

# By the World FORGOT

A New Serial by Ruby M. Ayres

## Chapter 48 THE FIRE

GEORGIE was wet through before she had gone a mile, but her mind was too full of the detail of her sorrow for her to pay heed to the rain.

There was, indeed, something comforting about the steady fall of it, and the necessities of walking occasionally took her mind off her loneliness and her desire to see Nicholas, or at least to know where, exactly, he was.

There was Clifford too; it seemed terribly harsh that in order to remain true to herself and her own ideals, it should have been necessary to hurt an innocent and kindly soul so very much.

At last she arrived at the little town which always seemed so magnificent in contrast to the village where she lived. The only vacant seat in the picture house was one right at the back under the gallery.

Georgie did not care; she squeezed past a couple of stout women and sat down with a sigh of relief.

She was tired. Lately she had not done much walking.

The big picture of the afternoon was half way through, and though she watched it, Georgie's thoughts kept wandering away—many miles away to a place called Ireland where she had never been, and which seemed further away than Germany, further even than America, as far away as Eternity.

One of the stout women beside her said in tones of great satisfaction as the last scene of the big picture flickered out:

"There, I knew it would end happily—they always do."

And the other stout woman answered cheerily:

"Well, and so they should. Things come right in life too, if you only give them a chance."

Georgie felt a strange little thrill of envy; it was good to find someone who believed that life came right; she wished that she could believe it also.

"The Topical News."

Georgie watched mechanically while hurdle races, stout gentlemen making speeches, girls who all looked more or less like Bernie Boyd diving into shallow pools, and airman risking their lives in impossible stunts, flitted across the screen, and then Georgie's heart seemed to miss a beat as she read the caption, "Famous travellers of the week, by air and sea."

A be-spectacled American millionaire alighting from an aeroplane at Croton; a well-known racing motorist walking down a ship's gangway at Southampton; a musical comedy actress standing in the doorway of a Pullman at Waterloo, and last of all "Mr. Nicholas Boyd, the famous film star, leaving the mail boat at Dublin."

Georgie felt as if her heart had stopped beating as in a dream she saw the tall figure of Nicholas Boyd limping slowly down the gangway, his coat-collar turned up, one hand resting on the wooden rail.

The disfigured side of his face was away from the camera, but just as he reached land he turned his head, apparently unconscious of what was happening, and it seemed to Georgie that his eyes looked straight into hers.

Just for a moment, then the picture flickered out and was gone.

The stout lady beside her broke into voluble talk.

"Poor dear, they needn't have photographed him! Did you see the ugly side of his face! And he was so good looking. Such a shame I think!"

Georgie's head had sunk onto her arms; she almost felt as if she were dying. The stout lady touched her shoulder.

"Are you ill, Miss?"

She looked up with an effort.

"No thank you—at least . . . It's rather warm isn't it? I think I'll go out."

SHE made her way blindly into the fresh air, her face white, her hands clenched in her coat pockets.

Yes, surely they might have spared him! She felt the sob, rising in her throat as she walked away from the little picture house, feeling as if she was leaving behind the man she loved.

"Oh why can't I be with him! Why can't I?" she asked herself desperately. "If only something would happen to make it possible."

It seemed so futile, this separation, when they loved each other, so unnecessarily cruel.

"Paper, Miss?" A bright eyed boy thrust an evening paper towards her, and Georgie mechanically hunted for a penny.

"Bus just going, Miss," the boy said again with an evident knowledge of the requirements of movie patrons.

Georgie came back to the present with a start, and running across the road she managed to secure the last seat on the shabby little bus.

The rain had stopped but everything looked grey and desolate, the street lamps twinkling through the darkness like wet eyes.

The world seemed to be full of tears Georgie thought in despair. Why was the world so full of tears? Mrs. Drill had gone when she reached home, but Edward Bancroft called to her from his study. "Is that you?"

"Yes."

"She went into the room."

"I suppose you didn't think to get me an evening paper?" he asked gruffly.

"Yes," Georgie laid the paper on the table.

His eyes were upon her.

"You're wet through," he said. "Go and change."

The reluctant kindness in his voice brought the tears to Georgie's eyes. "It's mackintosh," she said. "I shan't be hurt."

She waited, hoping vaguely for something more, she hardly knew what. But Edward Bancroft had taken up the paper and was engrossed in its contents. After a moment she said, "I've been to the pictures."

Anything to keep the conversation going; she felt as if she were shut into an empty world where there was nobody to speak to, nobody to answer if she spoke.

Edward Bancroft grunted. "Damned silly things," he said.

"Ought to be stopped. Even paupers seem to be able to find money to go and wallow in the rubbish they show at picture houses."

"I like them," Georgie said.

"Humph," he shook out the paper impatiently. "Well, here's one of the beastly jobs burnt down, and a good job too. Two people burnt to death. Well, what can they expect if they go to such death-traps; wonder it doesn't happen more often."

"How dreadful," Georgie said. In the following silence there was a knock at the front door; nobody ever tried to ring the bell and if they had it would have been useless.

"I'll see who it is," Georgie said. In a moment she returned. "A message from Mrs. Spears, Uncle Edward—she would like to see you."

"Humph—well, she can wait. Say I'll come presently."

Edward Bancroft spoke gruffly, but when Georgie returned from delivering the message he had gone upstairs to his room.

She repressed a little smile, realising that perhaps the Boar's head was not the only place where what Mrs. Spears said, was meant.

She sat down by the fire and took up the evening paper.

A headline caught her eye, and she read on mechanically.

"An appalling fire in the new Killick studios early today resulted in the tragic loss of two lives. Miss Bernie Boyd, the young film star who has made such a rapid stride towards fame during the past few months, was trapped in her dressing room, and though desperate attempts were made to rescue her, she was burnt to death before she could be reached. Another tragic feature of the disaster is that Bishop Laiter, a well-known American visiting this country and who is believed to have been interested in the Killick Film Company, also lost his life at the same time. The two bodies, charred beyond recognition were found close together."

Edward Bancroft's loud voice boomed suddenly through the silent house.

"Georgie! Georgie! Where the devil is my blue suit!" and then again as no answer was forthcoming.

"Georgie! Can't you hear? Why the deuce . . ." and then his lumbering step came down the stairs.

He pushed wide the half closed study door.

"Have you gone stone deaf that you can't hear when you're being called? Here am I . . . oh my God Georgie!"

But Georgie was lying huddled and insensible on the floor and could not answer.

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Georgie at last comes into a haven of happiness, Monday.

## RAILROADS SHOW GROWING INCOMES

NEW YORK, July 27.—(AP)—The first twenty railroads to issue June reports showed aggregate net operating income amounting to \$16,144,000, as compared with \$4,890,000 for June, 1932, an increase of 230 per cent. In May this year, net operating income of the same carriers was \$11,207,000, an increase of 97.2 per cent over the \$5,987,000 reported for the corresponding month of 1932. Gross revenues in June totaled \$70,109,000 for the twenty roads, as compared with \$50,016,000 a year ago, a gain of 16.8 per cent. Gross revenues in May were \$65,081,000, an advance of 2 per cent over the \$63,761,000 reported for May, 1932.

## COMMODITY PRICE TREND IS UPWARD

WASHINGTON, July 27.—(AP)—Wholesale commodity prices reported to the bureau of labor statistics continued their steady rise during week ended July 22, the index figure for that week standing at 69.7 compared with 68.9 for the week ended July 15. The week's figures bring the increase for the last five weeks to more than five per cent. The index figure for the week ended June 24 was 65.1.

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## Albany Enjoys Bank Facility

ALBANY, Ore., July 27.—(AP)—Branch banks of the United States National and the First National banks of Portland opened in Albany yesterday, giving this city its first regular banking facilities since the March financial holidays.

## Ex-Senator Dies

DENVER, Colo., July 26.—(AP)—Silver lost one of its staunchest supporters in the battle for recognition as a monetary metal when Frank J. Cannon, 74, former United States senator from Utah, died here last night.

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