

# LIKE A LILY AMONG THE THORNS

by Karen S. Bell

## EXCERPT

Sometimes a major change in one's life comes on the heels of ordinary events. A dinner invitation and cab ride can be more than transportation from here to there for food. The Countess would become a very important addition in Gabby's life but as of right now, none of them knew that, particularly, the Countess. Frozen in place while staring at the luxury townhouse, Gabby was caught up short. Reality had suddenly become fluid, become a changeling, a stranger in the night. The hours she had spent imagining the Countess's life as a Hollywood starlet or Gatsby character now converged with the truth of her circumstances. It was hard to digest this shift in perspective when everyone at the library remained unenlightened and still believed the Countess was a brave woman struggling to make ends meet just to get by. The bombardment of the truth was too much to absorb right now, especially when her own life was in such flux. She also did not want to think of how this information revealed the Countess's damning deception, her disingenuousness to everyone. It was a mind-numbing disappointment, a gut punch that made her feel off balance.

Everything was suddenly out of step and off-kilter. Too much random noise was being thrown at her by the cosmos, a shock to the senses. In just one day, today, to be exact, she had been notified that her apartment building was being demolished, her friends at the coffee shop, albeit not close, would be summarily swallowed up by the cavernous city as they dispersed, and now this...this unexpected truth of the Countess's financial situation.