

# BOY CRAZY

by GRACE PERKINS

**SYNOPSIS:** Peacefully engaged to Rusty Cronah, Hope Ross suddenly hears that her former husband, Dickey Dale, is sailing on the same boat that carries her best friend, Judy, and Hope determines to sail also. Ever since her father annulled her marriage, Hope has wanted to see Dickey. Now is her chance.

### Chapter 29

#### AN ORIGINAL LOAN

FOURTEEN minutes after the ship had drawn from the dock, and headed out into the harbor, Hope went to the purser and explained things. Paying by check for passage and reservation, even agreeing to bunk in with a school teacher from the middle west if she had to. Offering to let him wire Papa, or her bank, or anyone he pleased. God bless her inheritance—she didn't have to depend upon Papa's ideas and whims.

Then quietly, she herself went to the telegraph office and sent two radiograms. One to Mrs. Manly asking her to please take over the shop on Madison Avenue. And one to Papa Ross.

"Dear Dad," she wrote with trembling determination. "I am sailing with Judy who seems to need a chaperon on her wedding. Don't worry and please remember that I am over twenty-one now and no infant.

Love to you and Mama.

Hope."

Directly from the wireless room Hope made her way, still lugging Sassy under one arm, into the writing-room.

A trace of the gambler's smile still lingered on Hope's lips as she scratched urgent and whole-souled hieroglyphics over three or four sheets of quite entertaining stationery. Yet the mist of tears in her eyes that clung to her overgrown lashes, and the trembling of her hand as she wrote, were the merest proofs of her inner turmoil.

"Rusty darling: You'll hate me. I hate myself. I can't even think how rotten I am—and God knows, honey, I'm not worthy of your love for me. I know, because I love like that, only it isn't you I love. You know that, don't you? You've always known how I love Dickey. I've sailed on this boat tonight because he's on it; and I couldn't stand another week of not seeing him, and knowing.

"I'll always be fond of you. I may be all kinds of a beast, but when it all boils down, I'm a one-man woman; and if that one man isn't to be had, then I might as well go to the devil alone, and not drag you with me.

Please understand. But then, you've always understood as no body else ever has. I'll never forget the nights you let me cry it out on your shoulder about Dickey. You said once—do you remember?—that you'd give your soul to bring him back to me! That's how much you cared for me. So you can understand how much I care—for him.

I'd give my soul not to hurt you, dear. But what I'm doing just can't be helped.

I'm sorry.

Hope."

With breathless haste she sealed the letter, and dashed off to get it on the shore-post that went on the pilot boat. Then, just as suddenly, she kept the note from slipping through the slit of the letter box, and decided to send the letter as a wire, regardless of cost. She owed it to Rusty to let him know as quickly as Dad knew.

Back up to the operator's room she dashed—only to feel a bit close to blushing as the officer read it and gasped.

Then she ambled back to the purser, and found that an arrangement had been made. A certain Miss Millie Seabrook was quite agreeable to sharing her room, amazed that someone had offered to pay its entire cost, and let Miss Millie travel across free.

Down to the stateroom went Hope. Millie Seabrook was a young Southerner, who taught forty-three little boys from September to June (and before long Hope had her own ideas of what she taught them) and who had saved up for three years for a trip to Europe first-class.

Somehow it had never occurred to Hope that school teachers might fall in love. But Millie Seabrook was in love. Sublimely in love with a Frenchman who had done something brave with her brother during the war. Minute were the descriptions of Henri's letters, and numerous were Henri's pictures for Hope to look at. Millie had never met Henri! But she was certainly bound for romance now, with Alabama and forty-three little boys beautifully forgotten.

By two a. m. the two lovelorn cabin-mates were sound asleep. Early the next morning Hope was

up and dressed. After a brisk walk, Hope was hunched up in a deck chair in the sun by eleven o'clock.

A book was in her hands. Upside down. While Hope let her thoughts parade through her mind, she kept her bright eyes alert for shy glimpses of those who paced the deck in front of her.

And they came! She saw them as they first rounded the starboard side of the deck in the wind. Dick and Hickey, coated and capped, marching around the deck. Hickey talking earnestly.

Neither saw her as they passed, and breathless she watched their backs and waited after they disappeared from sight.

Around they came again, and Hope simply could not keep her eyes on the upside down book. Both saw her that time. One grim embarrassed glance, and Dickey lowered his eyes, a flush gathering under the swarthy tan of his clean-shaven face.

But Hickey didn't look away. Hickey, with his gun-powder hair sticking out like tufts under his cap, and his gray-white mustache that was a new acquisition since Hope's day. With brusque dignity Hickey acknowledged the mute appeal of Hope's wide-eyed stare with a stiff bow and a mumbled word.

But they didn't come around again!

Shortly after she met some of her old, high-stepping friends, who gabbled uproariously at the sight of her on the boat. All afternoon she spent with the Carter family, playing bridge. And out a . . . of the Dales crossed her vision.

Late in the afternoon she retired to take a nap, and give the little school teacher some tart advice on men. Heading Millie, as a result, off to the barber shop for a haircut, immediately she was gone, Hope sent a note over to Judy's room.

"Judy darling: I quite understand your complete absence at breakfast and luncheon. Nor will I care if you don't come down to dinner. But do you mind looking through your luggage for two suitcases of mine, and sending them over to Room 217? Love to you and Tom, and my blessings.

Hope."

"P.S. The weather out on deck is grand. You shouldn't be missing it."

As she expected, twenty minutes later Judy herself appeared at Room 217, a porter beside her carrying the valises.

"Hope, for the love of my sainted Aunt Amelia, what are you doing on this boat—and in such a cabin?"

"Judy darling! Don't you make a sweet married woman!"

"Judy," said Hope slowly. "I'm rotten. A complete and utter no-good. I've ditched Rusty. For good. In a very inexcusable way, and I certainly have done him mean!"

"Gee—the poor kid! But why, Hope?"

"I've never loved Rusty, and he knew it. I guess everybody knew it. But I do love somebody else. You certainly ought to know how much. And Judy—he's on this boat! And that's why I'm here!"

"Well, of all the forms of insanity! Hope, you're just asking for punishment!"

"I've had some already. Dickey wouldn't look at this morning. And his father barely bowed. But, Judy, you must help me. You must. It's so important!"

"Darling, I'd do anything. Didn't you help me land Tom? I'll go talk to Dick right now."

"No! You're not to do that. Don't you dare say a word. Promise me. Listen, Judy, I'm perfectly willing to make an idiot of myself, but I don't want Dickey to know what a perfect fool I am. I don't want him to know I'm chasing him. See?"

"Well, then, what can I do?"

Hope leaned back and fixed her lifetime friend with a probing stare.

"Did you really mean, Judy, what you said—that you'd do anything?"

"Why, Hope, you ought to know! Good grief, haven't you done everything for me? Haven't you made it possible for me to—"

"Never mind," Hope shrugged, and tossed her cigarette energetically out the port-hole. "Listen, Judy. If you really want to help me, you can lend me your husband!"

"Wha—what?"

"Let me be the bride instead of you," Hope explained glibly. "If I'm on the boat married, and not just alone, unmoored and unescorted, and not even on the passenger list—well, Dickey couldn't suspect me of running after him. Could he? And I could talk to him as Mrs. Post much better—oh, so much better!"

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With her unexpectedly acquired husband, Hope sets the stage for Dickey tomorrow.

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Real Flight For Life!

fe

BY GLENN CHAFFIN AND HAL FORREST



## S'MATTER POP—Hope It Is A False Alarm

By C. M. PAYNE



## BOUND TO WIN—"Butch" Boyle Remains

By EDWIN ALGER



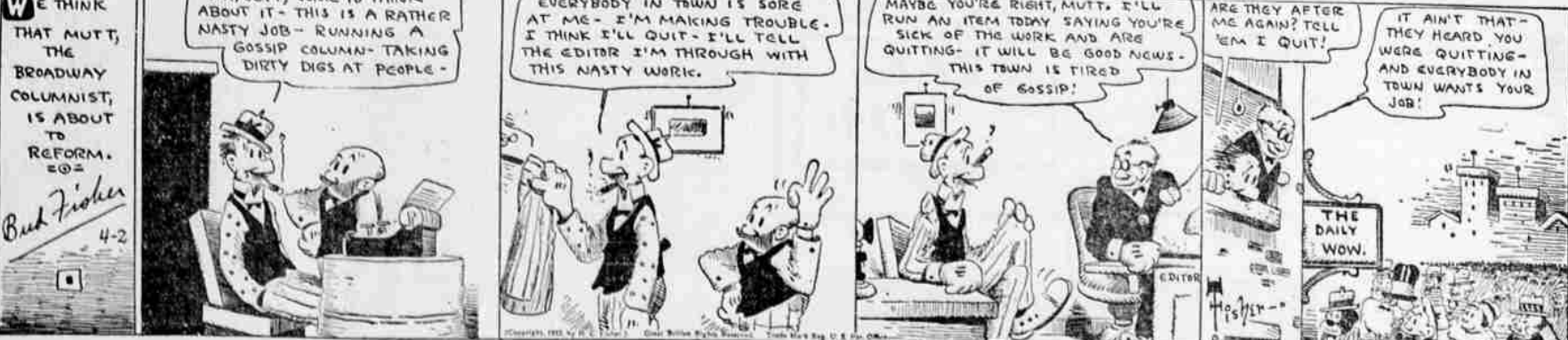
## THE NEBBS—What A Moment

By SOL HESS



## MUTT AND JEFF—Human Nature Doesn't Change Like The Weather

By BUD FISHER



## HIGHWAY DEBTS 29 MILLION NOW

SALEM, Ore., April 2—(AP)—The state highway bonded indebtedness was reduced to \$29,382,280, including the \$29,000,000 highway bonds issued as of April 1, the state treasurer announced last night. The veterans' state aid bonds were reduced to \$25,125,000. These reductions were reported following the transfer yesterday by the treasurer to the Chase National bank in New York city of \$2,668,082. This sum plus \$937,500 in principal in Oregon state highway bonds and \$674,867 semi-annual interest, and \$506,000 principal of state veterans' aid bonds and \$266,010 interest.

## ROSEBURG YOUTH KILLED BY AUTO

ROSEBURG, Ore., April 2—(AP)—Russell Osmondson, 18, was killed here last night when his bicycle was struck by an automobile driven by Lawrence Delaney, 22, of Roseburg. The boy's brother, Howard, 19, riding on the handlebars of the bicycle, escaped with minor injuries. Delaney was held in jail on an open charge, pending a coroner's inquest tonight. The two boys were on their way to a Boy Scout meeting. Their scoutmaster, L. E. Mikeworth, deputy county coroner, was just behind them in an automobile, and witnessed the accident.

## BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus

