

# KITTY FREW

by JANE ABBOTT

**SYNOPSIS:** Christmas Eve passes slowly while Kitty Frew waits for her husband, Gar. At last friends bring him home. This is unexpected, although Gar leads a spendthrift, gay life. While Kitty urges him to be practical, she does not realize that his theater work leads to interest in Marge Crosby.

Chapter 23

## "WHAT PRICE CHRISTMAS!"

Tubby anticipated Kitty's cry of alarm. "It's nothin', Kit—he took a little too much, that's all. This Merry Christmas business, y'know, just let Red and me put him to bed. He'll be fine and dandy in the morning, you'll see. The stuff was all right, don't worry."

Kitty, wordless, retreated before them, her eyes averted from the sight of their dragging burden. A nausea seized her. She went to the window and flung it up, wildly, staring blindly out into the black and white night.

Oh, that wasn't her Gar—that hanging, shambling figure! "It's my Kit," Tubby came out of the bedroom and stood beside her, his round face concerned. "Don't take it like that. It doesn't happen to Gar very often. Of all us fellows Gar knows the best when to stop. It got him tonight because he hadn't had any supper. Come

"You'll hate me always. You'll never forgive me. I don't deserve to have you forgive me, spoiling your Christmas. I was disgusting. I won't ask you to forgive me."

And she'd found that she could forgive him when he clung to her so, and that such forgiving was sweet.

"It won't happen again, sweet, you'll see. You know what I think of men who can make such beasts of themselves."

She did know. She knew Gar's fastidiousness about his personal appearance. She could believe him when he said it never would happen again.

During the days that followed he had been anxiously devoted, loving, humbly appreciative of her forgiving.

The play had run through the holiday week with great success. Kitty had sat with Gar through the first performance, sharing his nervousness and his satisfaction.

"Now we'll have to get busy on the next play," Gar had said and she had felt no rebellion; his interests were wholly hers.

She frowned down, now, at the envelopes before her; she wouldn't let these bills come between her and Gar.

She knew the exact amount of



"You'll hate me always. You'll never forgive me," Gar told her.

Kit, come away from that window!" He took her arm urgently. Kitty shuddered away from his touch.

"I loathe you all!" "Now, Kit, you don't, not anything of the sort. Tomorrow Gar'll be as sorry as hell, missing the party. Don't be hard on him. It's when a fellow stubs his toe like this he needs his wife. You got a tree all fixed up and everything, haven't you? And a new dress? Kit, come on to the dance with me. I'd like that."

It got through Kitty's distress that Tubby was trying to help her. She smiled, a little wanly. "Oh, no, Tubby, thanks, I couldn't go. But I'm all right." She let him shut the window behind her. She faced Red as he came out of the bedroom.

"Thanks, Red," she said to him, her head up, her eyes proud.

"He's sound asleep now, Kitty. You won't hear a peep out of him until morning."

Tubby lingered after Red had gone out of the door.

"Sure you won't change your mind and come along with me?" "I couldn't, Tubby."

"Well, then, Merry Christmas, Kit."

The holidays well over, "What price Christmas!" laughed Kitty, dolefully, facing a little accumulation of bills which had come in after the first of January. She had put them unopened into a drawer of the buffet. It had been a childish thing to do.

She'd been afraid of a quarrel. Gar always was so difficult when she touched on their finances. And just now she could not bear that any rift should come into the closeness that had grown out of that horrible midnight of Christmas Eve.

She had lain that night through, uncomfortably curled among the pillows of the divan in the living-room, sleepless, wretched, shamed. Long after a thin streak of cold daylight crept across the room she had fallen into a troubled sleep from which she had wakened to find Gar kneeling beside her. His remorse had been heartbreaking. He had been incoherent, humble, self-debasing, burying his face against her shoulder like a little boy.

some of them, Stratton's, for the new evening dress, the milk bill. She glanced over Bond's; she smiled. If Gar would let her buy his clothes for him she'd find just as good somewhere else for less money!

She took up the florist's bill last. Her glance running over its items stopped at the entry of two corseges bought on the same day, December third. Her calculation shot back to that night at the Rainbow Gardens. Gar had sent Marge the orchids. Or, no, he had intended the orchids for her and the flowers she had worn for Marge.

"But it's all right," she said aloud. She put the bill with the others. "Only he must stop sending flowers to anyone for awhile."

She considered the total amount of indebtedness, determinedly crowding back the alarm the figures gave her. They'd meet it by living very carefully for the next few months. But Gar must help her in her economies. She'd talk it over with him, tactfully, without any reproaches. She'd wait for his most amiable mood.

He came home that evening, very amiable, but with plans that precluded any talking over of their budget. He'd met Isobel Peters and she wanted them to come over for a game of bridge. Duck Sewell was going to make the fourth.

Kitty liked Isobel Peters and enjoyed bridge. But Gar invariably overbid, scoring any fear of losses.

Tonight he was more reckless than usual. At one o'clock he tossed twelve dollars carelessly on the table.

The next morning, while he and Kitty were eating breakfast, he grumbled over what he called his rotten luck. "Let me have a good hand and my partner always holds a bust!"

"Gar, we ought not to play for money."

"We'd look like a couple of nice pickers if we refused!"

"Well, then, let's not play for awhile."

Now, now was the time to talk to Gar about the bills! But not through she were afraid!

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Kitty meets David at a dramatic moment tomorrow, and gains a clue about Gar and Marge.

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## 'SWAT THE DRY' ROUSES PROHIS

## DEBENTURE ASKED FOR FARM RELIEF

NEW YORK, May 12.—(AP)—Prohibitionists have asked postal authorities to ban "Swat the Dry" stamps from the mails.

Fred A. Victor, superintendent of the New York Anti-Saloon league, told the Kings county W. C. T. U. he had written to President Hoover, objecting to a proposal by anti-prohibitionists to circulate the stamps through the mails. He said the protest had been referred to the postmaster-general.

The stamps, which it has been proposed to sell to raise a \$5,000,000 fund to fight prohibition, carry pictures of insects over which is poised a "swatter" labeled "votes."

WASHINGTON, May 12.—(AP)—Export debentures for farm products were urged today by Representative Summers (D., Texas) as a remedy for agricultural conditions created, he contends, by an arbitrarily applied industrial tariff.

Before the house agriculture committee, Summers diagnosed the problems of agriculture as two: Merchandising and the protective tariff. For the first he advocated a system akin to produce exchanges; for the second, use of debentures.

"The condition won't get better unless something basically is done and we are going to have hell popping in this country this winter unless something is done."

## BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus

