

BOY CRAZY

by GRACE PERKINS

SYNOPSIS: Out of grief and disillusion, Hope Ross reaches maturity—though not happiness, she has not been her happy-go-lucky self since her rascally marriage to Dickey Dale ended by her father's command since Hope and Dickey were minors. Mr. Ross has told Hope that Dickey left her.

Chapter 25 A NEW HOPE

HOPE'S letters to Papa Ross must have indicated this to a high degree, for all of her special delivery favors were granted toward the fall.

Together, in a bond of strange friendship, Hope and Mrs. Manly, the girl of nineteen and the woman of sixty-eight, traveled on through the west. To New Mexico, to Colorado, to California, to Vancouver, and even to Hawaii.

A new Hope, with the same old Sassy, still immaculately white of face and grimly whiskered, returned to Westchester the following Christmas.

Yes, a new Hope. Tall and slim and strangely self-assured, hardened in bone and muscle and softened in heart and tongue. A Hope who seemed suddenly to realize that Papa and Mama were lonely and getting on in years.

Oh, a very different Hope. Who once more gloried in flirting and in triumphing—this time with an older crowd by far. An older crowd who were naive, in the light of the younger set in many ways, but who taught Hope new and more dangerous thrills. The thrill of gambling that struck straight home, both in amusements of roulette and contract in the evenings, and in the stock market during the day.

For one entire year Hope crashed this crowd, hewing a peculiarly enviable and distinct position for herself. And Papa Ross, thankful to see her happy and agreeable, sane and carefree once more, paid the piper again—and gladly. Great was the cost, for Hope counted no forfeit too great for the tribute of this new world.

"You are going to leave me half of your fortune anyway," she would remind Papa Ross crisply. "Why not let me enjoy the money while you live, so you may see how I use it? Let me be the one member of this family who can live life riotously for the sake of what life can offer."

And Papa Ross, gazing at her through his cigar smoke, would feel a guilty tug at his heart, knowing how truly he had robbed her of her happiness once. Watch her, he did, day and night, stunned that a girl so young—his baby—should know so much of life, and know it so caustically.

And she certainly knew it. Not a haunt in all New York but Hope visited, from the ordinary night clubs and the regular speakeasies to the privately conducted saloons that the surfeited rich and aged would enter; from the joints of Harlem to the darkened rooms of Chinatown, from the Colony Club and the Ritz all the way out to the airports of Long Island, where at least she won her final thrill of earning a pilot's license.

Such was that year for Hope Fairfield Ross, whose beauty blossomed and ripened with a breathless and appalling audacity. Farsung and unchallenged were her triumphs—but no longer were they innocent victims innocently met. Resounding were the names that went down under her taunting and full-throated little laugh; older men all, wholly or partly married, it hardly mattered so long as they measured up to her new standard of manhood and sportsmanship.

While all the time Rusty looked on with pained and punished eyes, realizing the futility of protest, and trying desperately to interest himself in other and lesser lights. It was a strange roundelay—Rusty suffering over Hope and constantly wondering and hoping, and Angel (who had been promoted from being Rusty's secretary to that of the vice-president—and she never would have taken the change so calmly if it didn't mean twenty a week more for her mother who was ailing), oh yes, Angel was suffering over Hope, and constantly wondering—learning to hate the girl who could hurt Rusty so deeply.

Yet Hope along as savage races and creeds cling to superstitions, to certain invariable habits and weaknesses. No longer were there weeping spells for Sassy to watch sleepily. Hope had passed the stage of weeping. But one old secret routine persisted with her daily, nightly, and weekly. In a light blue vellum hand-tooled volume, locked with a tiny gold-fitted key, Hope kept a scrapbook. A strange little scrapbook, with

strange little notations beneath the items pasted therein. Every opening of every play that J. Hickson Dale had produced in the past four years! Every notice of his travels, of his motion-picture activities, the announcement of a time when he was in a hospital with appendicitis (and he could never guess who sent a certain truckload of flowers), and another of an island he had bought off the coast of Maine as a summer place.

Other and even dearer things were pasted in that scrapbook too. A full-page picture of Dickey Dale in the Year Book of Harmouth (wheeled out of Betty Preston adroitly), the picture that was published in a newspaper when he graduated with honors, bits of gossip published by New York columnists, and proving that Dickey was a gadabout in the theatrical world, an item announcing a sketch written by Dickey and incorporated into a small but successful revue, and finally the current publicity of strange and exciting reports that Dickey Dale was adapting an old play of his father's into a musical comedy libretto! Scheduled to appear on Broadway in the fall!

Certain people knew, that year, of Hope's great devotion to Charlie Rand, Jr., born on Hope's own twentieth birthday, in September, nineteen twenty-seven. And certain folk knew of Hope's unceasing concern over Judy, who had been fighting desperately since her debut to keep on in a world she could no longer afford. Judy, who should grab the opportunity at her doorstep to marry into the wealth of the Frisky Hall family, and who was fated to love a man even poorer than herself. Tom Post, the faithful saxophone player, never saw Frisky's seventeen-carat ring. Judy always hid it and wore Tom's quarter carat in his presence. She hated the ring as much as Tom did, and she hated Frisky more with each day that dawned.

It was growing harder, month by month, to see Tom; and Tom in desperation sneaked off to Chicago. Tom did wrong. He didn't explain to Judy that he had a big chance in Chicago, nor that he couldn't stand not seeing her. . . . He just left—and then wired her he'd be back when she broke with Frisky! Poor Judy! Hope had a new heart-break on her hands, for wasn't Judy's sorrow as great as her own? She knew how Judy felt only too well—but she had the sense, the money, the determination, and love enough to trace Tom and find the real reasons for his departure, and make him write them to Judy.

But in the meantime Judy was dizzy with grief. For how could she break with Frisky when both her parents were so desperately adamant, and so desperately in need? One can run away under normal circumstances, but one can't run away from a sick mother. Nor could one unburden oneself of the oversweet insistence of one's fiancé's family, who were just as adamant as the Hunt's inasmuch as they needed "family" to salt their "money."

It was the combination of Hope's interest in Judy and in Goody's baby that gave Hope the brilliant idea that sent Mama Ross pale, brought a gleam of pride into Papa Ross's eyes, and a buzz of joking gossip in the town.

For in November, Hope and Judy went into business together. In an enviable spot on the main street of their home town, a ubiquely decorated shop was brought into existence, and called the "Punch and July." Incongruous Hope! Opening a shop for children's dresses and baby things!

Running Papa's lawyer ragged with papers and leases and concessions to be signed, and disturbing the local bank with a new and peculiar account. Here was a way indeed for Judy to make money and feel guaranteed of an income. Done in the social manner, with an opening by invitation (where tea was served), the shop caused considerable interest from the start.

Judy was a demon for work, and Hope had a head on her shoulders even if it was blond! Most of the decorations and half of the children's rompers and dresses she had designed herself. Hope was wide-eyed with delight. Here was a new thrill, a terrific gamble, a vital interest. Here was companionship with Judy that meant something. Here was a new and satisfying way to shock the surounding universe in to a fresh flip of gossip. Here was work—and the dizzy flavor of success.

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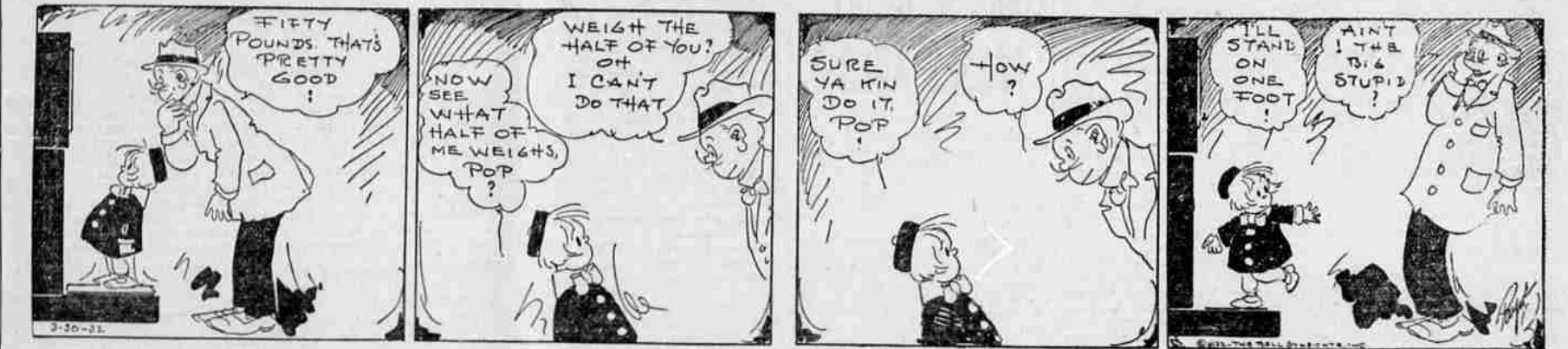
Engagements are announced in the next installment. Hope's last!

TAILSPIN TOMMY—Circumstantial Evidence!



S'MATTER POP—What's This? Something New In Physics?

By C. M. PAYNE



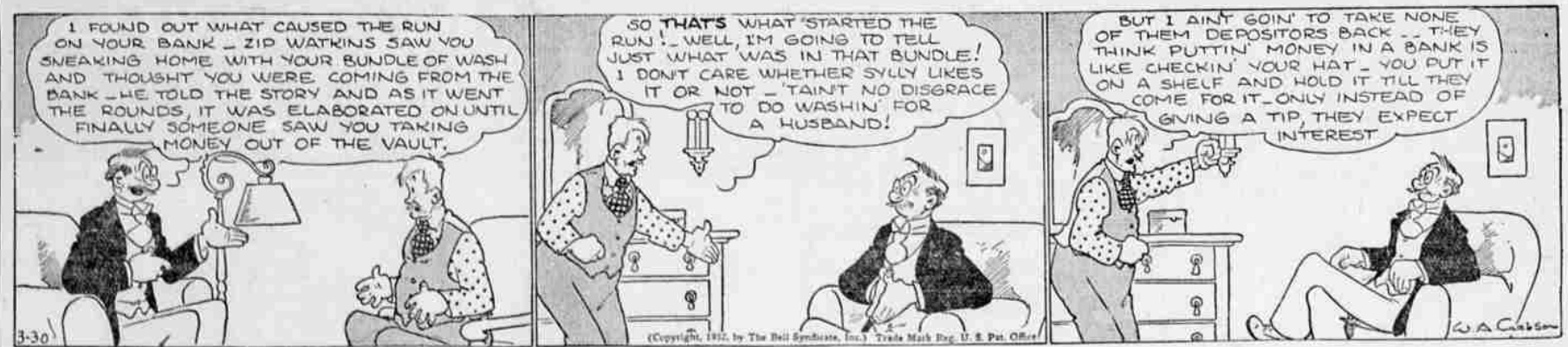
BOUND TO WIN—But In The Meantime

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—The Cat's Out Of The Bag

By SOL HESS



MUTT AND JEFF—Everybody Knows A Few Tasty Secrets

By BUD FISHER



FIFTEEN DEAD IN EASTERN STORMS

NEW YORK, March 30. — (AP) — Post-Easter storms that shrieked up and down the North Atlantic coast yesterday took at least 15 lives and caused widespread damage. Northern New England was speckled with stalled automobiles in snow several feet high. There and in up-state New York and Pennsylvania many communities were isolated. Schools didn't keep, telephone toppled, bluebirds met death in freezing winds, snow and rain.

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GRANGERS DENY OPPOSING KOAC

SALVEM, Ore., March 30. — (AP) — Bertha J. Beck, secretary of the State Grange, today denied that the executive committee of the grange meeting at Silverton Friday took any action toward requesting the state board of higher education to abolish radio station KOAC at Corvallis, as reported in press dispatches from Silverton.

Miss Beck said that only three members of the executive committee were present at the Silverton meeting and that inasmuch as a majority of the committee had previously taken action favoring the retention of the station the proposal to abolish was considered but not acted upon at Silverton.

BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus

