

KITTY FREW

by JANE ABBOTT

SYNOPSIS: Kitty Frew runs away from her husband, Gar, because he thinks a rich man's son doesn't need to work. His mother wants the marriage broken off because of Kitty's lack of social position, and uses Kitty's absence to influence Gar against his wife. He cultivates Marge Crosby while Kitty works.

Chapter 19

"DON'T BE ALARMED"
"That's exactly what's been the trouble, mother," Gar said. "Kitty hasn't gotten on to our way of living. She thinks leisure is loafing, and in Bridgewater loafing's a sin. But she'll learn."

"Of course, dear. She must learn. Your father has spent the best part of his life in building up a fortune and an honorable place in our community. These will be yours some day. And we want you to use both for the advancement of culture and good citizenship. Kitty must see that such occupation is worthy a man's time. I had hoped you would marry some girl who had been reared to the responsibility of wealth, some girl like Margery Crosby, but as your choice—a hasty choice you must let me repeat, Gar—fell on Kitty, we must make the best of it."

"You're wonderful," Gar repeated warmly. "Now run away, dear. I've a very busy day ahead of me."
"I'll hunt up Pound, maybe Kitty left some message with him for me."

"I'm sorry, Gar. I have had to dismiss Pound. I discovered that he was shockingly dishonest."
"Pound?" Gar stared at her. "Old Pound?"
"It distressed me to send him away. But to have kept him on would have undermined the whole service in the house."

"You must have hated to fire him! How long—fourteen years, isn't it? He came that fall I was getting over the measles. And he's been putting it over you all that time, has he? The old devil!"

"I'd rather not talk about it, Gar. I do feel very badly over it."
Gar left his mother's room and went to his own to dress. Half-dressed he called Marge on the telephone. She'd wanted him to come in for tea. Somerset and Di and some of the others were coming, and they were going to talk over the casting of the first play. He'd told her he didn't think he could make it; he'd thought of Kitty, that he'd been leaving her alone too much. Well, now, Kitty had left him.

He informed Marge, when he stopped for her, that Kitty had gone to visit her family. She might be there a week or more. Her mother wasn't very well. He remembered, conveniently, that Kitty had said that her mother wasn't well.

"Good!" Marge cried. Then she laughed. "I mean it, Gar—I need you so much just now. I'm sunk whenever I think of building over that barn. And you know so much more than I do."

He spent the greater part of each day that followed with Marge and Decker, the architect. He lunched with Marge, going over with her the plans and plumbers' and painters' estimates which Decker sent in. Somerset usually met them at tea-time and then later the others for dinner somewhere. Because his room seemed lonesome without Kitty he spent only enough time in it to dress and undress and sleep.

Every morning going down earlier than was his custom he asked Jones, the new butler, if there'd been a telegram for him or a letter.

Every morning he stopped in his mother's room to talk to her. He told her what the Players were doing.

"You won't believe your eyes, mother, when you see that old barn—Marge sure is an artist. She knows what she wants too. We hunted all over the city yesterday for some old lanterns—big ones. She's going to have them bronzed. The proscenium arch's going to be mauve and bronze. Decker couldn't get it at first, but Marge stuck to it. Of course when it comes to the plumbing and that sort of detail she depends on me."

"Of course!"
But after a little shutting himself out of his room, rushing here and there with Marge and the others could not crowd down his hunger for Kitty. His mother guessed it, noted his growing restlessness.

He sought her out early one morning. Cora had not yet begun her operations, and he found his mother reclining on her chaise-longue, the newspaper spread before her. She knew what he was going to say before he spoke.

"Mother, I can't stand it any longer—not hearing or anything. I'm going to Bridgewater. We'll talk things out."

Mrs. Frew let her head drop back against the pillows behind her. She drew her chignon negligee closer about her throat and held it there, as if she were cold.

"I know, dear boy, how you feel—" Her voice was a little detached and seemed by its detachment to put Gar's loneliness in the background. She hesitated an appreciable moment. "I was going to ask you, Gar, if you'd go out to Denver with me. There's to be a National Conference on Child Welfare, and I must go. But I'm not feeling very well. Oh, my dear, don't be alarmed! It may be nothing. I've talked with Doctor Riggs, and he's watching my condition. But I dread the traveling alone, strange hotels, meeting strangers. I know it's selfish to ask you to go with me when you so long to go to Kitty—"

Gar's concern was all that she could want, his answer prompt. "Mother, of course I'll go! But you ought not to take the trip, I'll ask Riggs if you ought to—"

"No, no, Gar. He might say I couldn't go and I must. It's a very important conference. And the change, the drier climate—she held the chignon closer to her throat—"may help me, if you go with me."

"And please, Gar, don't mention it to anyone, your father—"

He saw her face pale, her attitude languid. He kissed her tenderly. He had difficulty keeping boyish tears out of his eyes. In all his life he could not remember a time when his mother had admitted even to so much as a headache.

"You're good to me, dear boy. Am I asking too much? A few days—"

"We'll stay until you're set up again, mother. Kitty'd want me to stick by you."

A few days later the Winton Times informed its readers that Mrs. Dalton Frew and her son, Mr. Garfield Frew were in Denver for the National Conference on Child Welfare. And, less conspicuously in the column:

"Mrs. Garfield Frew is spending November in Bridgewater, the guest of Mr. and Mrs. John Brandon."

