

KITTY FREW

by JANE ABBOTT

SYNOPSIS: When Kitty Frew realizes that Gar, to whom she has been married a short time, is actually meeting Marge Crosby she is frightened but determined to hold Gar. This trouble is too gross to tell her confidant, Gar's half-brother Dorcas. She believes Gar's sister Carol, who has left home.

Chapter 33

DAINGEROUS GROUND

"I've been a fool, David," Kitty repeated. "Just because I had to turn my precious housekeeping over to Carley! Why, David, I've even tried to flirt with you! That night at the concert it annoyed me because you wouldn't talk to me. Until—David, it was funny, the way the music got me."

But there was no David there to answer because she was alone in the living-room of the little apartment, thinking, excusing that Kitty Frew she'd come to be.

"You see it's partly my fault. It goes back to that fuss I made at his mother's house. Poor Gar's afraid to tell me things that might make me angry. That's all it is. And of course I don't care—I mean about his taking Marge to the concert. Didn't I sit with you, there? And Gar would have been angry about that. And about the office—well, maybe he did go back. Old Jonathan wouldn't call me up to say he'd been mistaken about Gar's not coming in for the rest of the day. He isn't Gar's boss to know everything he's going to do. Oh, Gar's all right!"

"Don't you see, David, that I've got to go on? I can't let myself suspect that everything Gar tells me is—a lie! It isn't, of course. I've got to keep Carley because Gar wants me to and I've got to go on being gay as if—as if I were happy. And I'm going to be! This is only what comes up between married people often—little differences—"

And then Kitty would hold her head high as if to defy the David who couldn't hear her because he wasn't there.

But she was still frightened. There were times when she shrank from Gar's caress, when her heart sank unreasonably at his homecoming. She never called him at his office. She never questioned him as to what had happened at the office or at rehearsals. When he told her she listened, thinking: "This isn't a lie," and hating herself because she had to so reassure herself.

When in the evening they went out with the others she was resolutely gay and kept herself from watching Marge and Gar. They were old friends, they'd known one another since they were children. And it was Marge's way to appropriate some one of the men and Gar's way always to be charming to any woman he was with. Of course there was nothing between them! It was absurd, absurd—Gar was hers.

She did not call David, now, on the telephone. She did not go to Dorcas because there she might see him. She shrank from seeing him. He might guess the trouble she carried in her heart.

She went to Carol's more frequently. Carol needed her. The Russian "doo-dads" were not selling very well. She offered Carol a loan but Carol shook her head. "If it were your money, Kitty—"

"Well, isn't it mine? What's Gar's?" Kitty laughed. "If he earned it. Don't you know?" Carol's question was significant. "What do you mean?" And, instantly, Kitty was frightened. Carol laughed. "Why, mother gives him money every time he goes to the house! She pays most of your bills. I saw a lot of them on her desk that day I had the row. He'd just been there. Do you mean you didn't know it? Did you think you could live the way you do on what Gar earns—if you can call it that?"

Kitty had the sickening sensation of the floor swaying beneath her. When she spoke her voice sounded queer, brittle. "I knew that—that time. The bills had to be paid up, right away. We'd gone in a little too deep at Christmas time. Gar—just borrowed it."

"Borrowed it!" Carol's retort was scornful. "No, thanks, I'd rather starve than use any money she may have given Gar."

Well, she'd rather starve, too, than eat food bought by Mrs. Frew's money, thought Kitty hotly, helplessly. She remembered how easily Gar had assured her that the bills had been paid.

And she could do nothing. She had to go on, humiliated to her soul's heart. That was it—her satisfaction in their independence

was a mockery, now, those days of careful budgeting the joke.

She hadn't boasted to David that she wasn't afraid of Gar's mother. She was afraid. She pictured Gar going to her, every day, perhaps. Gar's mother was waiting, only biding her time until Gar realized his mistake, keeping him dependent upon her, feeding her sweet poison—

And what hurt her most of all were the little silences that came up between her and Gar, when, talking, all at once she'd know she was bordering on dangerous ground and break off abruptly. Did Gar notice how often it happened? "Sally and Phil are going to be married April second," she told him one evening. "Can you get away, Gar?"

"Sure as anything. You don't think I'd miss it, do you?" "I'm her only bridesmaid. I'm to wear blue; she sent me a sample." And then Kitty stopped.

"Get something good," Gar directed. "Go to Felicia's and have it made."

Mrs. Frew had her clothes made at Felicia's. Dangerous ground. At Isobel Peters' house one night, playing bridge with Tubby and Isobel and Buck, she heard Isobel tell Tubby that Marge was going abroad in April. Her heart gave a quick involuntary leap of joy.

If Marge went away and stayed away a long time, it would be easier to straighten things out. And going to Bridgewater would help, too.

She ordered the blue bridesmaid's dress at Felicia's, as Gar had told her to. He was interested in every detail of it.

He appeared to anticipate their holiday as joyously as he did. And planning for it, talking about it to Gar, going to Felicia's for repeated fittings of the blue dress helped Kitty put out of her mind the torment she had suffered.

One evening Gar was detained downtown.

She decided that she would go to Dorcas'. She wasn't afraid of seeing David, now. She wanted to know about his work. He must have had some work. She called Dorcas on the telephone.

"I've just turned the lock on my door, Kitty, but I'll let you in."

Then she wouldn't see David. But she went to Keichum Street, nevertheless.

