

# KITTY FREW

By JANE ABBOTT

**SYNOPSIS:** Kitty Frew ends her husband's stay in a hospital, when she is summoned back from a trip. He was hurt in an automobile accident, with Marge Crosby in whom Kitty suspects he is interested and Paul Somerset with whom Gar's sister, Carol, is in love.

### Chapter 27

#### "UNTIL DEATH DO US PART"

GAR was growing more excited. Kitty patted his hand gently. "Don't I know that? Now you mustn't talk. The nurse will send me away if you get tired." "Well, hold my hand, anyway." He was content with that. She told him of her brief three days' stay in Bridgewater; she saw that her voice roused him. In his eyes she saw that odd pleading that had been there when she'd accused him of staying in Winton because he did not want to leave Marge. The nurse tiptoed in and out. Mr. Frew came in and sat for a little while in Kitty's chair, regarding Gar with an anxious face. He had greeted Kitty warmly, with something like gratitude in his manner. "If you need me, my dear, call me. Will you go to the apartment?" She had not thought of it. She had not thought of leaving Gar for

ened, dismayed. The vicious circle was beginning again and she felt herself slipping helplessly into it.

Another night in the bare, clean room next to Gar's, another morning, the night nurse yawning, Miss Bixby coming in fresh, smiling, to take her place. Breakfast on a little table close to Gar's bed, Doctor Harrington examining his patient, joking with him, teasing Kitty for her pale face. And then alone with Gar, precious sweet moments, too sweet to let in any apprehension— "Am I better, Kit?" Gar was like a boy, wanting her assurance over the doctor's. "Oh, much."

"Kit, if I'm better I can talk. There's something I want to get off my mind—"

She stroked his hair. "Not now, sweetheart. We'll have hours and hours to talk."

"Do you love me?" "Oh, Gar! Yes, yes."

"Well, I don't know why you should—"

He was frowning. She had to kiss it away, quickly.

He did not ask why his mother did not come. She exulted at that even though she knew well she had soon to reckon with her. She had Gar to herself for a few days, at least.



"Even if he dies, he's mine!"

so much as an hour. But perhaps they would not let her stay here— Her face betrayed her distress and uncertainty. Mr. Frew patted her shoulder. "I'll talk to the superintendent. Perhaps she can arrange for you to have a room here for a night or two."

"Oh, thank you!" Impulsively Kitty lifted her lips and kissed Dalton Frew's strained, lined, tired face.

She was established in the room next to Gar's. At nine o'clock she bade Gar goodnight and went to it and to bed, at once. She slept soundly, waking to daylight filtering through the drawn shades. She dressed and went back to Gar's room where the night nurse greeted her a little tiredly, indifferently.

Miss Bixby came on duty at eight o'clock, fresh, smiling. "He had a fine night. He'll be out of here in no time," she assured Kitty. She brought Kitty a breakfast tray when she brought Gar's.

"You're lucky, Mrs. Frew. There's a girl comes to see the other fellow and she raised all sorts of a row downstairs last night because the nurse made her go at nine o'clock. They don't think he's going to get well—he was hurt internally."

It had been Carol, of course, who'd made the row. Kitty felt a deep compassion for her and at the same moment that disquieting reluctance to admit Somerset's share in Gar's accident into her thoughts.

The day passed quietly; the doctor came and went. Gar was more comfortable, more like his old self, demanding that Kitty sit close to him most of the time.

Mr. Frew came again and sat with Gar, talking awkwardly, affectionately for a little while. When he moved to go he beckoned to Kitty to follow him out to the hall.

"Has his mother told you, Kitty? Doctor Harrington says that Gar can be moved safely in a few days. She's arranged for a hospital bed at the house and two nurses." He did not look at her. "I'll make things easier for you, my dear, until he's up and around."

She did not utter the quick vehement protest that sprang to her lips. She was not fighting this helpless man.

But after he'd gone she leaned for a moment against the gray painted wall of the corridor. She was fright-

Miss Bixby came in and touched Kitty on the shoulder. "There's some one outside who wants to speak to you."

David, Kitty thought. She must thank him for meeting her though she begrudged the moments away from Gar. But it was Carol, waiting outside, her eyes strangely gleaming, a little smile twisting her lips.

"Kitty, I need you." She spoke quickly. She caught Kitty's arm and drew her toward the opposite door. "It won't take a minute. There's a minister in there—he's going to marry Paul and me."

She felt Kitty's shocked withdrawal. "I wouldn't have it any other way!" she said, low, fiercely, tightening her hold on Kitty's arm. "Paul wants it—"

A curious exultation shone on her face. "Even if he dies—he's mine!"

Kitty had no argument against that. She followed Carol into the room behind the closed door. Her glance went slowly from the nurse to a tall, slightly shabby man in a clergyman's robes standing near the window holding a prayer-book in his hand, to an interne, grinning over his part in this strange ceremony, and last, reluctantly, to the figure on the bed. But Paul Somerset's eyes did not meet hers. They were fixed on Carol. A faint smile lifted the corners of his lips. His hand moved a little and Carol took it.

"—Until death do us part." The words took on strange significance, sounding here in these walls that so often housed death. Kitty shivered. But in Carol's firm voice there was no faltering, no note of fear.

The nurse turned them all out a little brusquely. Out in the hall the clergyman put a book into Kitty's hand, bidding her sign her name as a witness of the marriage. The interne, still grinning, signed his. Carol put a bill into the clergyman's hand, muttered a quick thank-you and slipped back into the room. She had established her right there, troubled, close to tears.

"Do you think Paul Somerset—the other man—has any chance?" she asked Miss Bixby at her first opportunity.

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An alarmed call wakes Kitty in the next installment.

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By George McManus

