

# BOY CRAZY

by GRACE PERKINS

...OPEN: "Mickey still says 'no'." Hope looks at the corner father-in-law, Hickey Blair, who has pulled on the same boat, trying to resist Dickey. Hope has just learned that her father decided her when he had her marriage annulled, and that Dickey was prevented by Mr. Ross from wedding her.

## Chapter 33

**HICKEY** laughed. A crooked, broken laugh.

"Your picture is still in his watch-case," he said slowly. "Go and ask him to show it to you."

For one second Hope stood poised. Then, forgetting Sassy, and forgetting Hickey, she turned and raced out of the room.

Hope was on a wild-eyed search. All over the boat, from bar to salon, up and out on the decks, without hat or cape, fighting her way through the wind from one end of the ship to the other. And finding him, eventually in a forbidden spot, which meant that she had to climb chains and railings to get up to the bridge where Dickey stood with the captain.

"Dickey," she cried. "What time is it? Tell me, honey, what time is it?"

They brought her, still demanding the time, down to the captain's suite.

"No. By your watch, Dickey," she insisted. "I must know the time by your watch!"

Dickey went gray around the lips, and turned to the captain.

"I don't think Miss Ross is well," he stammered.

"I understand," nodded the captain. But he didn't—quite. Until much later that evening.

For Dickey and Hope, with so much to say, so many questions to be answered, so many questions that didn't need answering any more, suddenly found that hardly a spot on that huge vessel was sacred to lovers.

Meanwhile, Judy, in spite of Tom's white-faced annoyance, was searching grimly for Hope, sending the carriers in one direction, and any steward within sight to search out every known corner. And when at last Hope rushed up to Judy and nearly knocked her over with hugs and kisses and breathless explanations, Judy almost fainted with relief.

Quite unplanned and unexpected was the round-up in Hickey's suite. Nobody knew just who made the suggestion that they get married then and there by the captain. But Dickey leaped at the idea, his eyes lighting up into that old blue spark, and a broad grin gratefully hiding the scar of stitches on his lip.

"Will you, Hope? Will you marry me—right now?"

Hope tried to say yes. She really did try. But her face wrinkled up into a childish pucker and she nodded her head instead, gulping back her happiness.

After that, there was a general mad-house. Everyone had a suggestion, everyone a gift, everyone was talking at once.

Not even to change her black velvet would Dickey permit Hope to leave his side.

"Listen, cricket," he said with that memorably bossy air of his. "Last time you married me just as you were. This time you're going to do the same. That's orders, baby!"

The old pet name, the old ring in his voice, and Hope was glad of the confusion that prevented the need of answering. For suddenly through her tired, happy, confused mind, there rose a picture of her old home in Westchester, of the brook that ran beneath her window, and the weeping willows that bent in the breezes. . . .

Of the times that Dickey would call for her in a monstrous atrocity of a roadster, and of that long ride from the Country Club to the Justice of the Peace—where she had found neither justice nor peace. . . .

"Something blue! You all must wear something blue!" drawled a voice in her ear. And Millie's southern lisp went up to be stripped of a blue-satin garter.

"Something old," Hickey pled in as he drew the cork of a wine bottle. "I'm something old, and by thunder, I ought to do for any wedding."

"Let's get started," suggested Dickey as he slapped his father on

the shoulder and neatly applied the wine. "We can drink all the toast later. Come on, Hope."

"Oh, Lordy!" wailed Millie as she grasped the arm of her westerner, and watched Hope and Dickey head down the corridor. "I just have a feeling something awful's going to happen. . . . Now isn't that too silly, but I can't help it. It's like a premonition!"

"Shut up, for heaven's sake," snapped Judy as she followed Hickey. "Or there'll be murder at sea."

Flight after flight they climbed, the whole gabbling crew, joined by every person they recognized, or who had known Hope and Dickey. Joined by everyone, that is, but Lillian Toff, who was perched on a table in the bar, swearing that she intended to sue Hope for alienation of affections. . . .