Dorcas was wearing the old flannel dressing-gown, the soft, heelless slippers. Her appearance reminded Kitty of that night David had brought her to the house.

"Where's David?" Kitty asked, after an hour's casual talk.

"Out in the country," Dorcas' tone was short.

He'd gone, then, without a word to her! Kitty did not reason that David never called her, that all her meetings with him had come from her suggestion. She allowed herself a little feeling of hurt. Then at once it occurred to her that the book might have been rejected. David had gone to the little house to face down his disappointment.

"Has he heard from those publishers?" she asked quickly.

Dorcas smiled. "Yes. Didn't you know? Norwood sent for him. He went to New York last week."

"Oh, then they've taken it!" Kitty's joy brought Dorcas' glance levelly on her.

"No, they turned it down. It was too—sour. That's their exact word for it. Probably it reflected David's state of mind while he was writing it."

The calmness of Dorcas' manner exasperated Kitty. A lot of help she was to poor David.

"If you'd—if you'd stand by him—more—" she began a little incoherently. "Oh, Dorcas, David needs you a lot! And he's too proud to let you see—"

"He doesn't need me," Dorcas said flatly, tonelessly.

"But he does! Why, Dorcas, David's in love with you!" Dorcas laughed.

"You talk like a goose, Kitty. You're the one who is blind! David never has cared for me, in the way you mean. That's absurd. I might have made him, if I'd tried. But I wouldn't try. If he didn't, without it—We've talked it over. I could have taken what he had to give me but I didn't choose to content myself with any half-loaf. Now I see that I was wise—"

"Oh, Dorcas, you're all wrong!" "Wrong?" Dorcas stared. She rose abruptly and stood over Kitty, her eyes angry. "Can you tell me honestly, Kitty, that you don't know that David is desperately in love with you?"

(Copyright, Jane Abbott) Does Kitty refuse the challenge? Dorcas' statement puts an unexpected complication into her friendship with David.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Good Riddance!



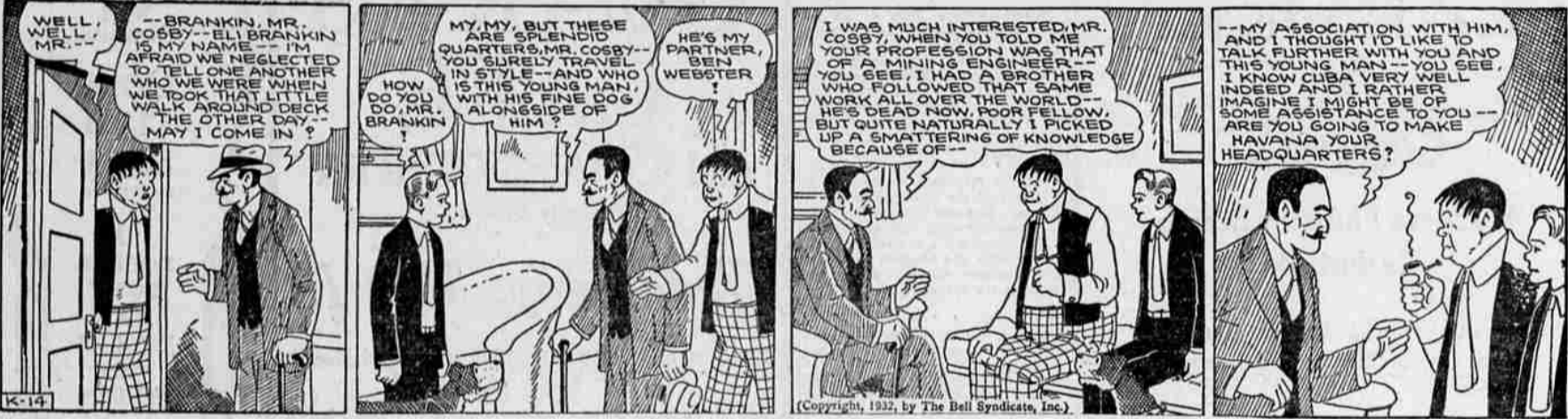
S'MATTER POP—As Near Right As Possible

By C. M. PAYNE



BOUND TO WIN—The "Little" Visit

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—What Now?

By SOL HESS



MUTT AND JEFF—It All Seems So Foolish To The Dog

By BUD FISHER



M'KINLEY PEAKS SCALED BY PARTY

WASHINGTON, May 17. — (AP) — Tragedy and success mingled in reports that reached here today of the first scaling of both peaks of Mt. McKinley in Alaska by a party which found dead on its descent a member of the Allen Carle band that attempted to reach the icy heights. Harry J. Lark, superintendent of the national park there, sent word he had found the body of Theodore Koven and "clear indication Carle deep in crevasse" near the Muldrow glacier. The main peak is 20,300 feet high, the highest in North America. Broken windows gazed by Trowbridge Cabinet Works.

GARNER CONTINUES HOOVER CRITICISM

WASHINGTON, May 17. — (AP) — Renewing his criticism of the President, Speaker Garner said today "the truth is that just as long as President Hoover is in the White House, the people of this country will not have any confidence." Asked at his daily conference with newspapermen whether he desired to answer the statement issued by Senator Moses in defense of Mr. Hoover, the Texan said: "The President sent for the distinguished author of 'Sons of Wild Jacks' to defend him. It must have gotten under somebody's skin. The truth is pretty effective."

BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus

