

KITTY FREW

by JANE ABBOTT

SYNOPSIS: After her sister-in-law, Carol, marries Paul Somerset, who is not expected to survive an automobile accident, Kitty Frew returns to her husband, Gar, in the same hospital. Gar has gone out with Marge Crosby secretly. Kitty is sure, but she is ready to forgive him now that he needs her.

Chapter 38
MARGE'S PLOT IS REVEALED
THEY'RE going to operate on Mr. Somerset today. Guess maybe they're doing it now," Miss Bixby whispered to Kitty.

While Gar slept, Kitty, sitting beside him, pondered on the consequences of Carol's marriage. If Paul Somerset lived, would she regret it? No—she knew Carol well enough, now, to answer that. Happiness of any sort, the simple fact of belonging to some one, would make Carol over.

Gar stirred in his sleep, muttered. His brows drew sharply together. His face had thinned, lost its boyishness. Kitty noticed little lines about his mouth. For a moment she was all maternal, leaning toward him, yearning over him. And then a great anger mounted in her heart against the woman who was his mother; every weakness in Gar—ah, she knew them, now—was of that mother's making.

"And I almost failed him!" He turned his head slowly. Kitty saw a little terror in his eyes. "I guess I was dreaming. I thought you'd gone!" He clung to her hand.

She stroked his hands, his face, his hair. She kissed him. His voice lifted, excitedly. "Kitty, I've got to tell you—"

"Gar, darling, you don't need to tell me anything now. Wait—"

"I don't want to wait. I want you to know. It'll bother me until you do. But, Kit, you've got to help me get it straight."

She held his hand in both of hers to give herself courage, as well as to steady him. Gar had turned his face away from her. She had to lean closer to him to catch his low, halting voice.

"I don't know how I got started, Kit. I do know this—I loved you all the time. Marge was always getting me up to her house about one thing and another. And she began talking about going away—staying away—It sort of got me. I'd always liked her a lot. We'd been—well, you see, before I met you I always thought she was the only girl!"

"Gar, I understand—"

He shook his head, his face still averted from her. "It was all right until I began lying to you about where I'd been. I hated it but I was afraid to tell you. It was easier to let you think I was at rehearsals. It was so easy—God, Kit, guess I'm a rotter."

"Gar, Gar, please!" Kitty's hands shook over his. "Marge told me she was going away because—because of us." He was silent for an interval. And Kitty's throat went dry and stiff so that she could say no word. "She was—I thought she was terribly unhappy. It bothered me a lot. I kissed her—oh, sort of off-hand. And after that things were different. She said she didn't care what happened. And there was Somerset. She told me she might run away with him. That got me. Kit, am I making you see?"

"Yes, Gar."

"That night—when we quarreled so—I went home. I told mother we were through, you and I. You'd said so, Kit. And I was—I guess I was crazy. Mother was wonderful—she was so calm. She told me—see Marge had told her how things were—Kit, I can't believe it, now. We talked about my getting a divorce. Marrying Marge. And the next day—Marge called me—she wanted me to come over to say good-by— And we talked— She asked me to go to Paris—she asked me to meet her there—she said if I didn't she would—I didn't say I'd go, Kit. Believe me. But I felt desperate. I thought I'd lost you. And, when I wouldn't promise, Marge got angry. She told me she was going to run off with Somerset. She called me later from the Rainbow Gardens—she's gone there with him—she called me to say— Well, it got me. It was after midnight—I drove out there and I told her I'd come for her. We got into my car—and Somerset followed me in hers. He was mad. I don't know just what happened—he tried to stop me and the cars sideswiped and that's all—"

Gar's halting voice finished on a long, joyful sigh.

Kitty was shaking. She tried to make a sound but her throat, her legs were too stiff. She burned with anger at his mother, at Marge

who had schemed so to play on his heedlessness.

"I won't fall you, I won't fall you!" her heart was crying while her lips kept their stiff silence.

Gar drew his hand from hers. "Did you get it straight, Kit? I loved you all the time. But I guess it doesn't matter, now. I guess, now that you know, you're through."

"But, Gar, I'm not. I'm not! We're just beginning. We're just knowing one another—now. We're together!"

His head turned slowly. There were tears in his eyes and a boyish unbelief. She laughed shakily, put her lips to his.

