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CHAPTER I

Orcid's real name was Ashforth-Ashforth Ash. A peculiar name—Ashforth. It may even impress you as absurd. Ashforth's mother is a romantic woman. She reads a great many novels and imagines herself a bit occult. Following her daughter's birth, she had strange dreams about ancient Egypt. She talked of reincarnation, and declared that she had been a priestess, and worshipped the moon. And lived in a marble palace, and danced before strange gods. Her husband, at the time, feared for her sanity. But Mrs. Ashforth laid it all to mysticism, and insisted upon naming her child Ashforth, after the moon goddess of old Egypt. It was to Ashforth that pagan women prayed. Maidens seeking lovers. And wives desiring children. Mrs. Ashforth thought it was a lovely custom, and sometimes begged favors herself of the moon. Not that she believed in it at all. It was merely a harmless little fantasy, and pleased her sentimental nature. Naturally Ashforth hates her strange name. People are always asking what it means, and she finds explanations exceedingly embarrassing. When she was small, the children with whom she played called her Ash-bash. It sounded rather like a cellar-way, or something gray and grubby; and the child hated it with all her fastidious little being. It was not only ugly, it was utterly incongruous. Because Ashforth Ash is an exquisite girl as ever lived. She looks a little like Dolores del Rio, only there is something more mysterious about her. Her skin has a sort of ivory pallor. And she has gray-green eyes, and vivid lips. Because her cheeks are colorless, the effect of her full, red mouth is startling as scarlet on old ivory. She has high cheek bones, and a pointed little chin. So that her face seems curiously heart-shaped. The effect is accentuated by the way in which she does her hair. It is straight black hair. Parted in the middle, and twisted in great coils over her ears. Victor Hugo said once of a theatrical celebrity: "She is not pretty—she is worse." Now, Ashforth is not really pretty. She is rare. Different from other girls. There are, for instance, typical debutantes, typical stenographers, and typical sportswomen. Exactly as there are typical wives and typical chorus girls. But Ashforth is not so easily classified. When Hugo spoke of the dancing girl, he probably had in mind the seductive quality known as sex appeal. A vulgar expression, but inclusive of attributes difficult of expression. Hollis Hart, the famous financier, was extraordinarily impressed the first time he saw her—and Hollis Hart was not a susceptible person. It was a stormy day in January when Ashforth—summoned by an electric buzzer on her desk—glided into his private office, to take her first dictation from the famous Mr. Hart. Ashforth was wearing a black crepe, swathed about her hips and caught on one side by an odd buckle. A most unusual buckle. A collector would have noticed it at once, and speculated upon its origin. It happened, however, that Ashforth had made it herself, with two sticks of sealing wax. One of green, and the other of gold. "The effect was of mottled jade. On the forefinger of her left hand she wore a sapphire, set in dull gold, and reaching exactly to the first joint. It was exactly an old sapphire, not valuable. But, as Ashforth knew, there are very few people who know antique sapphires when they see them. She had found the stone in a jeweler's tray, priced among various odds and ends, at 30 cents. The setting she copied from a ring in the Egyptian room at the Art Museum. The whole thing cost perhaps \$5, and looked fabulously rare and costly. Ashforth never had much money to spend on herself. But with a meager expenditure she achieved considerable distinction. Since her stockings were her greatest extravagance.

And that was astounding, because Hollis Hart had dictated to any number of girls. And never thought anything at all about them. Nor was he a poetic man. It was strange, too, how his name "Orcid" flashed across his mind. He thought of it immediately, as fitting the pale girl who waited, note book in hand. Hollis Hart was the last of an eminent family that traced its American lineage back to the first Huguenot settlers. "Scion of fame and fortune," as the papers say. Rhodes scholar, famous sportsman, and a millionaire many times over. Boston, at the time, was buzzing with the story of his reported engagement to the daughter of a British peer. Ashforth, of course, had heard the rumors. The peer, a bit impoverished, was said to be exceedingly close to the throne. And the daughter—before Hollis Hart had taken extended residence in London—was seen frequently in the company of the Prince of Wales. There was a great deal of international gossip. But the real status of affairs no one knew. Hart was one of those men privileged, and they say, to pick and choose. And there were plenty of girls languishing to be picked. The Sunday supplements told at great length of a glamorous widow with celebrated pearls, to whom Mr. Hart had been attentive. And the tabloids recited, with much detail, the agonized love of the French aviatrix who swallowed poison on Boston Common. It was whispered, they said, that the poor aviatrix was desperately and unavailingly in love with the well-known Mr. Hart. Ashforth had heard of a certain beauty, glorified by Mr. Ziegfeld, who publicly avowed her affection. And then there was the Austrian dancer with the million-dollar legs—oh, Hollis Hart had had his affairs—scores of them. Ashforth drew a pencil from the elastic on her note book, and raised her gray-green eyes to her employer's face. His own was blue—deep set. And he had a way of narrowing them. Faintly, she recalled his skin. It was so brown that it made his eyes seem peculiarly bright. His hair was black, graying at the temples. Ashforth, absently, wondered if the English girl had ever run her fingers through it. She had seen the girl's picture in the papers. She was big and rawboned, with a wind-blown, Italian look about her. And she wore tresses. Somehow Ashforth could not imagine that girl putting her fingers in anybody's hair. Hollis Hart was old enough to be Ashforth's father. She was 22 the day she went to work in his office. And Hart, at that time, must have been nearly 50. He was frequently called "the most eligible bachelor in America." A popular magazine had compared him once with the Prince of Wales. The press credited him with being a Don Juan, and never tired of printing rumors regarding a prospective marriage. He took an indolent interest in the bonnet business founded by his grandfather, preferring frivolity to ill-considered securities. His secretary, a benevolent soul devoted to philanthropy, set large sums aside for charitable enterprises. And Hart cheerfully endorsed them all. He had created a trust, the income from which was to insure the perpetuation of various philanthropic enterprises. "And now," sighed Hollis Hart, when the thing was done, "I can have a good time with a clear conscience." He had, when he first saw Ashforth, been having a good time for something like 25 years. Ever since the death of his father, an estimable old lawyer devoted to righteousness and plain living. With the exception of two venerable aunts, Hollis Hart was quite alone in the world. The aunts were maiden ladies, easily upset. They ate like sparrows, and were rusty black. Both of them worried incessantly about "had and" for Hollis, whose lavish checks they deposited the first of each month. At the moment Mr. Hart was considering the wisdom of a note to Aunt Meg. A reporter, it seemed, had asked her for a story some regarding the rumored en-

agement of her nephew to Lady Something-or-other. Aunt Meg, tremendously concerned, had written, tremulously, for details. Mr. Hart cleared his throat. Dictated his aunt's address, and stared vaguely at her note in his hand. A gasping little note, like a well-bred lady considerably out of breath. For a quarter of a century Aunt Meg had used white linen paper, bordered in black. Her handwriting was cramped and quivering. And she used a fine pen that inevitably splattered when she dotted her 's. The letter, somehow, looked like Aunt Meg. Or Aunt Sarah, for that matter. They were extraordinarily alike. Hollis Hart's aunts, Dorothea, decorous spinster. Once, at a garden party, they had met a dithyrambic lovely lady with their nephew. A charming, reckless girl whom many men had loved. Hollis Hart presented her to his aunts, and immediately she proceeded to envelop them with her gracious charm. They drew together shyly, their narrow shoulders touching, as they stood before the radiant creature. They were unconsciously ill at ease. And so at last for world, as to seem even more self-contained than usual. Frigid, stilted things in their withered bodies. And their minds parched. "I wonder," vaguely, disturbed at the thought, they were jealous of the warm, soft girl who knew so much of love. As he watched them, he felt sure of it. And from that day, Hollis Hart believed that all women were arrayed against one another. The unloved women hating the beloved women. And the beloved women despising all the rest. Ashforth put her fingers to the violet that bloomed in a yellow bow on his desk. From her body there emanated the lovely odor of a delicious woman. Soft as the breath of a night wind whispering. And Hollis Hart, in a chair-vibrant moment, knew that in the pitiless conflict of women, Aunt Meg and Aunt Sarah would be arrayed against the girl who stood before him. Because this girl was soft and beautiful. It seemed, then, inevitable to ask her to transcribe such a letter as he had proposed dictating to Aunt Meg. She could then wait for him to begin. Very quietly, without any sound on her note book, and the green stone on her forefinger gleamed, like a baleful star, across the desk at Hollis Hart. "Your ring!" he exclaimed involuntarily. "What a gorgeous thing! May I see it?" Unsmiling, she extended her hand. Her fingers, long and white, made him think of drooping palms. "I am intensely interested," she explained, "in archaeology, and particularly in the amulets of the Egyptians." "Yes." Ashforth was politely uncommittal. "It is not an antique gem," he hastened to add. "But rather a good copy. I think I sketched it myself from a talkman of the Græco-Roman period." "Then Cleopatra," he remarked, smiling, "may have worn the original." Ashforth looked on her ring with quiet humor. "Oh, yes," she said. "She wore it on her thumb the night she had herself delivered to Caesar in a sale of rags." Hollis Hart chuckled. "I've no doubt," he said, "that Caesar complimented the queen upon her taste." Glancing sharply at his new stenographer, he wondered who she was. A society girl, probably, taking a fling at business. Interested in antiquities, too. "I'm sorry," he murmured apologetically, "but I have quite forgotten your name." "Miss Ash," she told him. "Ashforth Ash." "Ashforth!" he cried. "Why Ashforth was the moon goddess of Egypt." She smiled self-consciously. "It is a beautiful name," he added hastily. "Very beautiful." Well, now, Miss Ash, will you take a letter please. He dictated quietly. Half a dozen business communications.

EXPEDITION INTO APACHE COUNTRY SEEKS LOST BOY

(Associated Press Special Wire) DOUGLAS, Ariz., Jan. 5.—Trekking into the wild ravines of the Mexican mountains south of the border here, Francisco Pimbre today was leading a party of 12 men bent upon finding the mountainous retreat of a wild band of Apache Indians, with whom they expect to find Pimbre's kidnapped son. The punitive expedition, which carried supplies for a two weeks battle march into the mountains, was authorized by Governor Paus to Topye of Sonora, Mexico, to hunt down and wipe out the band. The son of Pimbre, who is a Sonora cattleman, was carried away by the hostile Apache band in October, 1926, when the family was set upon while riding to the Pimbre home on Bavispe river. Mrs. Pimbre was killed and her body carried away also. The cattleman and a daughter survived the attack and escaped to their home, but Mexican officials at Agua Prieta, Mexican border town near here, last night declare that two other persons were captured in the attack. The officials believed these also were being held prisoner by the Apaches who live in the Rocky ranges which form the border between the states of Chihuahua and Sonora. The Agua Prieta officials stated that Governor Topye has moved to hunt down the Apaches by the additional reason of recent large property losses in the Bavispe country. Evidence pointed to the wild band as responsible for raids in which large droves of cattle had been stolen. The Apaches are the surviving descendants of the notorious Geronimo band which forty years ago terrorized southern Arizona. The band was broken up after many were captured by United States soldiers and the survivors entrenched themselves deep in the mountains. "Smart, is what you can't help saying when you see the new Romilla stockings. They're a smart bit of artistry for smart women with smart taste. Colors to harmonize with the winter costumes." — at Hart's Toggery.

BEN NICHOLS IS ELECTED HEAD OF CO. TAX LEAGUE

Directors of the Douglas County Taxpayers' League met Saturday and elected Ben Nichols of Riddle, president; R. R. Clarke, vice-president, and George Bacon, second vice-president. The directors appointed a committee to meet with the county court and learn why the O. and C. payment expected to be received this year from the government was not included in the budget. They state that the law requires the budget to show all prospective income for the year, and that O. and C. money was not included in the recent budget. In other counties, they report, mandamus proceedings have been brought where the county courts have failed to include money in the budget. It was decided also to hold a meeting of the directors in each part of the county during the year. Heretofore all of the meetings have been held in Roseburg, but it was thought that by holding the meetings in each community where there is a director it will be possible to secure more suggestions and bring about greater interest.

RADIO LOG ISSUED

An attractive folder which contains a blank radio log has just been issued by the Rutter Radio Service, located at the Union Oil Service Station at the corner of Stephens and Lane streets. Besides space for making a log the booklet contains information about the care of radios. The folder, which is from the press of the commercial printing department of the Roseburg News-Review, will be available at the radio shop Tuesday.

