

KITTY FREW

by JANE ABBOTT

SYNOPSIS: "You're sitting on a trap and it isn't a pretty one," Kitty Frew's sister-in-law, Carol, says to her. Carol dislikes Kitty, but she has been staying with her family. Her mother, disappointed at his choice of a wife, gives him plenty of money and tells him not to go to work for a while. Kitty dislikes the resulting aimless life of amusement, but when she tries to make her practical, he gets angry and tells her she is "small-town." Her prettiness and good common sense make little impression on Gar's friends. Chief among them is Marge Crosby, who snubs her while she tries to get Gar away from Kitty. Marge has caught Gar's interest with some amateur theatricals they are working on, and Gar spends much of his time away from Kitty.

Chapter 11

WHO HOLDS TRUMPS?

"CAROL!" Kitty's cry was sharp. . . an ideal match . . . wealth and family. . . The words shot across her memory. Mrs. Frew had said it of someone—Joan Travers and Jerry Mont—"Carol, stop! Why—why should you want to hurt me?"

Carol shrugged her shoulders. "I told you I had my own reasons. And maybe when you're sunk yourself you like to see someone else writhe."

"Well, I'm not writhing. Not even to please you am I going to let you disturb me. I'm sorry you're not happy. I can't understand it. You have everything most anyone could want."

Carol's answer was explosive. "Everything! You've lived here two months and can't see? Why, I'd leave this house in a minute if I could—just as David did. I will, some day."

Over her own outraged emotions Kitty felt a need of Carol's greater than her own and it held her, pitying, for a moment. But she had no way of reaching through Carol's strange unfriendliness, and before any word could be spoken Carol went on, scornfully.

"I thought maybe I could open your eyes but you won't listen. You can't see a game when it's played right under your nose. Well, that's that."

Kitty's control was close to breaking. She would not let Carol see it break. She would not write for Carol's satisfaction! But she had to catch the back of her chair and hold tightly to it to steady herself.

"If you mean Gar—and Marge—I'll trust Gar to play any game fair!"

Carol had moved toward the door. She turned with a little mocking smile.

"But Marge isn't holding the trumps, you see! Or that's what you don't see!"

When the door closed behind Carol, Kitty knew only a hot indignation in which Carol's parting taunt lost all significance.

"She wants me to be jealous! She wants Gar and me to quarrel. Well, I won't. We won't." She'd been forewarned, indeed. She'd been very close to jealousy this evening. She could thank Carol for saving her.

Her moment's pity for Carol was gone. Of course Carol wasn't happy; who could be happy who so enjoyed the process of hurting someone else?

She and Gar must get away from this house, from Carol's spying, watching for opportunities to say such things as she had said tonight. "I'll talk to Gar's father—tomorrow morning."

Gar came in a little after ten. She met him almost gaily. Oh, she'd been ever so busy.

"We closed that deal for the barn, Kit." Gar threw off his coat and lit a cigarette. "It's going to be a knock-out, the whole thing. Marge has an architect making some drawings already. And Somerset—say, that boy's a headache! He's had a past or I can't smell one. But he knows his job. And you wait—He's going to make a headliner out of Marge before she's through with him." Gar had drawn Kitty down into his lap and she cuddled her head against his shoulder happily. She was thinking, not of Somerset and Marge and the barn but that when they had their own home it would be like this, they'd sit like this before a fire and talk.

But her determination to talk to Gar's father stayed with her. She slipped out of bed early the next morning and dressed quietly as usual to waken Gar. She watched the clock and when its hands pointed to the exact hour of eight she went downstairs, her heart beating a little fast because this talk meant so much.

Mr. Frew was already at the table, his newspaper spread before him. Oh, why, Kitty thought as

she went in, hadn't she got down before he'd started reading it. But his welcome seemed to hold only real delight.

"This is nice, Kitty—to have your company. Perhaps if I had your pretty face across from me every morning my digestion might be better."

And Frew smiled, too, and began devoting himself to her needs. "Mr. Frew— And then the absurdity of that checked her, to have no more intimate name by which to catch his attention! But he had not heard it.

"Well, are you happy with us here, my dear?" Eventually he came to his usual question and Kitty pounced on it in relief.

"Oh, yes! But I've been thinking—I came down this morning to ask you—is that position in your office still open to Gar?" Her voice trembled in spite of her.

Mr. Frew looked a little vague. "What position, my dear? Of course we might make room for him somewhere. I've always played with the idea of his coming into the office some time. But his mother led me to believe he'd made other plans."

