Summer Sweethearts

By Mabel McElliott

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CHAPTER LVII

"I'd ideal," pursued Isabel, running a wet comb through her wave narrowing her eyes speculatively image in the spotted and cloudy . "My ideal is sort of like Fredric March only younger, but the same kind of chin."

Bill don't look a bit like Fredric ," observed Daisy with an air nonchalance belied by the knowing in her beady eyes.

You better let Bill alone," Isabel with spirit. "I've told Bill many me he wasn't my ideal as far as go, but he certainly is one hand- fellow. There are girls in this who'd give their shoes to go out him."

See you!" Daisy was setting the now, slapping forks and knives, hopelessly mismatched, down upon both notable for the number and ety of spots on it.

You mind your own business or be sorry," Isabel advised heat- "Tell you one thing—when Bill I step off we'll have a slicker ing place to live in than this . Wonder you kids wouldn't rinse a bit of wash now and then, with working her head off all day at canning factory. You get out of at quarter past three and hang and yelling your heads off till just we come home. But I know what's supper, too." She wrinkled her staring into the handleless pot the store.

Canned beans! I knew it."

She slammed into the room she with Daisy and Mary Maud. was taking her to one of the first hockey games tonight. She'd lucky if she found a decent pair of stockings to wear. When she had so boastfully to Daisy and the of her probable marriage to she had been whistling in the How did you ever get a boy to point where he proposed? She know. Maybe she'd go on like forever, working at the shop, com- home to a dirty house, getting by the minute, not having any- she wanted...

How nice it would be, Isabel mused, ing around the dark, shabby little to have pretty things, to have and dates galore. While you young—that's when it counted after all, it wouldn't matter she was older. She wouldn't then.

Oh, sis, a box came for you to- Mary Maud, gangling and pale in a gingham dress a size too came to stand and stare from door.

A box? How? By parcel post?" of any sort were an event this family.

I don't know. No, I think some- left it at the door. It was on Daisy," said Mary Maud , "wanted to open it, but I let her."

Frantically Isabel tore at the ripping it off. Under folds of paper lay a white and silver Isabel gasped. Staring. She open the square, creamy enve- There was a signature. Sally ...Why, of all things...

"Dear Isabel: I'm going to for a year. You said some- the last time you did my about getting married. Don't I gave this to you. The old have talked enough already. Good luck."

Well, I never thought she even liked men," marvelled Isabel. Casual, careless Sally had sent her the wedding dress!

"Try it on, sis. Try it on." Both dingy little girls were hopping about about food. Isabel emerged from the in an ecstacy of excitement.

They forgot about time, forgot scrubby cubicle which served as a bathroom, her arms and face gleaming from recent scrubbing. She slipped the lovely frock over her head.

"Ooh-ooh, don't you look nice!" Even Daisy said it, reluctantly but convincingly.

When you have never before in your life owned a really decent frock, Isabel thought, revolving before the square of mirror, it's heaven to own one at last...it works magic for you.

Lost in her dreams, she didn't hear the doorbell. Didn't hear Bill's deep growl in response to Mary Maud's piping treble.

"Tell her I can't make the game," she heard at last. "Tell her I've got to play pool with some of the fellows..."

Isabel went out into the sitting room. Bill saw her. He gaped. The little girls, sensing a situation, withdrew to the kitchen where they peeped through the kitchen door.

"Don't bother," Isabel said loftily. "You've broken dates with me gefore, Bill Martin. This is the last time. I'm getting me another beau."

She was regal in the white and silver. In the cheap little house she was like an exotic flower.

"You're telling me?" Bill demanded truculently. "You're my girl, aren't you? And we're gettin' married soon, aren't we?"

"Are we?" Isabel shrugged. "First I heard of it."

"Well, you know it now," said the man. He was staring at her as if he had never seen her before.

Katharine and Michael did not go to England at once, after all. When she was well enough Michael took Katharine back to Silencia where Miss Daisy and Miss Roxana and Miss Vincent and wheezy Mrs. Houghton fussed over her. She was still definitely the invalid. The doctor made her stay in bed part of every day and Michael, who had another cell-like little room across the hall, would carry her out into the heartening sunshine.

He was still unable quite to believe that this delicate, golden-haired girl was really his wife. He had nearly lost her—and all along the way their path had been tangled with briers. It was difficult to believe that everything could be straightened out at last.

One day about a week after their return to Silencia Michael had been out-riding on one of the fine Arab horses the Millards had left. He came into his room, almost blinded by the glare of the patio, and found the interior dark and cool. But, after his vision had cleared a trifle he saw Katharine sitting in his one deep chair. Katharine, dressed in a green linen frock with delicate handwork on it. She looked older, more poised and mature.

"Darling! You're really feeling better?"

He raised her hand to his lips. He felt, reverentially, that he was literally unworthy of her. Here he stood, strong and crude in his riding things, reeking of horses and the out-of-doors, and here was this girl, a very fairy princess of elegance and fragrance, condescending to him....

(To Be Continued)

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