

KITTY FREW

by JANE ABBOTT

SYNOPSIS: Kitty Frew, a young girl, has been left alone in the house. She is very lonely and misses her mother. She goes to the window and looks out at the night. She hears a noise and goes to investigate. She finds a small box and opens it. She finds a letter from her mother. She reads it and is very happy. She goes to bed and falls asleep.

SWEET DEADLY POISON

JAN had no reverence for these dear things of his master's; he wanted a run out of doors. He made his impatience so plain that David and Kitty laughed and yielded to it. They left the house by the woodshed door.

The yards, the empty weathered barns and outsheds, seemed to swim in a soft haze. Fat pigeons sunned themselves on the barn roof. Outside, as in the house, everything was meticulously clean, orderly. A path of old flagstones led to a strip of garden where still bloomed a few ragged chrysanthemums.

"Oh," cried Kitty, lifting her hand. "I hear it! The brook!"

"Of course—it's there, just beyond those willows."

They left the brook to climb the hillside through old oak trees and maples and firs. When, presently, they came out on the top Kitty dropped to the ground, a little breathless.

"I love it! It's as good as my hilltop!"

And David's silence, his smile of appreciation that was partly for what he saw and partly for her delight, was good to her.

The sun lay warm on them. David sat down beside her. Jan reluctantly curled at his master's feet.

"David, I'm glad you brought me here. I can rather guess what it means to you—it's so safe!"

He nodded his head. "I've wanted to bring you here, Kitty," he said simply.

She had a pleasant sense of sharing with David something so intimately a part of him that he had no words for it. She recalled the look on his face when he told her that his forebears had owned most of this valley—a fine proud respect-look, a look of belonging.

She was shyly conscious of depths in David which she never had suspected. She'd not known them because always when she'd been with him she'd been so wrapped in her own plight.

"David," how old was your mother when she went away?"

"Twenty. She went to Winton to teach school. She'd graduated from Cornell, you see, the year before. She met my father that winter. They were married in the spring."

Kitty's brows drew together. What had Gar said? That his father had married out of his class, something like that—

"How old were you when she died, David?"

"Four."

"And you don't remember her?"

"More now than I did. This place has helped me. She used to come here with me, summer, I suppose. Her father was living, then. I can remember her playing with me in the brook."

Kitty was silent, held in deep compassion. She divined swiftly how much David needed that sense of love. She remembered how he'd had to go to his father's house, an intruder.

"David, tell me more—about yourself," she said at length, softly. He gave a short laugh. "Not particularly pretty talk, Kitty. I guess I wasn't much more as a kid than I am a man, now. Then a sudden anger seized him. 'I was ready to adore her—that woman who took my mother's place. She was the kind a kid would like, lovely looking and all that. But she shut me out, right from the first. I wasn't hers. She shut me out from every-thing. She was poison, slow, sweet, deadly poison. She worked it on my father. She made him insensible to all but the need of making money. She worked it on poor old Carol—'

Kitty made a little protest. "But Carol's hers!"

"Not a son. She isn't Gar. It's Gar she wanted. Well, she has him."

An involuntary shiver went over Kitty. David saw it.

"She'd send me out of the room when anyone came in. I thought there was something about me that was queer—I'd listen through the door while she showed off Gar's baby tricks. Probably Carol felt the same way I did. That's the kind of thing that leaves scars, Kitty—"

Jan had snuggled closer to his master. David's hands caught the shaggy fur, dug deep into it.

"I told you it wasn't pretty talk, Kitty. You can't get it, perhaps—you haven't run up against hatred,

the kind that's put into a child's heart, that eats into the soul. I've been afraid of it for you."

"I'm not going to let it touch me!" Kitty cried on a sharply drawn breath. "Or Gar." She squared her shoulders with a valiant little air of strength. "Why don't you forget it, David? You could."

"I was too sensitive, more intro- spective than a kid ought to be. Well, I walked out when I was eighteen. She'd framed some petty things against me and I wouldn't deny it. It came to me all at once that I didn't have to deny it to her—that she didn't need to count. I got a job pasting advertising stuff on billboards. I wanted to write—"

"I used to grind out stuff nights with a blanket wrapped around me because my room was so damn cold. I didn't sell any of it—guess it was pretty bad. But it kept me out of mischief. After a couple of years I got a chance on the Times, report- ing—"

"And then you met Dorcas!" Kitty broke in, involuntarily.

David nodded. "Yes, I met Dorcas."

"I'd kept in touch with my father at his office. I used to drop around there late in the afternoon to have a little talk with him. One night he took me home to dinner with him. I didn't want to put a foot into that house but I sort of got it that he was lonely. After that I went there to eat with him, now and then, just as I did that night I met you. He's talked about my mother. Two years ago he gave me this place. It's taken every cent I can scrape to- gether to keep it up but it's worth it to me. It's safe—just as you said. I got a feeling when I'm here of be- longing to my mother's people. It squares me up."

He lapsed into a deep silence, then, which Kitty would not break though she longed to tell him how grateful she was that he had let her into his confidence. Her heart brimmed with tender, wordless affection.

He roused after a little with a laugh. "I haven't spilled as much as this to anyone, Kitty. I guess it's because you're you. But what say to opening some of those cans?"

He sprang to his feet. He took Kitty's hands to help her to hers. He kept his hold of them as she stood, slim and straight, before him for a moment.

"I've never brought anyone else here, Kitty. I've never wanted to—before."

"Thanks, David."