Kitty caught the table edge with tight fingers.

"He hasn't any other plans, that is none that will get us anywhere! And he ought to begin working. We ought to be living in our own home, independently. If you'd make him think you needed him, maybe—"

Her earnestness brought Mr. Frew's full attention to her. There was a little kindling of satisfaction on his face. "You're right, Kitty. The boy ought to begin working. Tell him to come in at four o'clock this afternoon. We'll talk things over—there'll be some place I can put him into. I've just bought a new business block—he might take over the renting of the offices."

"Oh, I know he could do it," Kitty cried and then laughed that she should be extolling Gar's ability to his own father.

Mr. Frew patted her hand. "I didn't think the girl's nowadays bothered their heads about practical matters. So you want a home of your own—"

For a moment she fancied a quality of wistfulness in his tone. "Well, make yours, Kitty, and keep it a home. Don't let it get to be a mere shell of a thing—"

"Like this house," she finished silently for him, on a flash of understanding. But that understanding was lost at once in her joy that he'd promised to talk to Gar. And if for even an instant Dalton Frew had felt any longing for a home that was not a mere shell, even a gorgeous shell, that apparently was gone, too, in his concern at the lateness of the hour.

"You've made me forget that I have a very busy day ahead of me, little Kitty," he lamented.

Gar did not waken until nearly noon. By that time Kitty had completed in her fancy the home they would have, to its smallest cupboard. They would buy their furniture carefully, a few pictures, pictures they hung because they meant something to them. Books—there have books, everywhere, not just in stiff rows.

Oh, no, their home should never come to be a shell of a place; there would be love in it, laughter, nonsense, a need of one for the other.

She'd have Gar's father and mother, even Carol, come for dinner often. And David. David must come to sit before their fire, to know that their walls were walls that put arms around you—

When Gar wakened she met him with shining eyes, a merry mood.

"Gar, I've a wonderful surprise!"

But she would not tell him, she said, until after he'd had his breakfast; she teased him, eluded him when he tried to kiss her, shook her head, laughing, when he made absurd guesses as to her surprise.

When she told him she put her arms about his neck. "Gar, your father has a splendid position for you, right away! It's something to do with a new building he's bought. Renting the offices—He wants you to go in at four o'clock today to talk about it!"

Gar pulled her hair. "Since when have you been getting chummy with Dad? I haven't heard of any new building."

"I ate breakfast with him this morning. It was nice. I think he liked it. And we talked—things."

"Ha, I'm jealous! What things?"

"I told him that we ought to have a home of our own, Gar." She waited, then a prayer beating with every pound of her heart.

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Unintentional eavesdropping gives Kitty the key to Mrs. Frew's trickery, in the next installment.

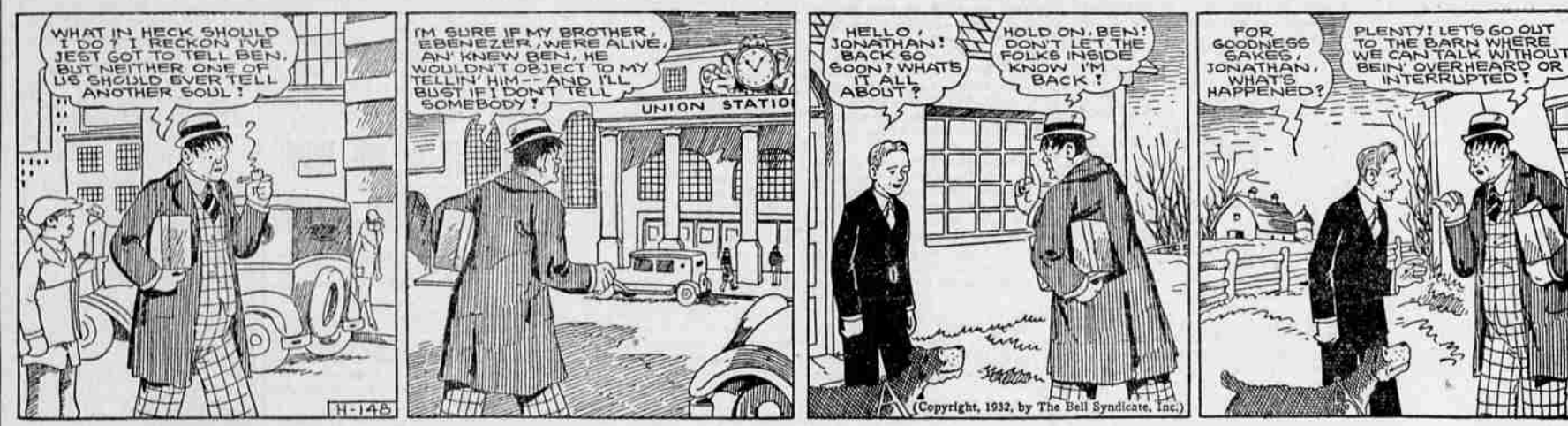
TAILSPIN TOMMY—An Old Enemy—The "Scarlet Ace!"



