

Cody burst out laughing, this time even harder.

Glancing around the back of the wagon, the reason became clear and Britania gasped in alarm. One of her trunks had burst open, spewing lacy be-ribboned undergarments hither and yon. These were not items worn by the type of lady she pretended to be. They were outrageous dainties, a jezebel's delight, couture de jour for a whore.

"Oh, bloody `ell."

She clamped a hand over her mouth wishing she could call back the words as her upper-class accent gave way to East End twang. On hands and knees, she scurried around gathering up the incriminating garments and stuffing them back into the trunk.

Using only thumb and forefinger, Cody carefully disengaged a pink rosebud-covered corset dangling off the back of the wagon. "Interesting choice of underclothing, Miss Rule. Can't say as I've seen such pretties outside a bordello." He offered up the garment, the garters taunting and swinging back and forth in front of her nose.

"They were gifts, if you must know," she said, wresting it from his grasp, "going away presents from my girlfriends. And since I nearly met my death a moment ago, I would think you would be more worried about me, rather than the contents of my wardrobe."

"Sorry," he said, his tone indicating he wasn't—his half-smile reinforcing the point.

He rummaged around in another pack, and extracted a bottle of liquor. "I guess you being such a *lady*, it would be foolish of me to offer you a snort of whiskey. I know I could sure use one." Uncorking it, he took a large swig.

Her mouth watered. She had done her share of elbow bending, and right now, a drink sounded just the thing.