a crust of bread, and he slept in the corner of her room. One day they carried her away, and since then Kid had slept in a doorway or an alley.

By selling papers he managed to get enough to eat, and if he did not have the money he stole to satisfy his hunger.

He was often cold and hungry, but he saw many other children that were in the same condition, and he did not suppose that any one ever had enough to eat or a warm place to sleep every night.

Kid went in to the Salvation Army meetings, when they held them in his neighborhood, because it was a place where the wind did not blow, and while there he heard them sing and talk about Some One who loved everybody and would help you if only you would ask Him. Kid was never able to find out just where this Person lived, and, therefore, he could not ask for help.

One day Kid saw a lady who was too well dressed to belong in his part of the city, and he followed her, thinking that she might have a pocket-book he could take. The opportunity did not offer itself, however, and before Kid realized it he was in a part of the city he had never seen before.

The buildings were tall and the streets much cleaner than where he lived. Kid walked along, looking in windows of the stores, when he noticed a lady standing beside him with a jeweled watch hanging from her belt.

He had never seen anything so beautiful or so easy to take, and he waited for a few more people to gather around the window, and then he carefully reached for the watch, and with one pull off came the trinket, and away ran Kid, like a deer, with the watch clasped firmly in his begrimed little hand.

On and on he ran, not knowing where he was going--nor caring, for that matter--and it seemed to Kid that the whole world was crying, "Stop, thief!" and was chasing him.



After a while the noise grew fainter and fainter and he stopped and looked back. There was not a person in sight.

Kid looked around him. All the houses were large with clean stone steps in front of them. Kid sat down on the bottom step of one of these houses and looked at his treasure.

He held it to his ear and heard its soft tick, then he looked at the sparkling stones on the case. He opened it and watched the little hands move, then he opened the back part, and there was the picture of a baby, a little boy, Kid thought. Around its chubby face were curls, and its eyes were large and earnest-looking. Kid sat gazing at it for some minutes, wondering who it was. When he looked up he saw a large building across the street with a steeple on it, and on the top of that a cross.

The door of the building was open, and after a while Kid walked across the street and up the long, wide steps. He went in and looked cautiously about. It was still and no one was to be seen.

There were two doors, and Kid went to one of them and pushed it open. He thought for a minute he was dreaming, for he did not suppose that anything so grand could be real.

There were rows and rows of seats, and at the very end of the big room Kid saw a light. He walked down one of the aisles to where the little flame was burning, and stood in front of the altar.

Kid looked at everything with a feeling of awe, but he had not the slightest idea of what it all meant, and he wondered who lived in this beautiful house, and thought it strange that no one appeared and told him to go out.

There were pictures on the wall and Kid came to one of a sweet-faced lady who was holding a little child. Kid started and stepped back as he looked at it. "It is the baby in the watch," he said. "This must be where he lives and that is his

mother." Some one was coming. He was caught at last, he felt sure. He slid into a pew and crawled under the seat and kept very still--so still, in fact, that he fell asleep. When he awoke a light was burning in the church and its rays fell across the picture of the mother and child in such a way that the eyes of the mother seemed to be looking straight at Kid under the seat.

For the first time in his life he felt like crying. "I wish I had a mother," he thought, "and I should like to have her hold me in her arms just as that little boy's mother is holding him. I would tell her about this watch and perhaps she would tell me how to get it back to the lady."

Kid crept from under the seat and stood up, and coming toward him down the aisle was a man. Kid thought he wore a queer-looking costume, and he dodged back of the seat; but the man had seen him and there was no use in trying to run away; besides that, Kid was not at all sure that he wished to get away.

"Is this your house?" asked Kid, when the man came up to him.

"No, my son," he replied; "this is the house of God."

Kid's heart leaped for joy; that was the name of the One the Salvation Army people told him about, who loved everybody and helped you.

"If you please," said Kid, "I should like to see Him."

The good man looked at Kid very earnestly, and then he said, "If you will tell me what you wish to see Him about, I am sure I can help you."

Kid told him about the watch and that he felt sure the lady lived there, as the baby in the big picture was very much like the picture in the watch. "And if this is God's house," said Kid, "I thought He might be the father and forgive me. I am very sorry that I took it."

The good man took Kid by the hand. "Come with me," he said; "you are forgiven, I am sure."

Kid was given a good supper, and for the first time in his life he slept in a real bed.

The next day the good man found the owner of the watch, and when she heard Kid's story she forgave him.

Kid was placed in a school, where he learned to be a good boy, as well as to be studious, and he soon forgot the old life. He grew to be a man of whom any mother could have been proud. But the only mother Kid ever knew was the mother of the little boy in the picture, which he cherishes as a thing sacred in his life.

Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share

ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.
Instagram: @ririro_reading · Pinterest: pinterest.com/ririrocom