'SMATTER POP—Yes, Time Flies That Way



BOUND TO WIN—A Bomb For Ben



THE NEBBS—The Weaker Sex



MUTT AND JEFF—Jeff Flashes A Bit Of Rare Judgment



Grangers Present Comedy Friday For Contest In County

CENTRAL POINT, April 21.—(Sp.) Friday the Grange will put on their competitive play, "The Tenth of the Girl's Home." The cast includes: Mrs. Butler, Eula Benson; Mr. Butler, Will Foley; Ann Fisher, Edith Belmont; Katie, Eva Smith; Devlin Blake, John Blackford; Aunt Marietta, Mae Richardson. Other members will be on the program and all hope for a large attendance. A small charge will be made at the door.

At the next Grange meeting, May 9, a number of candidates will be initiated in the first and second degrees.

A new telephone service to be inaugurated in Switzerland will enable subscribers unable to reach their party to have messages delivered by a special bureau.

Elect Officers Of Eagle Pt. P.-T. A.

EAGLE POINT, Ore., April 21.—(Sp.)—P. T. A. met April 8 and elected officers as follows: Mrs. G. E. Osterhaut, president; Mrs. W. H. Young, vice president; Miss Yetta Olson, secretary; and Mrs. Earl Storer, treasurer.

The program consisted of a reading, Irene Pearce; piano solo, Miss Yetta Olson; reading, "Cooperation With the Teachers," Mrs. Charles Walker.

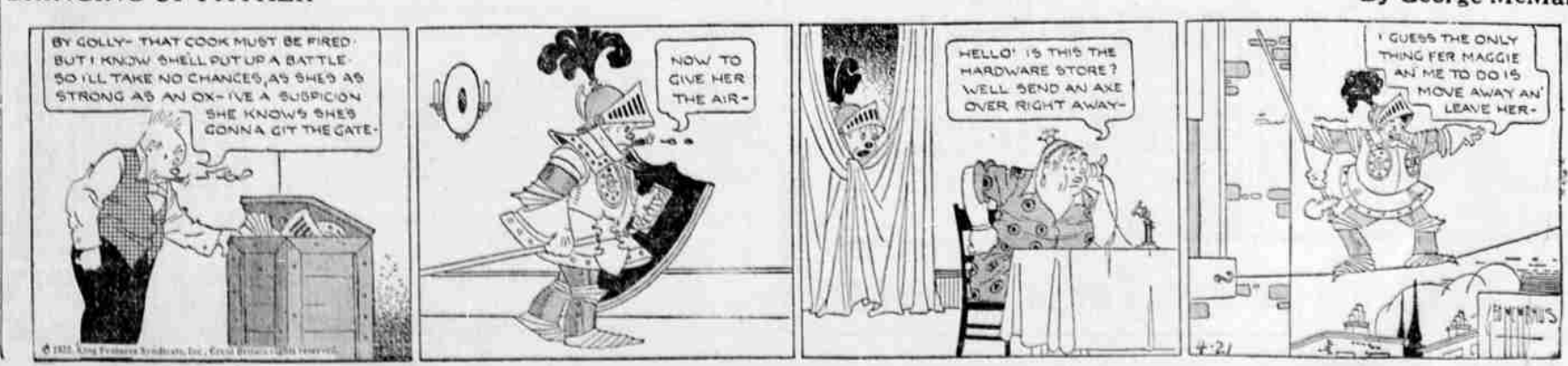
Mr. and Mrs. I. R. Kilns entertained Mr. and Mrs. Luther Haak at dinner April 17.

Alma Anderson of Medford visited April 18 with her aunt, Mrs. Lester Throckmorton.

Mr. and Mrs. Nick Young are repainting their home. Mr. and Mrs. Roy Smith spent the afternoon April 11 assisting them.

Mr. and Mrs. William Perry were in Medford on business April 18.

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus