

BOY CRAZY

by GRACE PERKINS

SYNOPSIS: Hope Ross finds her marriage with Dickey Dale in ruins through her father's tactics. Mr. Ross "convinces" her that Dickey is not standing by her, and she dumps Dickey from her. After the marriage is annulled, Hope goes to Dickey's college and is very gay to save her pride.

Chapter 24 PRICING A COUNT

THEN days after the Harmouth scandal, Hope and Sassy found themselves headed for Cherbourg, with Mama Ross bravely facing seasickness, and delicately raising her eyebrows at the hot polloi that were her fellow passengers. To certain people a trip to Europe seems to be the only answer to every emotional upheaval.

But nobody on the boat was quite good enough for Mama Ross, who kept magnificently aloof as she paced the deck in her English tweeds, and confined herself otherwise to her five-room suite. Never once did Mama appear in the dining-salon or attend the evening galleys which the ship proffered to less sensitive and cultured souls. After having glanced over the passenger list, she had tossed it aside, and devoted herself to her books and her daughter.

This routine, as it happened, suited Hope completely. Hope had considerable crying to accomplish, an snowed amount of thinking to do, and innumerable questions to answer herself regarding life and its possibilities. The disgrace which had attended her being sent home from Harmouth, the degrading explanations she had insisted upon making, to take all the blame (so that Tuck might merely be suspended instead of actually expelled from college), Papa's red-eyed disgust with the entire disgraceful proceeding; all these things mattered little to Hope except to make her thoughts the more involved. What she really cared about was Dickey, and what Dickey thought of her when he returned to Harmouth and heard of her fraternal house scandal. . . . Not that she really cared. . . .

No, not that she really cared, she told Sassy. For Sassy kept in the suite by crook, since it couldn't be done by hook, gazed back into Hope's troubled eyes with a quiet and ancient wisdom that seemed to comfort his mistress. And Sassy's purring, Sassy's blinking stare, or Sassy's comforting silence were all the company that Hope wanted in those particularly tumultuous hours. Negatively she almost wished her mother were not about, though one could hardly call Mama company. All one had to do to please, entertain or distract Mama was to play yes-woman to her every remark.

Hope wasn't used to playing yes-woman. That had been Goody's occupation. But now it came easy enough. Anything for peace and solitude. Hope was sadly amused at herself, and sadly amused at Mama, who in her best days was no conversationalist. How often had Papa Ross said yes to her. Hope wondered, as she found herself nodding agreement.

"Do you think Goody is happy?"
"Oh, yes, Mama. Sure."
"Think of it! My daughter married! Sarah! A wife herself now, beginning to face life and its responsibilities. Oh, I do hope the dear child is happy and comfortable. Charlie's such a nice boy, but all men are a handful!"
"Yes, indeed, Mama."
"You're the one I wish were married! You're the one I worry about! Goody could always take care of herself. You're the one, Hope, who needs a strong hand, a firm love to guide you and bring out the best that's in you. Because I'm sure there's a best somewhere. I've seen it! Besides, it's in your blood. Oh well, some day you'll meet the right man."
"Yes, I suppose so."
"Certainly you will! Don't look so gloomy, child. Think of all we do for you! You think too much of yourself and too little of others. Won't it be delightful to see Goody in Paris? On her honeymoon!"
"Yes. Rather."
"Oh, I hope she's been dieting like she promised. Perhaps we can pick up a few trinkets for her. Shall we stay in Paris about a month?"
"Yes. That would be nice."
"Yes, that's long enough. I don't want to be there when the tourist crowd starts. . . ."

Obviously, Hope met Goody and Charlie in Paris. Went the rounds with them. Met their friends, and Mama's friends, and attended the spring openings of the couturieres, the races, the galleries, the private parties, the night clubs. . . .
Flew to England with Charlie and Goody while Mama persisted in crossing the Channel by boat. Bade Goody a mute good-bye at Southampton

and watched the boat out of sight, wondering at her own humble awe at Goody's quiet bliss. Yes, Goody was happy, and so was Charlie—so happy, both of them, with their nice, correct, middle-class marriage. Was that the right kind of love, Hope wondered—good and complacent, doing the right things, seeing the right people? How ecstatic Goody looked. How changed!

For the entire summer Mama and Hope did the Continent alone, and late in the fall Papa joined them. Hope had found distraction verging on the romantic with one noble, good-looking, monocled, mustached, military attaché of the royal house of Italy. It was Hope's oft-repeated boast that no possible objection could be found to her new playmate. Since she must eventually be married, certainly fate had sent her the best. A God-sent answer to the old alternative of Rusty Crandal back home—or mummifying loneliness and restlessness.

County, as she insisted upon calling him, was agreeable and could tango; and he would let her do as she pleased and had suggested to Hope that after marriage each could go or come as was desirable, each could have their separate friends, and they could make dates with each other when it appealed to them. It sounded intriguingly and surprisingly fair-minded for an Italian; but it left Hope with just a wee spasm of nostalgia, and with a sharper tongue, a growing sarcasm, and a quiver in her left nostril that made her feel as if the whole thing were disastrous. It was, for that matter, but aside from her private opinion of her fiancé, he offered a new freedom. Didn't he promise freedom from himself—and in addition, there would be freedom from Mama and Papa, and the sight of Goody's contentment, from more pleadings on Rusty's part—from the whole United States that held Dickey Dale.

Mama had agreed—without being the slightest degree impressed. Presentations at Courts were old whoopees to Mama, and who was she to raise an eyebrow over aristocracy that happened to equal her own? What was a mere Count?

Still, however, she did agree. So Papa was summoned, and for three weeks great to-do and what-all was made over the meeting of the two unctuous, overpoweringly polite, and tremulously concerned families. Business of looking into and being looked into caused magnificent pastime, and finally both American and Italian Papas and Mamas came to a delightful agreement of hitching up names, matching titles and assigning chaperons; a great and refreshing little game, especially when played with Dukes wild.

It so happened, however, as soon as complete arrangements were made, that Hope decided to change her mind. But Hope said no word of the real reason. She put it down, and truthfully too—a little matter of a fiancé who despised cats. Her decision was prompt and immovable; yet that was hardly a fit explanation, and left Papa and Mama Ross with a new pastime that was neither entertaining nor comfortable, of undoing and unpromising, and dodging a payment for discomfited noble feelings.

Be that as it may, Hope sailed home to America with her nerved parents, and her shrewd and plume-tailed Sassy early in December. To spend Christmas Eve in Goody's bravely furnished new home, set near one of the dattling lakes of Westchester, in a new residential section that seemed to be a sort of barnacle of a golf club. The house itself was a stolid eight-room monument to the opinion Charlie's parents had held of the union. The entire furnishings and equipment from the black-and-rose tiled kitchen down to the monogrammed door mat outside the heavy green-painted front-door, were the contribution of the two who had once been bitterly disappointed because Goody was not a boy.

Christmas and New Year's were spent with Goody, partly because they were Goody's first big and important parties, and she was so insistently anxious that her "foiva" be with her on her first Yuletide; partly because Mama and Papa were barely speaking to Hope; and partly because Hope, for the first time in her life, didn't care to give a tree party, and barely noticed that the servants put up a tree.

After the holidays, life plodded relentlessly onward, whether Hope liked it or not. With a shrug of her sloping shoulders, Hope realized that in the scandal of Harmouth, she had hammered the last nail down in the coffin of her reputation. (Copyright, Grace Perkins)

Hope realizes herself that she is changed, on Monday. But she is the old Hope when danger threatens Sassy.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Aerial "Hitch-Hiking" Across Asia



S'MATTER POP—A Telephone Order



BOUND TO WIN—Jonathan Craves Action!



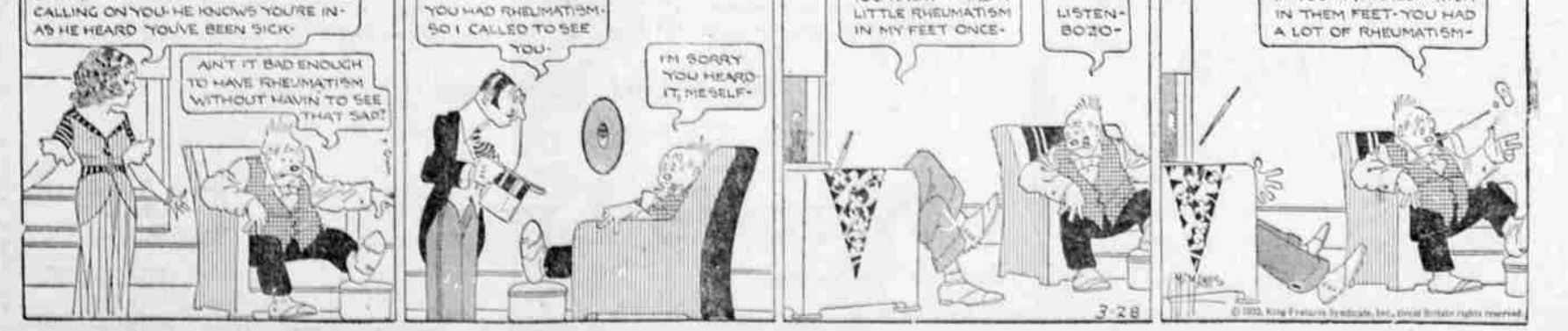
THE NEBBS—Well That's Different



MUTT AND JEFF—Unanimous Without Leaving The Jury Box



BRINGING UP FATHER



UMPUA HARBOR PLANS FAVORED

WASHINGTON, March 28.—(AP)—Assessing conditions have changed since the improvement was first undertaken, the war department today recommended to Chairman Mansfield of the house rivers and harbors committee a \$1,200,000 modification in the Umpqua project.

CRESENT GOLD RUSH HITS LEGAL TANGLES

CRESENT CITY, Cal., March 28.—(Sp.)—One hundred prospectors who staked claims on an old river bed reputedly rich in mineral ores during one of the wildest gold rushes seen here in years were worrying over a legal obstacle which may bar them from profiting.

Most of the staked land is owned by the Del Norte Timber company of Kauai, Wis., and the ownership of the mineral rights is disputed.

It is reported that gold, quicksilver, platinum and tritium average \$8 to the cubic yard, and other reports have it that in some places the values run to \$100 a cubic yard.