At the narrow twisting staircase that led up to the captain's room, Hickey commanded the party to halt. Up he went himself to announce the excitement, and to request the captain to make way for a wedding.

For the longest time he was gone. Behind the door of the captain's room, while at the foot of the staircase stood Hope and Dickey, side by side, breathless, wordless, listening to all that was said, and grinning idiotically.

The minutes dragged. A sense of restlessness ran through the crowd. Tighter became Dickey's grip on Hope's clammy hand. . . .

And at last the captain's door was flung open and Hickey appeared. A crestfallen and sad-eyed Hickey, gazing down on them. With the captain smiling quizzically behind him.

"You can come up," announced Hickey sorrowfully, "but you won't like it!"

Dazed, Dickey and Hope looked at each other.

"Why, in the name of God?" shouted Dickey from the foot of the staircase.

The captain pushed his way to the front. Explaining, most apologetically, that stories, tales and romances notwithstanding, he could not read a marriage service for them. Not even considering the friendship he felt for both Dickey's and Hope's fathers. Only when one is dying and wishes to marry another so that the estate might be inherited, or when the ship was doomed to sink; only in cases of extreme emergency was such a marriage permissible.

To the selected few who were invited a few moments later, the captain went on to placate the dejected lovers.

"It is not a ruling of the steamship companies," he sighed with true sympathy. "It is a land rule. You've no idea how many requests I have for wedding services. And no idea of what troubles and engagements it would mean if I complied. Just figure for yourself! I would like nothing better than to oblige."

"Well," Hickey filled in the blank silence that followed the captain's ultimatum, "it's only four-teen hours until landing time."

Hope and Dickey gazed at each other tragically.

"Gee," Dickey breathed heavily. "We've waited so long. Darn near five years now."

"Say, what's the matter with you two?" Hickey grumbled with feigned irritation. "Here you kids have a happy ending, and still you're not satisfied. You're worse than the show business!"

"I just know it!" Millie's voice poured itself softly through the room. "I just know something terrible would happen!"

"Aw, will somebody stop on that?" pleaded Tom Post nervously. "Judy, do you mean to tell me we can't get rid of Hope tonight?"

"Well," Dickey grinned as he accepted a special frosted glass from the captain. "This makes twice I've been done out of a real wedding. Believe me, tomorrow we're going to make the rounds. We're going to get married civil, church and every way they serve it."

Hope looked wistfully at Dickey close beside her. "I'm game," she agreed. "But what wouldn't I give right now for a nice chaplain! And I don't mean Charlie!"

(Copyright, Grace Perkins)

THE END

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Maybe It's The Curse Of The Padmini!



## S'MATTER POP—If It's A Joke Why Not Laugh?

By C. M. PAYNE



## BOUND TO WIN—Briar Arrives

By EDWIN ALGER



## THE NEBBS—Before The Storm

By SOL HESS



## MUTT AND JEFF—It's News When a Backbiter Bites Himself

By BUD FISHER



## BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



## NORTHWEST MILLS JOIN TARIFF PLEA

PORTLAND, Ore., April 7.—(AP)—An alliance of lumber and pulp manufacturers of the Pacific northwest with operators in the southern states, in the interest of an import tax on lumber and pulp, was predicted by Oregon lumbermen here today. The senate finance committee will be urged to include such an import tax in the revenue bill.

Representatives of the northwest will join with those from the south in a personal appearance before the senate finance committee.

CASCADIA—Cameron sawmill resumed operations.

## NEWFOUNDLAND PREMIER HIDES

ST. JOHNS, N. F., April 6.—(AP)—Newfoundland was expected to resort to a national government today to placate the mob which yesterday smashed the windows of the house of assembly and caused the precipitous flight into hiding of Premier Sir Richard Squires.

Resignation of the Squires government, the promise of which halted the angry mob's determination to throw the premier into the harbor, had not been received at 10 a. m. today.

The suggested national government would be headed by F. C. Alderdice, present opposition leader.