"Oh, Gar, that we should have been afraid of one another! There were things I didn't tell you because I was afraid, little things that didn't matter. I was seeing David often, and his friends, and Carol and I was afraid to tell you because you wouldn't understand. And I was too critical and—oh, Gar, we were just stumbling! And we love one another so—"

Her tears wet his face; her lips clung to his.

"Kit—" his voice was scarcely above a whisper. "Kit, I swear to God that I'm going to be worthy of you. I'm going to be a man."

"Gar, let's move away from that apartment—"

"You're going to have everything your way, sweet. I'll do whatever you want me to."

"I love you, Gar."

"Kit, did I—did Somerset—Marge?"

"Marge wasn't hurt, Gar. She's gone away with her mother. And Somerset—they don't know, yet. She could not risk telling him of Carol's and Somerset's marriage."

"Poor devil—I hope he gets out of it." Gar's brows drew together. "Kit—I think Marge used him. I don't think she intended for a minute—going off with him."

Kitty dropped her eyes to conceal her satisfaction. That Gar, now, should see that! Oh, he had come to wisdom.

The afternoon wore on, drowsily. Miss Bixby found an opportunity to tell Kitty that the "other fellow" had stood the operation better than the doctors had expected.

At four o'clock Mrs. Frew came in with Doctor Harrington. She smiled sweetly at Kitty. "Aren't you exhausting yourself, my dear?" She kissed Gar's forehead. She was composed, gracious, charming.

"Do you think by tomorrow he can be moved, Doctor?" she asked when he had examined Gar.

"If his chart shows another good night. With a nurse—" The doctor looked at Miss Bixby.

"I have asked Miss Bixby if she'll come to the house. And I will take a night nurse, too."

"I don't see any reason for him to stay here," the doctor affirmed. Gar's glance went questioning to his mother.

"What's it all about?"

"I am taking you home, dear boy." She beamed fondly down at him.

Gar smiled, boyishly. "Home? That'd be great—to get out of here. But—" his glance sought out Kitty where she stood, straight, sober-faced, behind the others. "It's all up to Kit! She's my boss, you know. What say, Kit?"

Sweet words—they flooded her. She took a little step forward. She did not look at Mrs. Frew.

"We'll do whatever will make you most comfortable, Gar. I think it will be nice if you can go to your mother's house until you're all well." She was clean swept with a great joy. She wasn't afraid!

She shared Gar's boyish eagerness. They talked after Mrs. Frew and the doctor went away. "You'll stick close to me, won't you, sweet?"

She promised. She left him at nine o'clock and went to the next room. She lay for a while on the narrow bed, thinking over all that the day had brought—Carol's strange marriage. Gar's confession, her own sudden yielding to Mrs. Frew's wishes, with its moment of triumph when she knew she was not afraid.

It had been an exhausting day, yet, though physically, emotionally weary, Kitty was strangely happy and at peace. "I'm strong enough for anything!" she thought as she closed her eyes to seek sleep.

She was awakened by Miss Bixby shaking her. Miss Bixby wore a thin kimono over her night clothes. Her hair was hanging down over her back. Her lips hung open and her eyes were frightened.

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BOUND TO WIN—Nearing Havana

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THE NEBBS—Oh—Promise Me

By SOL HESS



MUTT AND JEFF—Look Who's Broadcasting For Jeff

By BUD FISHER



JACKSONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION THURSDAY EVENING

JACKSONVILLE, May 23.—(Sp.)—Baccalaureate services for the graduating class of the Jacksonville high school were held at the Presbyterian church Sunday, May 22. Exercises were as follows: Prelude, Miss Marjory Lindley; invocation, Rev. S. H. Jones; hymn, "How Firm a Foundation" congregation; scripture lesson, Prof. M. E. Goe; solo, O. E. Hess; prayer, Rev. W. L. VanNuy, D.D.; anthem, choir; sermon, Rev. W. L. VanNuy, D.D.; solo, Mrs. W. J. Nee; hymn, "My Country 'Tis of Thee"; benediction, Rev. W. L. VanNuy, D.D.

AMERICAN DOUBLES TEAM IS DEFEATED

AUTEUIL, France, May 23.—(Sp.)—Helen Jacobs, Berkeley, Cal., and Gregory S. Mangin, Newark, were eliminated in the first round of mixed doubles in the French hard court tennis championships today. They were beaten in straight sets by Miss. Rose Berthel, France, and Pierre Grandgullio, Egypt, 6-3, 6-2.

BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus

