

## The Lady's Mine

**Francine Rivers**

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In Francine Rivers's delightful novel *The Lady's Mine*, an exiled Boston brahmin claims her uncle's property in a "wild and woolly" mining town, flourishing against expectations.

Kathryn, whose rift with her stepfather propelled her westward to Calvada, is an enterprising young woman with a strained family history. But her arrival in a backwater full of men sparks the townspeople's curiosity about why a lady would ensconce herself there with no chaperone. Beck, a saloon and hotel owner, bristles over her arrival, too, though he's still compelled to look out for her well-being.

In this intriguing story about misaligned first impressions, headstrong Beck and Kathryn form a deep affinity for each other. They have a quick repartee and a mutual desire to improve their community. Kathryn's subtle faith and earnestness draws Beck in. Their relationship begins in a cautious manner, prompted by curiosity. Repeated coincidences place them together, resulting in tantalizing frisson and humor. And Beck's return to faith comes in natural increments; he's an able counterpart whose plans dovetail with Kathryn's. But mysterious circumstances surround Kathryn's uncle's death, and Calvada's contentious hierarchy and rivalries create problems. Her revival of her uncle's newspaper is met with political resistance.

Calvada's colorful citizens, including a gangly typesetter and a matchmaking widow who runs a café, evoke the can-do ethos of the West. Despite their own broken dreams, people rally around Kathryn, who evinces genuine compassion for miners' widows and others. She takes risks for her neighbors, resulting in redemption.

Agape love has rippling effects in *The Lady's Mine*, an entertaining romance novel in which a forward-thinking woman and a former rogue work to energize a boom town.

KAREN RIGBY (January / February 2022)

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