TO ATTEND MEETING

Attorney Ray Crompton of Roseburg has been elected representative to the Imperial Shrine council from southern Oregon. The meeting is to be held at Los Angeles in June.

NEW REPAIR SHOP OPENS WEDNESDAY

A new shoe repairing business to be known as the Quick Service Shoe Shop will be opened Wednesday at 335 North Jackson street. Roy W. Bruton, who has been employed in that trade here for the past ten years, is the owner and proprietor. He has been with the Perrin Shoe store for the past few years. Up-to-date machinery has been installed and the room which is to house the shop partitioned off, making the location suitable for a modern repair shop.

NEW ZEALAND PROGRAMS ARE RECEIVED HERE

Jack Throne, local radio fan, yesterday received a letter from the Radio Corporation of New Zealand, Limited, acknowledging and confirming his report on reception of program from their Wellington, New Zealand, station 2YA on the night of November 2nd last. The letter was 25 days in transit from New Zealand. Jack frequently gets stations in Japan and China, and one station in Australia. The remarkable feature about hearing the New Zealand station is not only its distance of approximately 7000 miles, but that it is across the Equator in the southern hemisphere. The New Zealand program was in English and consisted of modern song, dance music, and horse race and weather reports.

THE Dodge Brothers Six Just Announced Is NOW ON DISPLAY Ride in it and drive it. J. O. NEWLAND & SON Douglas County Distributors Phone 458

CONDENSED REPORT OF FARMERS SECURITY BANK YONCALLA, OREGON Statement of condition at close of business December 31, 1928. RESOURCES: Loans and Discounts \$126,053.31, Bonds and Warrants 64,410.05, Furniture and Fixtures 1,000.00, Cash and Due from Banks 99,615.01, \$251,078.37. LIABILITIES: Capital Stock \$15,000.00, Surplus and Undivided Profits 8,311.33, Deposits 227,767.04, \$251,078.37. A. L. LASSWELL, Cashier

BLIZZARD SWEEPS MIDDLEWEST WITH FATAL RESULTS. (Associated Press Special Wire) KANSAS CITY, Jan. 6.—Winter hurried itself upon the middle-west today with blizzard-like intensity, causing at least four deaths, and bringing to several states the season's heaviest snow which was whipped into drifts by blustering north wind. Temperatures ranged downward to below zero, and more intense cold waves predicted for tonight in Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Oklahoma and east Texas. Three accidental deaths in Iowa were attributed to the storm, and a man was found frozen to death today in Beloit, Kan. Numerous sled and traffic accidents were reported. All trains arriving in Kansas City were from fifteen minutes to two hours late, trains from the west and being the most seriously affected. Many locomotives carried snow plows to clear the track of drifts. City traffic was tied up by drifting snow. Travel on several street car lines in Kansas City was virtually at a standstill this morning despite efforts of more than 400 laborers to keep tracks clear. At the storm and wind temperatures moved eastward, the situation in the Rocky mountain region was improving. Zero and near zero temperatures general throughout the region but were dispensed to day by higher marks and bright sunshines. Telephone and wire communications were affected by the storm and numerous points were unreachable by wire from Kansas City. Cattle losses were expected by livestock men in parts of Kansas where the snow caught from a thin blanket in the southeastern part of the state to ten inches at Salina. Temperatures in Kansas were the lowest of the season and a drop of 2 degrees below zero in Kansas and western Missouri was predicted for tonight. Highways in many places were blocked by snow drifts. Eat barbecue sandwiches and five forever. Brand's Road Stand

NOVEMBER RECORD MONTH FOR DODGES. For the second month in succession, records of shipments of passenger cars and trucks from the Dodge Brothers plants in the United States and Canada were broken again in November, according to official figures announced by the company. With an increase of 62.6 per cent in deliveries to dealers over the corresponding month in 1927, a new high production peak for any November in the history of the organization was reached. The October deliveries also set an all-time record for that month when an increase of 6,840 units over the same month a year ago were shipped from the plants of the company. "Reports from our dealers indicate that they will have a slow December," said Charles W. Matthews, general sales manager for Dodge Brothers. "The seasonal decrease in sales, general throughout the industry at this time of the year, has not been felt to any appreciable extent this year. The last quarter of 1928 is proving an exceptionally busy period at the Dodge plants."