

Lady Gallant

(excerpt from chapter 14)

Brushing Josie's hands aside Garrick caught the open bodice of her dress and smoothed it back and down over her shoulders. She freed her arms from the sleeves and the material fell softly to her waist. She wore no corset, only a camisole, and the curve of her firm breasts threatened to spill up and over the sleek fabric.

"You're quite bold in you choice of fashion," he pointed out with a smile, as he envied the silk that caressed her in places he longed to touch.

Doubt shadowed her delicate features. "Does it leave something to be desired?"

"Oh yes, I dare say it does."

"What?" she demanded petulantly.

"Only you," he reassured.

A naughty smile brightened her face. The expression didn't appear to be practiced or contrived and he ached a little more with wanting her.

"You're so beautiful," he said.

She glanced down as if embarrassed or unbelieving. He tipped her chin up and her gaze met and mingled with his. "Take off the rest of your dress," he whispered.

Like a cat uncurling from a sweet dream Josie rose to stand before him. Then she slipped her thumbs under the fabric that hung gathered about her hips and with a slight bit of encouragement the delicate taffeta slid downward over the wonderful curve of her bottom.

The fabric billowed to the floor and pooled around her ankles. The glow of the fire blurred the edges of her silhouette and to Garrick she seemed a wingless angel in white camisole and petticoats. She reached up to unbind her hair and her gleaming tresses, dark as mahogany, tumbled forward giving sharp contrast to her cream colored shoulders.

He stared up at her in wonder and for the first time in his life he felt as if heaven might be within his reach.