

MOVIES

It's the Collerans' private life that disturbs people who like their movie stars conveniently pigeonholed. Although she has yet to play the role of a happy wife, that's the characterization she has stuck gossips with since they first probed her well-shielded home life.

Last year, in desperation, they tried to link her with Peter Lawford, who had costarred with her on television, but before the whisper could get its wind up, the Collerans were happily busy putting about a new house they'd just bought in Los Angeles.

"The house has a lot of crazy angles," says Lee, with a lack of restraint she rarely displays off-camera. "It's furnished mostly in children's toys and has a lot of property—two and a half acres, and all for us."

The Collerans confess to being Easterners, however. They met in 1955 while Lee, once a hopeful dance student, was still dizzy with her first tv success and Bill was earning a reputation as the inventive director of "The Hit Parade." They married in 1957 and settled down to a Manhattan life, which was fine until their second child, Matthew, was born almost two years ago.

"Our roots weren't so strong that we couldn't pull them up for the prospect of seeing Katherine and Matt out in the sun all year round," says Lee.

Even location shooting does not usually separate the Collerans. While making Columbia's suspense film, "The Running Man," all four were in Spain, although not always enjoying it. "Poor Matt had a good dose of the usual traveler's illness, and for a while we were concerned. While the children are young, though, we want them with us as much as possible. We're people who can settle anywhere. I remember when we went on to Ireland, I watched Bill and Kathy walking down the street in tweeds and caps, and I thought: a tourist would take a photo of them as typical Dubliners."

ONE OF THE reasons Lee misses the East is because her parents, whom she is very close to, still live there. Her father, Frank, is a department-store owner in Quincy, Mass., and Lee visits him and his second wife on holidays. Lee's mother resumed her career as a radio actress in New York when her daughter was 16.

Actually, Lee's only major problem is the fact that people, discouraged by the evenness of her life, try to inflict on her the more dramatic characteristics of other stars. Once, for example, a press agent erroneously reported that Lee occupied the former apartment of Marilyn Monroe and tried to emulate the then-rising star.

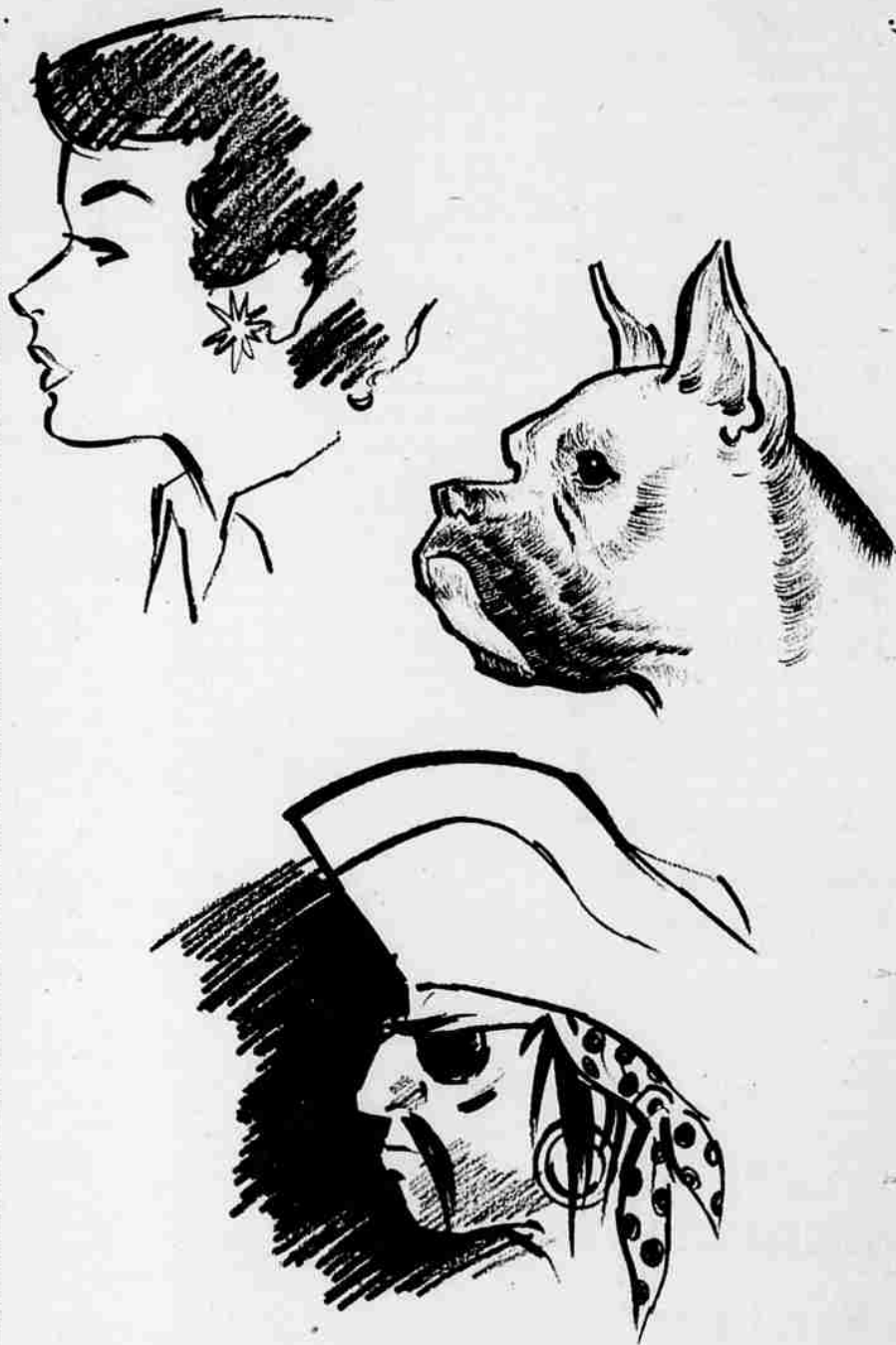
Years later, when Marilyn held up production on "Something's Got to Give" just before her death, the studio searched for a replacement. It picked Lee, and the Lana Turner comparison now became a Marilyn Monroe comparison. Ironically, when hearing of the decision, Marilyn's friends used almost the identical words Lana had used four years before: "If the role is right for Lee, then it was wrong for Marilyn."

The episode ended abruptly with Marilyn's death. Lee reportedly received \$100,000 for doing nothing, but today there are indications she still feels bitter about being used as an innocent pawn in a tragic feud.

Still, there is always hope. Not long ago Lee and her husband were standing outside a theater where the tragic love story, "Days of Wine and Roses," was being previewed. She was being deluged by compliments on her fine performance when she overheard someone remark: "By the way, have you seen this Tippi Hedren—Hitchcock's new star? She reminds me of Lee Remick."

"Now that is a compliment!" Lee replied emphatically. "They're comparing somebody with me—poor girl."

But it will take a lot more than superficial looks or imaginative press agency to give Hollywood another actress like Lee Remick.



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