

# My Lady Scandalous: The Amazing Life and Outrageous Times of Grace Dalrymple Elliott, Royal Courtesan

Jo Manning

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In the Sin City of London in the late eighteenth century, partying, whoring and gambling were endemic. Money ruled and anything went - for men. Women, in contrast, had everything to lose, starting with their reputations. Even so, not every woman was cowed by convention. Some, like beautiful Grace Dalrymple Elliott, brazenly did whatever they wished with whomever they pleased - and flourished brilliantly as a result. "My Lady Scandalous" recreates the life and fast times of one of the era's most colourful characters, who went from Edinburgh schoolgirl to Europe's most sought-after courtesan. Men competed for her favours even as her society doctor husband pursued a divorce. Grace became mistress to England's notorious Lord Cholmondeley and gave birth to a daughter, Georgiana (who may in fact have been the child of the Prince of Wales). Grace's liaison with France's richest man, Phillippe, Duc d'Orleans, proved perilous as d'Orleans fell to the Revolution's guillotine, just as Grace escaped with her life. Jo Manning, a gifted writer and connoisseur of the times, enriches the details of Grace's life, from the journal published posthumously, with excerpts from contemporary newspapers, magazines, prints and portraits. "My Lady Scandalous" is a captivating portrait of this darling of kings and princes, an irresistibly unconventional woman whose story cannot fail to fascinate.

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