

Ashes of Lightning

by Vincent Cornier

Author of "The Steel Dutchman," "The Flying Hat," Etc.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

GILES MORETON: Twenty-five, handsome but temperamental. Reputed to be a former R.A.F. pilot, invalided out. Now works as an inspector in the Lowood tank plant.

Moreton. "Carol, I can't tell you more. I must ask you only to trust me. An—enormous request, when you come to think of it . . . I'm in a terrible quandary. All I can ask you to do is to cast your mind back across recent events—recall to mind my conduct at Calthrop's inquiry; search across your memory for any act or word of mine which might raise a doubt about my bona fides . . . I'm prepared to stand or fall, in your estimation, by the conclusion you arrive at. I—I simply cannot be fairer, nor can I tell you more."

"She—she's a fool! She simply must be! I never heard of such a terrible accusation. She ought to be locked up."

Moreton sighed and wearily smiled at her vehemence. Then his face hardened and his whole bearing took on that held-in quality which Carol formerly, disliked so much. He was baffling and remote—the old Giles

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"But it's my duty, Carol," he told her impatiently. "I've got to get out to the works and report. I'm not going to dawdle around here while the rest are fighting that fire under bombs, may-be! Good heavens, girl, be sensible! I'd feel a scug if I let them down."

"Cross-section of an English home, at war?" He was watching Moreton. "An illuminating lesson for the—ah—Eidennhausens of this world, what?"

Sounds darn queer to me! Of course, there's proof? "If," Calthrop patiently returned "twenty-seven separate heaps of magnesia and metal, undoubtedly the residue of burned-out incendiary devices can't be considered as proof, well, I give up." He grunted. "What are you being so sticky about?"

"Oh, Carol! Don't be so dumb!" Exasperatedly he pointed to her trunk. "How can you go fire-fighting in a—a whirl of chiffon, or whatever stuff it is?"

He left the remainder of the sentence in the air. Carol's face flamed. "Well sir, now you see!" and there was an oddly challenging tinkle in Moreton's answer. "Miss Gilroy, also is to be trusted."

"I'm remembering," Moreton interrupted, "that delightful contrivance which was shaken out of that lorry; the semi-transparent tube of bottled lightning which was tickled up by my mug of tea."

"Of—of course! Your Sir Albert Hardisty—"

"Thank you for your approval, sir. And, I think a discussion will help. I've got two definite suspects—one Hector Flanagan, another called Helme. They're in this sabotage business up to their necks."

"The moon, late risen, was giving light enough to pierce the acrid smoke pall which hung about the district. Moreton pointed to a gap in the stone walling of the road. Beyond it was a fearsome wedge of gloom—a narrow, rock-studded ravine."

"That's the fins for one German bomber, anyway," Sir Albert calmly interpolated. "Perhaps, Moreton, it would be as well if you stayed where you are."

"No, sir. I'm a night-shift worker, you'll remember."

"One watches metal coming up from the rough bar, through operation after operation—through wearisome hours of labour; the earnest labour of humble folk who have, dimly or clearly some picture in mind of a world released from impending doom and hideous slavery—and, dimly realized, find pride. Pride in achievement; pride in the strength of their ultimate flexion of the fighting arm. . . . And that rough steel becomes shining and silken. It is made obedient to limits of thousands of an inch—the intolerance of a split hair, either way, is not allowed. That steel takes on a certain investment of majesty. . . . It becomes an instrument of man's salvation; a shield against the hammerings of Thor."

"That's awfully kind of you, Sir Albert. I will give you a message for Daddy. But he won't be worrying."

"The little Army-grey car buckled along the steep and cobble roads leading out to Hellersfield. Calthrop headed for that ruddy arc in the night which was bent above Lowood."

"Assembled, living, moving, it is made exactly ready for its place in war. Then, Calthrop, all the intricate labours and all the ponderous hours which have been devoted to its perfection are wasted." His voice became a throbbing snarl, "by traitors. And, of the sins, I rate treachery as the foulest—in peace or war."

"No, I can almost see him; sitting by the fire, tickling the ears of our dog and reading some old book." Her eyes glanced twinkling, at the General's.

"Well, some such gear. Magnesium-electron flares, if you like that better. Each had been spaced exactly two hundred yards from its neighbors, describing a sort of horseshoe formation about the factory."

"I heard some kind of yarn," he ventured, "about Fifth Columnist activities. The moors were deliberately fired, I was told. Anything in that?"

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High-Grade Samples from Week's Run of the Press

North Bay Nugget.—When peace is finally framed let us hope it remains a permanent picture.

Exchange.—The modern girl is shakily happy. That is, she has a soldier on each arm.

Pembroke Bulletin.—To the bachelor life is just one unearned thing after another.

St. Thomas Times-Journal.—Practically everything Mackenzie King has done towards the war effort he has been forced to do by public opinion. But he never failed to take full credit to himself and his government for the country's accomplishment.

ICE SKATING

THURSDAY—8:30 p.m. Public Skating. FRIDAY—2:00 p.m. Public Skating; 7:30 Juvenile Hockey, South Porcupine vs United Movers; 9:00 p.m. Sea Cadet vs Canadians. SATURDAY—8:30 p.m. Public Skating. MONDAY—8:15 p.m. Senior Hockey, Falls vs Timmins. TUESDAY—Skating Club all day. WEDNESDAY—2 p.m. Public Skating; 8:15 p.m. Senior Hockey, Schumacher vs Combines.

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Promoted to the Rank of Engineer Lieutenant Announcement was made this week from Ottawa that James Cowan, of Timmins, has been promoted to the Timmins, has been promoted to the R.C.N., in recognition of his services during the war.