

KITTY FREW

By JANE ABBOTT

SYNOPSIS: After the death of her husband, Gar, Kitty Frew stays with her friend, Dorcas Taber. David Frew, Gar's half-brother, who has been in love with her for a long time, tries to help her adjust by suggesting that she make a home for Gar's father and his sister, Carol, and her husband.

Chapter 40

TREASURE ISLAND SHOP

"YOU'VE helped me so—always," Kitty said. "Now this—I was getting frightened, David. I couldn't go on living this way. My brain is empty, David, and I couldn't think of anything else. But you've thought of it for me. I'd like to go out to the little house—with Mr. Frew and Carol and—Paul. You are kind—to let us in that way."

The look in her eyes tore his heart.

"Kitty, Kitty—you're young. You have a life to live and it will be full and happy. There'll be other men to love you from whom to choose—"

She turned a quick rebuking, silencing glance on him.

"Can you suppose for a moment that I would think of that—now?" "No, not now. But when the time comes—"

He jerked his shoulder. "Kitty, I told you once that I was disappointed in you. I didn't think you knew how to face things squarely. I was wrong. I believe you do. At least you have learned—perhaps better than the most of us. It means more to me than I dare tell you, that you feel that I have helped you. We'll leave it like that. But I'm ready—I want to help you, always. I will never care for anyone's happiness as I care for yours."

He did not look at her. He steeled himself against her probable anger.

She knew what he meant. But she answered quietly, unemotionally. "Thanks, David." Then she caught his arm with both hands.

"Oh, David, I do appreciate what you've given me! I can tell you how I feel. I can forgive you—now—for what you said to me that day—about Gar and me. When you told me to call it a bad business. It was—but it was my fault as well as Gar's. I shouldn't have married him without knowing him better. It wasn't fair to him. Oh, I don't mean that I would have loved him any the less! I mean—I would have known better how to weigh the good and work in him. Then I would have given him—real love. There was profound regret in her voice.

"If he'd lived—things might have happened again—and I might have failed him in understanding! And we might have spoiled, irredeemably, what was beautiful between us. And I have that. It's—it must be enough."

David made no answer. And because he didn't she turned a slow, grateful smile on him.

They heard Dorcas' voice in the lower hall calling to Mrs. Gentle.

"Here's the late Miss Taber! Now for supper." David moved toward the alcove where Kitty had laid out the cold supper.

"David," she had followed him, come up close to him. "David, before Dorcas comes—thanks, again, for your being—just you."

A little before nine o'clock of an October morning, more than a year later, Kitty Frew parked a small car before a smartly windowed shop on Winston's Elm Avenue, alighted and walked briskly through its wide glass doors.

"Good-morning, Josta."

"Good-morning, Mrs. Frew. Mrs. Delafeld phoned that she was going to keep that dress, Mrs. Frew. I know she would. I know her kind—they'll row about anything. I always could pick 'em out the minute they walked into Stratton's."

Kitty had hung her coat and hat away. She appeared in a trim, tailored dress of soft deep blue.

They moved briskly about the work of putting the show-room into order for the day, taking off and folding cotton coverings, rearranging stock. Josta talked as she worked in the breezy confidential manner of the days at Stratton's, only now it was about her baby and her Bob. Kitty, half-listening, smiled. What luck it had been to find Josta eager to earn money to help the limited finances of her small household!

"Did you know this is our first birth anniversary?" she asked Josta. "We balanced our year book last night and we're ahead."

"Hoo-ray!" Josta waved her duster. Then she saw a limousine draw up at the curb.

The business of the day had begun. Kitty left the customer to Josta and retired to the cream and

gold cubicle that was the office. There was mail to open, orders to fill, orders to check over, sales to enter. A typewriter swung at one side of her flat desk. On the other side were files. Across the room was another desk, another typewriter. Carol Somerset was her partner in the Treasure Island Shop, where were sold dresses, blouses, negligees, costume jewelry.

But Kitty did not open the top letter of the pile Josta had put on her desk. She looked at it, musingly, thinking: "A whole year!" It had not been altogether easy, the job David had given her of making his father and Carol and Paul happy. Each had had to learn to adapt himself to the quiet and remoteness of the little house.

When September came Dalton Frew had decided he'd like to stay on until cold weather. One day he had driven into the city to attend to some important affairs. He had kissed Kitty on his return.

"It seems like coming home," he'd said.

But Carol had been restless, bored. "It's not getting us anywhere," she had fretted to Paul, in Kitty's hearing.

That afternoon Kitty had coaxed her to her hilltop.

"Paul's going to have that dramatic work on the Times," she'd said.

"Oh—that. It's something, of course. He's tickled about it. And if the Players go on they'll have him direct, I suppose. But it won't be enough to live on—the way we want to live."

Kitty's face had sobered. Carol's tone was like Gar's.

"I've got some stuff to get rid of, anyway," Carol went on.

And then the plan had sprung to Kitty's fancy.

"Carol, why don't you open a shop somewhere? Nowadays you have to put your stock right under people's noses."

"I've thought of that, but how can I without any money?"

There was the money which Dalton Frew had put into the bank in Kitty's name.

"Carol, we might go into partnership. Only I'd want to sell something besides Russian doo-dads."

"Oh, well, I'm fed up on the Russian line myself."

"The dresses would go. There's always a sale for those. And the jewelry as a sort of side-line. And little odd things—"

And they had talked and talked, with Dalton Frew and David and Paul Somerset and Dorcas Taber and in October the Treasure Island Shop had opened on Elm Avenue just where its windows would catch the eye of every woman motoring to the business part of the city and within walking distance of the wealthiest homes.

They had adjusted themselves to their responsibilities. Carol was the better buyer. Kitty admitted it and sent her to New York to order more stock. Kitty was the better salesman. "I suppose I've inherited it from my father and my grandfather."

She was living with Dalton Frew in a quiet roomy apartment. He had asked her to live with him with such simple pleading that she had no thought to refuse.

Letters came infrequently from Mrs. Frew, sometimes from Miss Bixby. No one of them hinted at coming back to Winston. Miss Bixby had written: "Sometimes I think she isn't just right in her mind. She'll sit for hours and not say a word or as much as stir. She's like some one lost, poor dear."

Her poison had come back to herself, Kitty had thought, reading it. Dalton Frew had not let her take any of the housework on herself.

"My dear, you do not need to." And one day she had found old Pound waiting for her when she came back from the shop.

Oh, it had been a good year, counted in what of purpose it had given her. Her days had been full, her evenings spent in amusing Dalton Frew.

And yet she sighed, now, thinking back on them.

David now spent the greater part of his time in New York. "Little Lady" had been an amazing success. David was established as a writer.

Weeks had passed when she had not seen him. When he had come back for brief stays she had fancied that he was different. But that was to be expected, she'd argued with herself; success, new friends, new inspiration for work must change him.

The old David was gone, she'd told herself, rejoicing for him, yet feeling a little longing for the David she had known.

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David tells Kitty he is going abroad, on Monday. Can she be happy, alone?

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Careful, Skeets—Fame Is Fleeting!