They went down the trail through the woods, gray now, for the sun was slipping over the hilltop. David built a fire on the living-room hearth, drew a low table to it and spread a cloth over the table top.

It was when they had finished their meal, a cozy meal before the crackling flames, that he turned to Kitty with a smile.

"You've forgotten. You were going to tell me something."

She related every detail of her luncheon with Miss Lee and what Miss Lee had said to her. A little excited tone colored her voice. "And I shall go on working even after—"

"Oh, David, don't look like that! It makes me feel like a fool. I have to believe that Gar will find me, don't you understand that? If I didn't, I wouldn't have anything! Even my love for Gar wouldn't be worth- anything." Her voice sank to a whisper.

"Go on," he commanded brusque- ly.

"It's easier now for married women to work—housework's dif- ferent and allows more leisure. And it must give a woman a splendid feeling of partnership."

"It's a fine sounding plan. It goes—with some. But what if Gar won't see it the way you do? What then? Reconciliation at any price?" His question had a brittle edge.

"Offended, Kitty shut her lips on any answer."

Suddenly David swung round to her. He stood over her, his face stern. "Kitty, can't you see, yet? Haven't you learned the truth? That woman owns Gar body and soul—she'll give him as much rope and no more. You haven't a chance against her. You can't make Gar over—he's a spoiled, selfish, easy- going lazy fellow. The most you can do is compromise and you'll give up all that's fine in you and you won't be anywhere. Call it a bad business, a mistake—go back to Bridgewater—"

Kitty had a gasp to her feet so that she faced him. She was shrinking back from him, her eyes fixed in horror on his face, her lips trembling.

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Defying David, Kitty works on until Monday, she is discovered by an old friend.

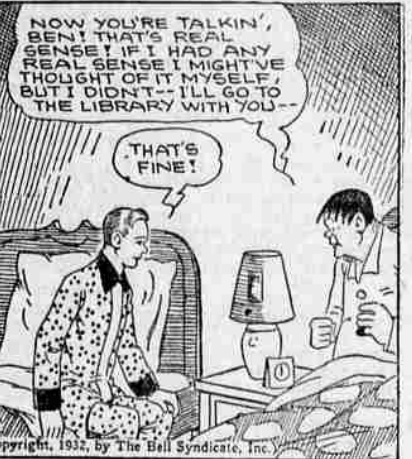
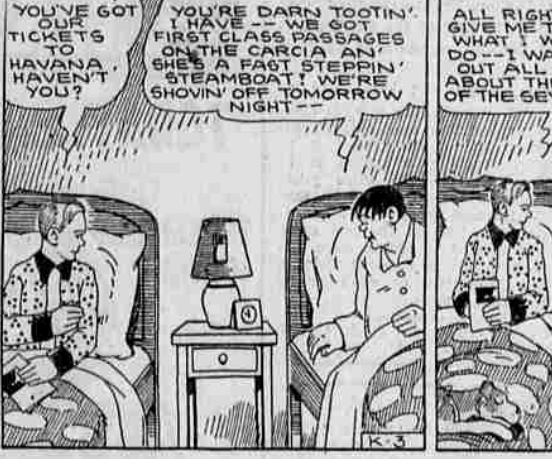
TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Deck Adventure!



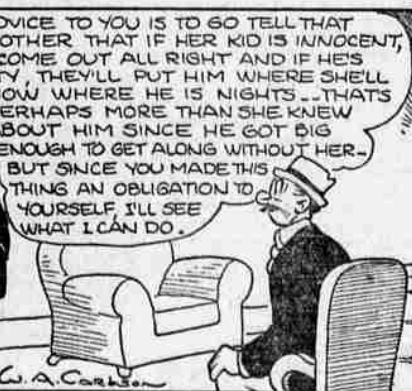
S'MATTER POP—Not Like Neighbor's At All!



BOUND TO WIN—Ben's Hunch



THE NEBBS—Passing The Buck



MUTT AND JEFF—Quick Action



PRISON DEBATERS BEAT 'OUTSIDERS'

JACKSON, Mich., May 4.—AP.—It looked like a bad break for the Michigan state prison debating team when it drew the negative of the question, "Resolved, that the 18th amendment should be repealed," for one of the prison debaters is serving a sentence for violating the prohibition law.

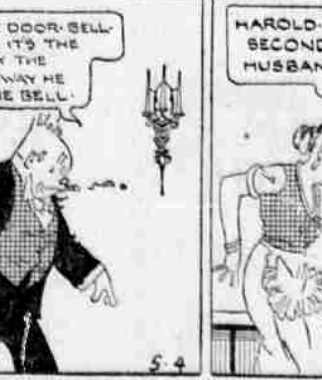
But the three prisoners upheld their side so effectively last night that they won the decision over a team of Detroiters, recruited from members of a University of Michigan extension course public speaking class. Judges of the debate, held in the auditorium of the new prison, were members of the university faculty.

GIRLS' HOME WILL BE WEMME CARE

PORTLAND, Ore., May 4.—AP.—Fulfillment of the trust imposed by terms of the E. Henry Wemme will for the first time since the supreme court established the public trust, was accomplished at a meeting of the trustees and representatives of the board of the Florence Crittenton home here today. The Crittenton home was formally deeded to the Wemme trustees.

"It will be reorganized and operated as the White Shield home, affiliated with the Florence Crittenton chain of homes," according to the announcement. The Wemme trust has assets of \$325,000, sufficient to maintain the girls' home without cost to the public.

BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus