

Summer Sweethearts

By Mabel McElliot

CHAPTER V

KATHARINE shrugged her shoulders. She hated the subject, but she was fascinated by it. How Mackenzie, and rather stupid, a bore at 30, was in the nature of a town joke. Yet she had been sought in marriage... That was something. How was rich, how powerful, that was the way the world looked. Sally Moon, foolish and beautiful and cheaply pretty, had had a chance to become a wife...

Not that Katharine wanted marriage. But from her chilly and rather bewildered heights, she wondered how it was done. Sally knew how to get a system, involving the use of art, of flattery, of caresses, of murmured words on dance floor and in the privacy of a room. Katharine had always held herself aloof from what she called "that sort of thing." Now, suddenly, she was curious.

Sally has her points," Zoe said curiously, as if she read her companion's thoughts. "Oh, I don't doubt it!" Even to Katharine herself the words sounded nearly bitter. She wouldn't stoop, she said herself, to the sort of thing Sally said. But, brushing against a man's shoulder, appearing to stumble and catching the nearest masculine hand to arm, spraying oneself with the most seductive perfumes...

"You're a funny girl," Zoe said curiously, almost speculatively. "Don't you like men?" Katharine said the door lever open, and stepped lightly to the ground. In the light of early morning her skin was flawless, ivory stained faintly with an apricot glow. Her fair hair rolled in little tendrils about her face. "Why, she's gorgeous looking, really," the other girl thought. "What wouldn't she like to be a go-go?" Katharine said to herself. "I don't know how we get on the subject. Of course I like men. Don't I dine and dance and go with them?"

"Oh, it isn't that. I know you have lots of beaux," Zoe hastened to contradict. "It's just that—well, you're so sort of casual with them. I don't believe you've ever even had a flutter. Have you?"

Katharine shrugged. "All this talk of flutters," she said with distaste. "It makes me—well, just a bit sick." "There, you see?" cried Zoe. "I have it! You're on the heights most of the time. And," she added mysteriously, "they don't like it!" "What doesn't?" Katharine, comprehending perfectly, was purposely silent.

"Men," said Zoe softly. "They're afraid of you." "Let them be!" said Katharine. "Oh, don't be cross," coaxed the little girl at the wheel of the roadster. "I only wanted to—well, it does seem such a waste—your being so persons and all that..."

"You think," began Katharine with a scorn, "that being in love's the fun. Is that it?" Zoe, remembering her tears and howes and imprecations, when dragged away from the adored Gibbs, had to grin. "Not—fun, exactly. Oh, but it's the most life worth living. Haven't you ever, not one single time, walked to in the morning to find the sky blue and the sun brighter and everything—oh, marvelous—just because you were going to see someone?" "No, I haven't."

"I don't," murmured Zoe, "quite know it."

Any moment now, Katharine's earnest thoughts ran, any moment Michael and Sally Moon would be fording the river. Sally's dark curls would

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