

# KITTY FREW

by JANE ABBOTT

**SYNOPSIS:** The future looks empty and terrifying to Kitty Frew, when she runs away from her husband, Gar, and asks his half-brother David to help her decide what to do. Brought up to take marriage seriously, Kitty can't adjust herself to Gar's constant round of good times, to his lack of any responsibility about finding a job, she has been staying with Gar and his father and mother, but she begged for an apartment where she and Gar could be alone. Overhearing a conversation, she realizes that Mrs. Frew is trying to make Gar dissatisfied with his marriage, and tells him that she won't stay with him while his mother is buying him. David Frew has had a disagreement with his family and understands Mrs. Frew's domination of Gar. He takes Kitty to Dorcas Taber, whom he calls a "doctor of souls." Kitty decides the interview, but wants Dorcas' advice.

## Chapter 15

### SYMPATHY AND A TOOTHBRUSH

"HURRY—I have tamales left!" It was a throaty, low, level voice.

In her shrinking, Kitty had imagined herself having the unhappy details of her story to a masterful woman, calloused by social service, and here in the lighted doorway stood a girl no larger than herself, no older at first glance, in a man's straight-lined flannel dressing robe and soft heelless leather slippers on bare feet.

"I'd vowed I wasn't going to let

two chairs up to it. Dorcas pushed Kitty into one and took the other. David sat down on a cushion on the floor, his long legs drawn to his chin, just as he had sat in his father's library.

"I call this bliss—now let the world go by." And Dorcas stretched her small, slippered feet toward the blaze. "It's been a stupid day, David." But she said it gayly, as if its stupidity only made this moment of ease the more pleasant. "Carruthers was on his head, all day. Raging. I spent three hours with that Austrian singer what's-her-name and got about enough out of it to fill three lines—she's that sort."

"Dorcas does the special features for the Times," David explained to Kitty.

"Humph—he makes it sound like something," Dorcas retorted. "I'm supposed to be a human ferret." Then suddenly she sat alert. "But, oh, David—Emil Schelling's got a contract with WZAW. He's tearful, he's so happy. Seven weeks—Starr said a lot of nice things about his audition. He'll get some pupils now."

"He's off your hands," David put in.

"Not at all. I've told him he may use the front room downstairs. Mrs. Drinkwater's going back to her



David saw the distress in Kitty's face.

anyone in tonight," she was saying when she saw Kitty.

"It's Mrs. Garfield," David explained.

Dorcas caught Kitty's elbow and drew her into the room. "I'm glad to know you." Her tone made Kitty feel that she was glad. "You'll eat with me, won't you? You've had dinner? Well, some coffee, anyway. David can tell you that my coffee is just a little better than the best ever made. David—chairs and things."

It was a long room of soft light and color and inviting comfort. The meal of tamales was spread at one corner of an old refectory table set in an alcove. Close to it was a chest of the same fine old polished wood; from shelves hanging over it David was taking down cups as Dorcas directed. And into the cups, delicate old Spode cups over which at any other time Kitty might have wondered, Dorcas poured coffee from a squat silver coffee pot so like Grandmother Brandon's coffee pot at home that Kitty had an irresistible desire to put out her hand and caress it.

A great relief had lightened the terror which had gripped her below stairs. She wished she could give David some sign to tell him that she liked Dorcas. It was just that, at once. Wondering that this could be so she appraised Dorcas, a little shyly. From all claims of prettiness Dorcas was tall, short, for her nose was too broad, her mouth too wide, her body was curvaceous and fat like a boy's, her shoulders square and lean. But Kitty did not single out any such features; she was trying to put into definition the unaffectedness of the other, the forthrightness that was smooth-edged and friendly, the directness of speech and manner that won instant liking.

Dorcas had made no apologies for her dress, and the flannel robe seen in a faint light was faded from much washing and ragged about the cuffs. And she had shown no curiosity over the unusualness of Kitty's coming, with David, at this hour.

When she finished her coffee she told David to build up a fire. "We'll clear these dishes out of the way." And Kitty was heightened by the sharing of that task, working elbow to elbow with Dorcas in the limited space before the tiny sink. His fire kindled, David had drawn

home town—she's going to open a beauty parlor there."

There was evidently much funny about Mrs. Drinkwater's venture. David and Dorcas talked it over and laughed over it. And Kitty, not knowing what they were talking about, yielded to the cheer of the fire, to the apartness of this room. Now she was more aware of the room itself, of the fine lines of the old secretary against the further wall, the prints hanging on each side of it, the old silver candlesticks on the narrow mantel over the fireplace. A curious home for this girl in the old flannel robe and yet she seemed not incongruous in it.

A doctor of souls—David had called Dorcas Taber that. This Emil Schelling, Mrs. Drinkwater—had she decorated them? David? David seemed different now, younger—there was a more vital look about him. Himself—Her wandering thoughts came sharply up against the fact that she had been brought here for doctoring.

David saw the distress in her face, interpreted the involuntary movement of her hand toward him. He stopped abruptly half-way in a careless retort to something Dorcas had said.

"I suppose you've guessed, Dorcas, that we've come to you for advice. Kitty's declared an ultimatum. It needs some thinking out."

Dorcas merely inclined her head. But when David started to speak she stopped him.

"Suppose you run along home, David. Kitty and I can get things straighter if you leave us alone." To Kitty: "You'll stay with me tonight? I've everything you'll want—even to a toothbrush."

David glanced questioningly at Kitty and Kitty confirmed his dismissal with a little smile intended to show him that she was not afraid, now.

It was easier to tell Dorcas than it had been to tell David—there was in her listening a quality of understanding that helped Kitty over the things she could not say.

And when she had finished Dorcas did not answer for a few moments, as if she were weighing what Kitty had told her.

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A new environment claims Kitty tomorrow, while she waits—for Gar to come to her.

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Skeeter Thinks Of Everything!



## S'MATTER POP—It Didn't Seem To Be The Right Finish



## BOUND TO WIN—What About The Farm?



## THE NEBBS—The Prisoner



## MUTT AND JEFF—The Count of Hoboken Has Novel Ideas



## BRINGING UP FATHER



## DRIVERLESS AUTO CRUSHES WOMAN

SILVERTON, Ore., April 26.—(AP)—Mrs. A. B. Chapman, 50, of this city was crushed to death this morning when a light automobile she had left running while she got out to remove a pole from across the Brinkmeyer bridge leading onto South Water street near her home, started into motion and ran her down and crushed her beneath it. The accident is thought to have occurred about 10 o'clock and it was an hour later before she was found by Constable A. A. Pitney.

## PHOTOS OF PLAY CAST ARE BEING DISPLAYED

Photos of members in the cast of "Bless His Little Heart," taken by J. Verne Shlange, are in display throughout the city today, and have attracted much comment. The three-act farce will be presented tomorrow and Wednesday evenings at St. Mark's Guild hall by members of St. Mark's Altar guild. Tickets are on sale at Ethelwyn B. Hoffmann's and Palmer Music House.