It was Kitty's habit to read the Times while she ate her breakfast in the restaurant where David had taken her that first night she had come to Ketchum Street. She always scanned the social page closely for any word of Gar or his mother, Margery Crosby, the progress of the Little Theater.

She read now that Gar was with his mother in Denver. And almost at once that, she was in Bridgewater. Her first shock and hurt gave way to puzzlement at that. She stared at the brief lines, stupidly. Gar thought she had gone home! Pound had not told him—And then deep in her heart a little flame of hope kindled and grew. Gar surely had written to her at Bridgewater before he went away—He wouldn't go away without some word.

All the dreary discouragement, the ache of waiting lifted from her. Of course Gar hadn't worried about her because he thought she was home with her father and mother. He'd shown himself stubborn but she could smile even at that, now, in her great relief. She could think of his going away with his mother without any anger. It wouldn't be for long—conferences that brought important, busy people together never lasted long—and then he'd come back to find her.

But if a letter went to Bridgewater addressed to her, her family would think that something was wrong! She considered such a complication a little dismayed. She had not told her father and mother that she was alone on Ketchum Street. She had worded carefully one letter to them letting it give them the impression that she and Gar were in an apartment of their own. She'd hated the deceit but she hated more telling them all that had happened. They'd believed so simply in hers and Gar's happiness.

She could telegraph them. She pushed her uneaten breakfast away from her and went out hurriedly; she could not waste so much as a minute. She remembered a telegraph office near the Times building.

Gar gone to Denver with his mother. Planned to visit you while he was away but found it impossible. Send any mail back here."

Eighty cents, a hole in her savings, but she could not think of that, minimize words with this glow of expectancy so consuming, her. It seemed such a thing of certainty, that Gar had written! This was Friday; by Monday his letter would be back to her.

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Kitty has thought herself hidden and safe, but Carol crosses her path tomorrow,

which necessitated his dismissal from school during the recent "spell of weather."

Arriving at a local doctor's office a few days ago, when the skies cleared after the storm, the boy asked for a slip, granting him permission to return to school, a form required following absences.

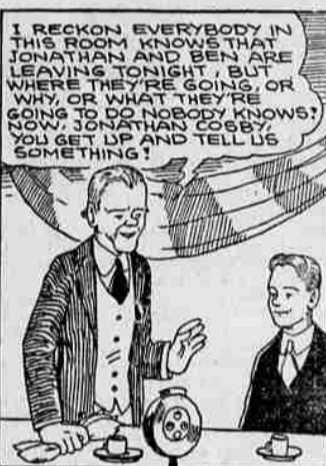
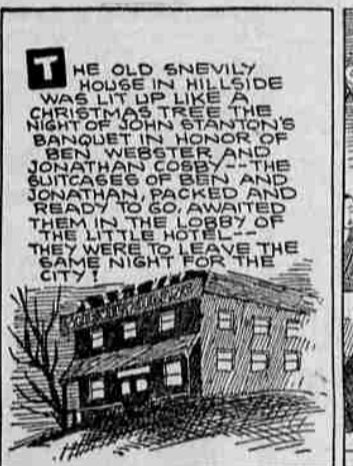
TAILSPIN TOMMY—The Diamond Thieves Appear Again!



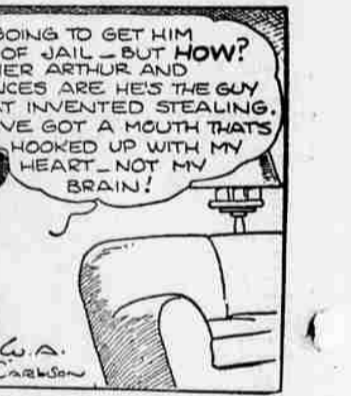
S'MATTER POP—Such Belittling!



BOUND TO WIN—The Farewell!



THE NEBBS—Everything Will Be All Right



MUTT AND JEFF—And Then Mutt Crowned Him With The Skillet



BRINGING UP FATHER



HAPPY LAD GOES BACK TO SCHOOL WITH NEW SHOES

Shoes—to Webster. "A covering for the human foot, having a thick and somewhat stiff sole," to most people a necessary bit of apparel, pinching when new, squeaking when old—are to a little Medford boy today the manifestation of all that is beautiful in life.

For in their well polished leather he sees a return ticket to school, the approval of his playmates, the answer to a long, long wait, and a farewell to stinging chaps and chilblains,

which necessitated his dismissal from school during the recent "spell of weather."

Arriving at a local doctor's office a few days ago, when the skies cleared after the storm, the boy asked for a slip, granting him permission to return to school, a form required following absences.

Asked the reason for his absence, he admitted with hesitance, "I had no shoes, and it was cold." The doctor's secretary and another physician standing by, volunteered to supply the shoes. Negotiations were made with a local shoe store and the bright eyed boy soon returned with his feet encased in new shoes and socks.

"Nothing cheap about them, neither," he exclaimed in appreciation of the gift. "And I'm going to keep them shined, every day," he called back as he skipped his new possessions out of the office and down to the street.

Broken windows glazed by Trowbridge Cabinet Works.

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