

LOVE, Ltd.

Illustrated by
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Mary Lee Started With a
School-Marm Mind, but Flip and
the Moon Soon Changed It
and Mary's School Lost
a Pretty Teacher

MARY LEE could have come back to Monte Seco with a four-carat diamond on her left hand, but she preferred to return alone without a hint of romance.

When Flip heard her decision he roared up and down the cloistered patio at the ranch-sanatorium. He said: "Mary Lee, you're crazy. Or... you're ashamed of me." He stopped, suddenly hurt and unsure. "Mary Lee, are you ashamed of me?"

"Of course, not, silly. But... Well, I think I love you, Flip, but it's so very different from what I thought love would be."

"You've been reading a book," said Flip.

Flip was everything Mary Lee Lynn had never dreamed she could love. He was honestly red-headed, a tackle type when she favored ends and backfield men. He was gay. Not the most serious subjects could hold his feet on earth. No, Mary Lee could not imagine herself in love with young Philip Carney, and, by a fair process of logic, she could not imagine Philip Carney in love with Mary Lee Lynn.

"I like him because of five lonely blite years of school teaching in Lava Arch, she thought. "And he's attracted to me because I'm little and was so frightened and hurt."

Mary Lee, finishing her contract with Lava Arch, Ore., thought she would die if she couldn't get home at once. She nearly did. She whirled around the mountain road in her ratty old car and suddenly there was another machine in front of her.

She was not seriously hurt, only a sprained ankle and what the Fortland papers referred to as "minor contusions and abrasions," but the shock did her up completely. Or perhaps it was weariness from the hard year past. Anyway, old Dr. Carney, who had been driving the "other car," put her up at his remodeled ranch sanatorium for a rest. And there

"But you don't understand. Oh, please don't send me away like this." The tightness left Flip's mouth. His lips twitched upward at the corners. "Come into the consultation room," he said. "The Carneys, pere et fils, guarantee complete service; no extra charge for personal attention."

"Oh, you... you," choked Mary Lee, but she kissed him when he turned her face up firmly. Flip kissed her again and again, and then tenderly the palms of her hands and the tips of her fingers one at a time.

He said: "Obviously there's nothing wrong there. Wait, do you suffer from cold feet on hot days? Are there chills up and down your spine? Is there a ringing in your ears? Do you experience a feverish desire to laugh and cry and run up and down volcanoes? Does the sight of the lowly violet bring tears to your eyes? My dear—it's love."

"I think you're right," she said, trying to smile. "But I want to be sure. No, wait, I've a grand idea, Flip. In about a week you come down to Monte Seco. There in normal surroundings with— with normal competition, we'll know."

"Let's just take a chance," began Flip. Out in front the station bus bonked twice. Mary Lee, her eyes unaccountably flooded with tears, tossed her head. It couldn't be love if he could be so light about it. You couldn't make fun of love. She began gathering up hat, gloves, purse... nice, reliable things to cling to in a major disaster.

"All right, if you don't want to come," she said.

"Lord, Mary Lee. I'd do anything to get you. You know that."

Mary walked out of the office, fighting her desire to grab Flip and never let him from her sight. She climbed into the station bus, which started promptly.

"Fl come," shouted Flip. He jumped on the running board and clung there as the bus jounced down toward the gate. "Why wait a week, though?" "Not a day sooner," insisted Mary Lee.



By
DOROTHY MARIE DAVIS

He Seemed Silly
but He Knew
What He Liked
and Just How
to Go About
Getting It

as deep to find... to find... Mary Lee faltered.

They stood silently watching the moon in the pool. Then Philip Carney stirred and drew Mary Lee into his arms. "I love you," he said. He set her free as suddenly and hurried to the other side of the pool. "I've got to think," he explained, "and I can't think close to you. I want to be sure this is real... this... this..."

"Flip!" Mary Lee was angry, raging. "Don't tease me. Do you love me or don't you? If you do, how can you torture me? If you don't... If you don't, I'll go away; I'll get over you. I'll forget you... if I can."

"I only want to be sure," he said. "You put love to a test, didn't you? Well, I'm not sure it wasn't a good idea. Mary Lee, moon-lady, I think I love you very much. My pulse accelerates alarmingly when I touch your fingertips. Your long lashes and that nick in your chin, your lips... they drive me insane. In fact, it may not be love at all... just dementia."

"Flip," said Mary Lee, miserably. "My dear," he spoke softly, challenging. "How far would the moon wade?" When she made a little hopeless gesture with her hands he nodded. "I was afraid of that. So you were right, after all. Even love does have its limits. Good-by, little Mary Lee."

DHILIP CARNEY turned and strode away through the trees, reappearing or the terrace briefly where he paused to blow a solemn kiss to Mary Lee.

Mary Lee summoned her courage and followed him. When she opened the doors the music poured over her and stunned her for a moment. She poised in the arch a long time before any one noticed her. They were all there... good, Vin Post and, far away, Nelda and Flip.