

# BOY CRAZY

by GRACE PERKINS

**SYNOPSIS:** Money and beauty mean little to Hope Ross, recently made Mrs. Dale, since her father opposes her runaway marriage. She has not heard from Dickey Dale, her husband, since Mr. Ross turned him away from the house. Her father has seen Dickey privately, and injured him severely in a fight.

Chapter 20

## A DREADFUL MISTAKE

**HOPPE**—in her room—talking to her father whenever he came. Listening to him, face averted, silent, unprotesting.

Waiting and waiting and waiting—until tired little lines crept around the blue eyes, and a wistful droop around her mouth. Waited, with Sassy in her lap, as she wrote letter after letter—whole sheaves of them—to Dickey.

These letters she gave to Goody, who had put in an embarrassed appearance the second morning, bringing Hope news of Mama Ross's dangerous heart attack and her lingering illness. The more questions Goody asked and Hope left unanswered, the more resentful and awkward the older girl became.

For once Goody found herself the favorite of the household. For once she was sought by her father for support and assistance. And Goody gloried in her new importance. She herself was thoroughly convinced of the madness of Hope's escapade and felt no guilt in corroborating her father's lie about Dickey's non-appearance. Not a word did Goody breathe of the scene that had taken place in the billiard room the night after the wedding. Never once did she whisper to Hope that Dickey was hurt—no one knew how badly—and was lying in his grandmother's house under a doctor's care.

In Mama Ross's sick room, Goody had stood by the bed (conscious of her father's broad back as he stood staring unseeing out of the window, and keeping his averted face from the two women who were plotting) and gravely, sincerely given an oath to her invalid mother that she would never mention the episode to Hope or anyone else. Goody meant well when she gave this dramatic promise, and Goody was one whose religion it was to keep a promise at any cost. She never dreamed her father half hated them both for drawing the knot tighter around Hope's disillusionment. How could she guess? She couldn't see the half sneer on his face, or the look of disgust and resentment in his tired, hurt eyes. . . . She was concentrating upon Mama's urgent, half-hysterical prattle. . . .

And each letter that Hope entrusted to her sister with tearful pleadings that she post it right away, Goody brought dutifully to her father. Never dreaming that he half despised her for carrying out his orders and keeping his secret so nobly, so elaborately, so sanctimoniously.

Greater even than that were Goody's glories those days. Not only was she her mother's unfailing staff of comfort, but Goody was the general supply-house of information for all of Hope's gang as they phoned the house.

It was Goody who effected the final triumph in the breaking of Hope's spirit. Papa Ross, feeling that he had done his share, refused actively to indulge in the gorgeous drama which Mama Ross was enacting with her superb "heart attack." When, after eight days of waiting to hear an answer to her many letters, Hope had to face herself and admit that Dickey couldn't have cared for her or surely he'd make some effort to come to her, wire her, phone her, or speak to her, the child caved in completely.

Great was the sorrow, the weeping and the moaning that went on in Hope's room. Pillow cases wet with tears, bedspread stained with hacking sobs, dresses, blouses, pajamas ruined from continual sobbing. Hope faced the downfall of pride, of trust, of faith in love—of complete disillusionment. Faced the fact that she had been an idiot, an infatuated fool, a cheap and easy mark! Realized that all they said was true! Dickey had been drinking; she had only known him a few months—she had let him walk off and have his own way—without a murmur!

When finally Hope permitted Goody to lead her to Mama Ross's darkened and incensed bedroom, she went with some dim understanding of the game Mama was playing. Lying there, weak and frail, begging her child to "come back to her." Instinctively she knew it was a ploy, well acted. And yet, Mama did look ill; and the marks of suffering and torture were plain to be seen in her faded gray eyes.

Beside Mama Ross's bed Hope knelt, her arms stealing around Mama's neck, and her head bent in weeping it out on Mama's shoulder. "He didn't love me," sobbed Hope, grateful for the soothing strokes of Mama's hand on her hair. "He didn't love me, Mama."

(Which is one way, of course, of saying "I'm sorry I hurt you, Mama, and I was all wrong.")

Papa Ross stole into the bedroom later and sat by the bed-side with Hope on his lap. In low tones the three talked, after having banished Goody at Hope's request.

Then, quite dry-eyed, Hope sat at Mama's desk and wrote the words Papa dictated dryly, weightily: "Dear Dickey:

"I want you to know it was all a dreadful mistake. I can see that now. I know you see it, too. I never want to see you again. Please respect my wishes in this regard."

This, written wobbly, in Mama's brilliant blue ink, was dutifully folded, addressed, sealed and handed to Papa. One letter of Hope's that was really due for mailing. A letter that would be taken out of the envelope addressed to Virginia and put in another addressed to the home of Dickey's grandmother, under whose care he still lay. . . .

A week later Hope set sail with her father, who was slated for a six weeks' trip through Europe on business. Upon their return they joined Goody, Mama and Charlie Rand and his folks at Bar Harbor, Maine.

Hope was changed. Anyone could see that. Even Hope herself realized that. Short of temper. Cold. Sharp, and eager for excitement. Tireless and ceaseless in her pursuit of pleasure. Tart and sarcastic in her recital of her runaway marriage! Talking of it quite without self-consciousness every time she was faced with the sheer necessity of talking of it, as youth faced youth, and old friends regarded one too kindly, too curiously, or too sympathetically. Talked a little too glibly about her marriage. But only when it was necessary! Never once did she talk of it in private. Not to Mama, to Goody, nor even to Judy Hunt, "her grandest friend in the world." Only July and Rusty seemed to understand somehow. . . . Theirs were the only eyes she avoided. . . .

Hope had left off thinking about her marriage. Scorning the thought of a man who had so betrayed her. Trembling with rage at the whole male outfit, and bent with vicious determination to make them all suffer for what one had done to her.

Yet—despite her bitterness, Hope kept Sassy by her side. Nursed and petted and fed the white cat as if it were a baby. And if any living thing heard the innermost secrets or knew of the weak moments of heartaches and loneliness, Sassy learned Hope's hidden grief and the true meaning to her new brittle and unfeeling hauteur. Sassy learned the secret and kept it well.

Back in town, Hope learned from her father that the annulment suit he had filed was coming up on the calendar at the State Supreme Court late in September. Hope was not required to appear. There was no pleading, no chance of interference; for the annulment of a marriage of infants is not a discretionary matter, but an automatic procedure. Even if she wished. Hope could not have opposed it. Even, she mused, had she and Dickey insisted they wanted to be married, they would have had no voice! All that counted in the world of law on such matters of infantile love, was Papa Ross. Papa—and Papa's lawyer, and one thousand dollars. It was a funny day. A day that broke her heart. . . .

On the night that her annulment came through, Hope let her gay and defiant banner slump into the mud of defeat. Try as she might, she simply could not face the huge party that was being given at Charlie Rand's. She pleaded forgiveness from the passive Goody, and phoned Rusty, who was to escort her, and made explanations; pleading a headache with those at home, and shut herself into her room.

From that night onward Hope was grown up. Bravely she faced her circle. Restless, moody, Hope had a difficult battle to fight, and as long as people left her alone she fought it superbly. But no longer would she enter into "installment bargains" about drinking, and Papa Ross did not press his point. Papa Ross had less and less opportunity to press his points with his blonde and blue-eyed young rebel.

Hope learns what Dickey thinks about her, in the next installment. But how can she see him?

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Theft Of The Padmini Diamond!



## 'SMATTER POP—A Slip Of The Tongue Makes Trouble For Ambrose.



## BOUND TO WIN—In The Meantime!



## THE NEBBS—In The Nick Of Time



## MUTT AND JEFF—Today's Menu—Insults For Breakfast



## BRINGING UP FATHER



## HEAVY BAIL HOLDS JAILED HIJACKERS

**TOLEDO, Ore., March 23.**—(AP)—With bail placed at \$1500 each on three separate charges, Paul Remaley, Sidney Carrick and Bert Chapman, all of Portland, await action by the Lincoln county grand jury in connection with Sunday's jail delivery and the hijacking of liquor held in the jail here as evidence against three alleged liquor runners. The Portland men were charged with burglary, defacing a public building and with aiding and assisting prisoners to escape. The grand jury will meet April 25.

Real Estate or Insurance—Leave it to Jones, Phone 106.

## FERRY SERVICE ON COAST INADEQUATE

**GARDINER, Ore., March 23.**—(AP)—Twenty-four-hour ferry service at Coos Bay, Umpqua, Stiuslaw, Alsea and Yaquina bay will be requested of the state highway commission by the Oregon Coast Highway association. This was decided at a meeting of the association here Sunday. The next meeting will be held at Florence April 24. The association named a committee to co-operate with Curry county officials in arranging for the bridge dedication May 28 and combining with it official announcement of the opening of the Oregon coast highway from Astoria to the California line.

By GLENN CHAFF and HAL FORREST

By C. M. PAYN

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