

KITTY FREW

by JANE ABBOTT

SYNOPSIS: Recently a bride, Kitty Frew finds herself working in a store, because her husband Gar would rather live with his wealthy parents than set a job. She tells her half-brother, David, that Gar will come for her. Although Gar's mother influences him against her, Kitty expects him to agree to work.

Chapter 17

TWO KITTY'S

DAVID shook his head. He did not look at her.

"Oh, David—why doesn't he send me some word? I—I can't bear it!"

"Oh, yes, you can, Kitty." He spoke gruffly.

She'd said that before, to David, and he'd answered her like that. And invariably she'd stiffened herself to her unbearable heartache. She did now with a quick lift of her chin which David saw.

"I'm eating with you girls tonight. Oysters—" he indicated a carton he was carrying carefully. "Maybe Max will drop in and give us some music."

And just as David wanted her to, Kitty thought of Max and his music. The fun of sitting around the old table, in what Dorcas called her "night-club," eating the oysters.

Dorcas was there before them, a big gingham apron tied around her. The lamps were lit, a little fire kindled on the hearth. Coffee was boiling.

Dorcas usually entertained such times with a vivid recounting of her day. Her assignments ranged from accused criminals to socialites.

Today she had had a particularly delightful experience. The Times though its publicity had been uncovering rare old editions for a local bookstore. A letter had come to Dorcas' attention, written in a fine script. Reading it, seeing the delicate pointed handwriting, she had sensed a story and followed it up.

"I wish you could have seen him, David—you'd use him for a character. He had a shawl around him, actually. White hair, like a fine little mist around his head and pink cheeks. And blue eyes like a child's. And so polite—I must have the only comfortable chair in the room and he must stand bowing until I sat down. And David, what do you think he owns? A first edition of the Old Curiosity Shop—You should have seen how he caressed it. It had been given to his father by Dickens himself. Will he sell it? Thank God, no!"

But Dorcas' enthusiasm was for the little old man rather than for the rare old book. He didn't know anyone in Winton; he lived here because his grandson had put him here in the back room of a boarding house. Dorcas had touched on a hunger that had not been satisfied. "He's an exile."

A mischievous look had leaped to her eyes. "I'm going to take him with me to Aunt Lydia's, Sunday. She says there aren't any real gentlemen left in the world. I'm going to show her she's wrong. Won't they look sweet talking together?"

Frequently Dorcas spoke, with affectionate amusement, of her Aunt Lydia, who was, she had explained to Kitty, her own root. Kitty had gathered that to a certain age this relative had directed Dorcas' life. She it was who had sent Dorcas to the girls' school near Poughkeepsie, of which Dorcas spoke often, scornfully. Dorcas had left it to "go on her own." But her precious independence hadn't quite barred Aunt Lydia. Every Sunday she dressed with great care and to a degree of elegance in marked contrast to the carelessness of her appearance during the week and went to her aunt's for dinner. But Aunt Lydia, as far as Kitty knew, never came to Ketchum Street.

Max Adler appeared with his violin before they had cleared the meal away. And after him Mark Quinn, bursting in noisily. He'd been promoted at the garage. Now he could afford an extra evening with the life class. He sat on David's cushion before the fire staring into it, dreaming, until David ordered him off. Emil Schelling ran up smiling, expansive with the good fortune of a new pupil. Max played for them, one thing after another, walking up and down the length of the room while he played. Kitty, relaxed in the deep chair that was always hers, closed her eyes and her brain to everything but the thin, sweet, lifting tones. On his cushion David dropped his cheek against his hands, where they clasped his knees, and watched Kitty. Mark Quinn, his back to the others, stared into the little fire. Emil Schelling beat his fingers noiselessly against the arm of his chair, his face illumined by some inner ecstasy. A great contentment hung over them; time

stood still—yesterday and the day to come were nothing. The evening was like other evenings. After the music they argued, David with young Mark, heatedly, Dorcas with both of them. Emil Schelling grumbled and grunted and Max Adler denounced all their ideas.