S'MATTER POP—Nail Down Things That Come Up To Meet You

By C. M. PAYNE



BOUND TO WIN—The Landing

By EDWIN ALGER



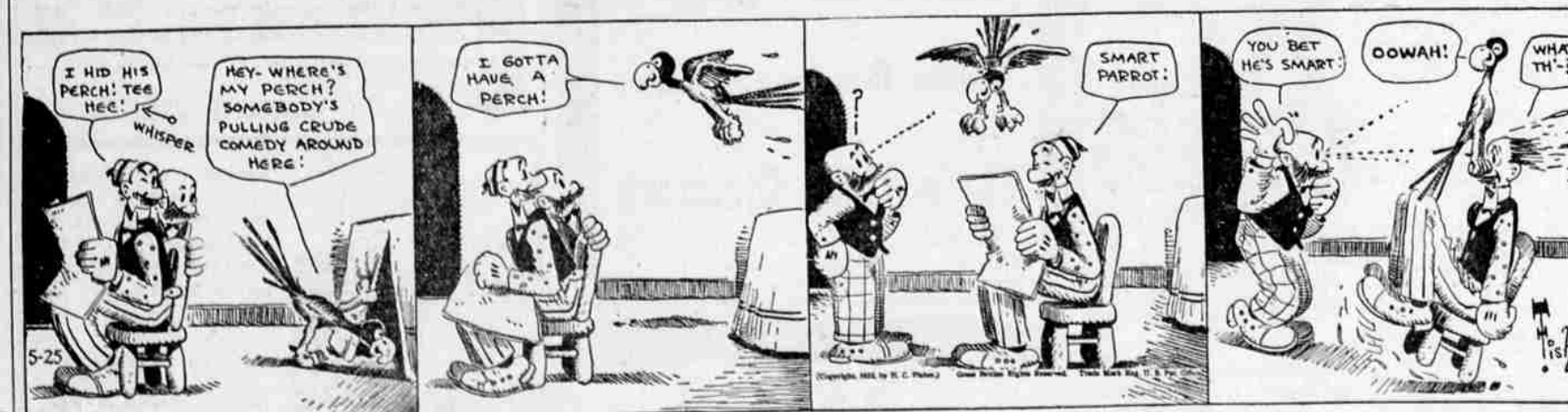
THE NEBBS—It's An Idea Anyway

By SOL HESS



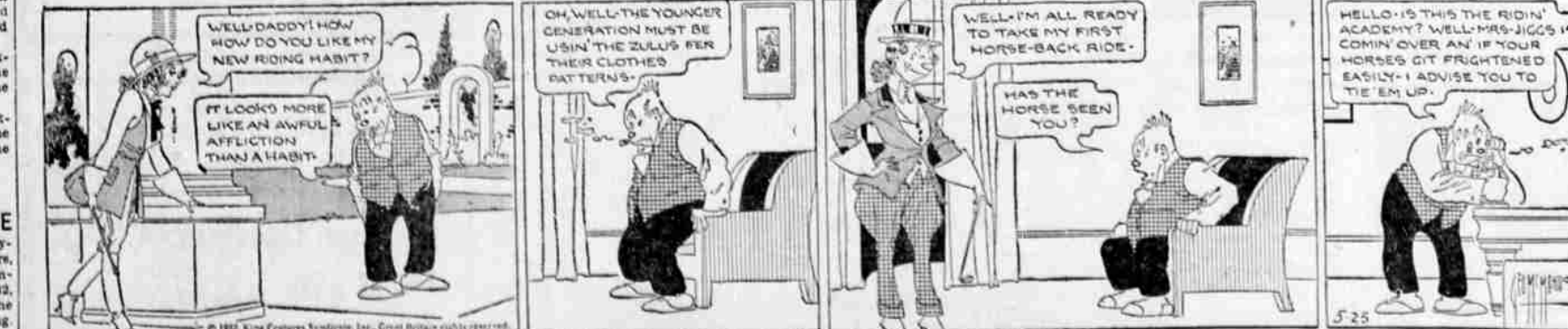
MUTT AND JEFF—You Bet He's A Smart Parrott

By BUD FISHER



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



ODD FELLOWS OF STATE NAME NEW HEADS AT MEET

RUENGE, Ore., May 25. — (AP) — Coming as highlight in Tuesday's program at the 77th annual session of the grand bodies of Oregon, I. O. O. F., the election and advancement of officers in the grand encampment found Earl H. Shank of Hood River advanced to the office of grand patriarch of the grand encampment of Oregon. J. M. Wilson of Tillamook presided over Tuesday's session of the grand encampment and retired from his

office of grand patriarch after having been elected delegate to the sovereign grand lodge which meets in Denver next September.

John Schwitzer of Portland was advanced to the office of grand high priest of the grand encampment, and William Morley was selected as grand senior warden.

Several prominent men are expected to enter the contest for the office of junior grand warden of the grand encampment.

Today's program is to be featured by the grand lodge parade, one of the most colorful events of the convention.

GOLD STAR MOTHERS REACH FRENCH SHORE

PARIS, May 25. — (AP) — Seventy-eight American gold star mothers, the first group to make a pilgrimage to the battlefields in 1932, arrived in France today aboard the Leviathan after a pleasant crossing. All were in good health.