

Excerpt from Angel's Master

"Undressing in front of a man is quite unnerving."

"I would imagine, but if you stay here longer, it will not matter, because I will have already seen you without clothing." He swept his gaze slowly over her figure, clad now in a white shift, petticoats, with a corset on top. Curiosity at what covered her hidden curls held him captive. "Women wear entirely too many clothes as it is." Somehow, she appeared more alluring than she had before she shed the dress. "Uh, do you require assistance with the corset?"

"Yes, please." Once more, she presented her back to him.

This time his fingers shook as he worked the hooks and satin ribbons. "Are you always this unabashed? Most women would be cowering in terror at the real or imagined horrors a pirate would do to them." When the stiff, fabric-covered contraption fell away from her body, he tossed it onto the chair to join his weaponry.

Jacqueline turned to face him. "I am not like most women. I find simpering and coquettish behavior a waste of time and annoying at best." A grin parted her naturally pink lips. "This is exactly the type of adventure I've been looking for, but I must warn you of one thing."

"And that is?" His brain lost the ability to think for itself when she removed the pins from her hair and the honey-colored mass tumbled around her shoulders. It was just as he'd imagined.

"I am not squeamish about killing you if you behave with anything less than gentlemanly courtesy." She dropped hairpins on the bureau. Propping one foot on the sea chest, she drew the mass of petticoats up her leg to reveal a dagger strapped to her thigh. "It might be messy, but at least I would have the satisfaction." Jacqueline unbuckled the bit of leather then placed the dagger on the sea chest.

"There is a flaw in your reasoning."

One brown brow arched in disbelief. "I think not."

"Oh, yes. You see, pirates oftentimes do not resemble anything remotely like a gentleman." Giving into the urge, he slipped his arms around her waist and pulled her close. "Those that do are the first ones shot by your acclaimed Navy." Her hair smelled like a flower garden, and he inhaled the scent. The top of her head fit comfortably under his chin.

"That is a disappointment because there are times when a woman does not wish a

man to behave in a proper way.” She looked at him through her lashes, her eyes full of questions for which he had no answers.

“But you just threatened me two seconds ago about such an occurrence.” The heat of her skin burned his fingers. It took all of his willpower not to throw her on the bed and rip off the remainder of her clothing.

She gave him a throaty laugh. “This is not one of those times.”

With a growl, he crushed his lips to hers, willpower be damned.