Kitty let their voices tide over and around her, while her thoughts went off on a much-traveled course of their own. Another day without Gar! That it had come and gone and that she had lived through it gave her a dull amazement, as if she saw before her a girl who was neither Kitty Brandon, for whom life had been so joyously simple, or Kitty Frew, a girl who could go on eating, sleeping, talking, laughing, taking down tweed ensembles and hanging them back again, unfolding and folding sweaters and blouses, saying briskly over and over: "Can I help you, Madam?" and come back here to count what she had gained in self-respect! Tonight she shrank from that other girl who could so go on; all that was tired and disheartened and lonely in her cried out against that self-respect, she didn't want it! She wanted Gar, Gar! The sudden unbearable longing for him brought hot prickling tears to her eyes so that she had to shut them tight and hold them so.

But after a little she opened them to meet David's kind, concerned glance. He gave her a quick smile and she felt steadied, as if a hand had been put on her.

When they were all gone, when Dorcas had put out the lamps and spread the fire and said good-night, Kitty went on to the little room that was hers. It was not much, of a room for it was bare and furnished only with a pine bureau and small iron bed and a table and a chair and its wall-paper was faded and a little dingy but it was hers, for the total of three dollars a week.

Before she undressed she sat down at the table and entered the day's expenses in a small memorandum book. Breakfast, twenty-five cents, lunch, thirty cents, stockings, a dollar and a quarter. She contemplated the figures she entered. Unless some unexpected expense came up she could save eight dollars this week. She'd saved ten the week before. When the amount reached fifty dollars she would put it in the bank.

She put the book in her bureau drawer. She laid out a fresh blouse for the next morning, hung away her suit. Undressed, she wound her alarm clock, switched off her light and opened her window wide to the cool darkness of the night.

She turned her back on the darkness as it filled her room. She closed her eyes resolutely. Sleep she must have for the strain of the next day. She picked a safe thread of thought and followed it. Those twined things simply must be sold—another week or so and no one would want them!

Mrs. Frew's day began early with a prescribed system of exercises. After this she ate her breakfast which Cora brought to her room. She ate leisurely, heartily. When Cora carried her tray away she lay on her chaise-longue and read for an hour, the morning paper, a magazine, perhaps a book of new fiction. After that, for another hour, she submitted herself to Cora's clever fingers and Cora's cleverly directed flattery, finding both stimulating. At eleven o'clock she received Pound to go over with him the orders for the day.

But on the morning following Kitty's flight from the house, Pound came to her door a full half-hour before she expected to see him. Pound was so obviously disturbed that Mrs. Frew dismissed Cora at once.

"Well, Pound?"

"It's Mrs. Gar, madam. She's gone—"

Mrs. Frew's expression did not alter though Pound, if he had not been so completely held in his distress, might have heard a quick indrawing of her breath.

"What do you mean, Pound?"

"She went last night. She went alone. Mr. Garfield had gone out—I think he went out to dinner, likely. And she went out just after him. She took her bag, madam. I called a taxi for her. She seemed—well, she seemed upset, madam. If I may be so bold, I'd say Mrs. Gar hasn't been happy all the time. She acted like she had something on her mind. I worried about her going like that. I thought maybe I ought to tell some one. But Mr. Gar isn't in his room."

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Gar's excited plans for recovering Kitty come in conflict with his mother's intents tomorrow.

TAI SPIN TOMMY—In The Clear!



S'MATTER POP—Phonetically Identical



By C. M. PAYNE

BOUND TO WIN—Jonathan Sells The Idea



By EDWIN ALGER

THE NEBBS—Take It From Me



By SOL HESS

MUTT AND JEFF—Jeff Can Do A Hundred Yards In Nine Seconds Flat



By BUD FISHER

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus

THREE AUTO THIEVES ARRESTED AT DRAIN

ROSEBURG, Ore., April 28.—(AP)—Sheriff V. T. Jackson said today that Charles Fuller, Ed Baley and Archie Searle, all of Russellville in Multnomah county, have confessed not only to the theft of an automobile belonging to W. S. Woodward of Salem and Albany, but to the stealing of two other machines. The three were arrested late Tuesday at Drain following recovery of the Woodward car which was abandoned at Leona.

UNION PACIFIC NEAR EARNING \$10 DIVIDEND

NEW YORK, April 28.—(AP)—The annual report of the Union Pacific Railroad company, issued today, discloses that the company came within \$153,511 of earning its \$10 per share dividends on outstanding common stock. After various charges, net earnings for the common stock totaled \$27,075,588, or \$9.93 a share, compared with \$24,754,281, or \$15.63 a share in 1930. Dividends on the common in 1931 amounted to \$22,229,100.

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