

Excerpt from Saying Yes: A Game of Seduction

Eliza watched Nick make his way through the crowd until he was swallowed up in a sea of flesh and barely there dresses. She was once again left to take in the incredible view of sensual people, in the most sexually charged environment she'd ever encountered. The sex filled eyes of men slid over her. And for once Eliza wasn't shying away from their heated stares. She was out of her element but didn't care. The alcohol strengthened her backbone and fortified her courage. Tonight she'd play the sex goddess they imagined her to be, even if she were far from it.

She was about to finish her unneeded glass of champagne, when the brush of fingers swept her hair from her neck. She closed her eyes and leaned into the touch. She naturally assumed it was Nick until the smell of mint and jasmine invaded her nose and a feminine purr tickled her ear.

"You are too hot for your own good," Angel purred in Eliza's ear. "You've amassed quite a list of men who are interested in entertaining you; women for that matter."

Eliza looked over her shoulder and brazenly inquired. "Does that list include you, Angel?"

"It does. But tonight I'll relent to let you have a male's attention. Something tells me you aren't quite ready for the likes of me, beautiful. But don't doubt my desire for you."

Eliza squeezed her thighs together and a rush of heat tickled her spine. She couldn't help but turn around and face the temptress that was set on challenging her. Angel didn't move an inch to accommodate Eliza's face. They were a breath away from kissing. "You desire me?"

Angel moved so close that Eliza could smell a hint of cherry in her lip-gloss. She was surprised at how turned on she was by her. Maybe it was the erotic environment, maybe the music, but Eliza was so sexually amped up that if anyone touched her, including Angel, she'd melt. "I do. But tonight you're not mine. You've been requested in the "Sloth" room." Angel pointed to the upper level. "Black hall. First door on your left."

Without warning, Angel pressed her lips to Eliza's. "Don't do anything I wouldn't do...which is everything." With a giggle and a turn of her stilettos, the gorgeous glamazon walked out of sight. Eliza sat in her seat motionless. She should have been stunned by Angel's overt flirtation, but nothing surprised her. She turned around and Robert was leaning against the bar, looking at her with a shit-eating grin. "Looks like you have more than one admirer here tonight."

"It would appear so."

Eliza took a final sip from her glass then slid it across the bar. She had a lot to drink but her balance and wits were intact. Weaving through the crowd, she walked up the stairs in search of the room labeled "Sloth." Her heart pounding with each step upward. She was a jumbled mess of anxiousness and excitement. The word rattled around in her head. It was one of the seven deadly sins. Sloth was being emotionally and physically inactive. Maybe her illicit lover was trying to draw her out as a neophyte. She wondered if she had the balls to follow through. This was her chance to be more than she was before entering, her chance at discovery, and her chance to push the boundaries...no limits.

She had only been there one other time but knew the halls were color coated. The black hall was the first hall you came to when you ascended to the second floor. Seven sins on each hall of the four halls. The world narrowed down the dark hallway, pressing in around her with its line of doors. Most of the doors were closed, including the door she was instructed to find. Eliza was at her final destination.

She laced her hands together and brought them up to her mouth. She couldn't remember what lie beyond the door. Was it the suspended strappy leather swing that hung from the center of the room like a sexual amusement ride? Or the wall sized wooden "X" that had shearing padded cuffs to shackle your ankles and wrists. Eliza circled the soft skin below her hand with her fingers and licked her lips. Maybe giving up control was the answer. She wouldn't think, she'd just react to the pleasure she was given. A heated chill slid down her spine. Maybe it was the room with the sensual black lights and circular bed that could accommodate a crowd. Goosebumps settled over her flesh. If she only knew what she was walking into she'd breach the door with ease, but it was the unknown that made her nervous. Would he be a gentle lover or a dominant man hell bent on making her submissive? Was she submissive?

Slave to Love, by Bryan Ferry, echoed from the speakers. Eliza put her hand on the door handle but didn't turn it. Her pulse was galloping. She took a calming breathe, leaned her forehead against the cool wood and shut her eyes.

The graze of warm fingers against her back made her shudder. Every hair stood on end and her breath caught in her chest. The rich smell of cologne washed over her, but she didn't open her eyes. She wanted to let her sense of touch, sound and smell work for her, not her sight. She let her paramour run his fingers over the exposed flesh of her shoulder. She could feel the heat of his body edging closer and closer and knew instinctively that it wasn't Nick. Her pulse quickened and her mouth pooled with saliva. The brush of a nose and the feather of lips on her skin made her sigh as damp heat flooded her panties.

"Turn around." The unmistakable baritone of his voice resonated into the very depths of Eliza's soul. Her stomach fisted into a tight ball. She swallowed hard and took a shaky breath. Frozen, she didn't open her eyes and wouldn't turn to face him. If there was ever a time to wish for the power of invisibility, it was now. If it was a dream, she wanted to wake up. She knew it wasn't. It was him.

"You're not going in that room unless it's with me."

A tinge of anger replaced the anxiety she felt only moments earlier. Was this a set up? Had he orchestrated the whole thing? She lifted her head but angst kept her eyes forward. "Why are you here?"

"Because you're here."

She didn't need to turn her body to see him. He was a beacon in her periphery. She eased her head further around so she could take him in fully. The untouchable, "claimer of women" who was hell bent on testing her professional boundaries, was here to test her physical and mental boundaries as well. Since Lake Mitchell walked through the doors of her office, the "911" of dominance played a leading role in her every waking thought. He smelled distinctly of soft

patchouli with a hint of vanilla, woody and sweet. She wondered what he tasted like...his mouth...his skin. He was so fucking divine she wanted to devour him whole. Her mouth continued to water as her eyes swept over his finely sculpted frame. He had on charcoal dress slacks that sat perfectly at his waist and skimmed his thighs, tapered at the ankles – very English, thought Eliza. His horse-bit Gucci shoes were polished to a high sheen and the top button of his starched light blue shirt was open, revealing a faint wisp of chest hair, sprinkled over perfect olive skin. She sucked her top lip with the tip of her warm wet tongue. She kept her eyes glued to the hollow of his throat, unable to meet the imperfection of two-toned eyes that awaited her.

“Why are you here?” she repeated. This time her tone was unmistakable. He’d gone too far

“Look at me, Eliza,” Lake’s husky voice drew her like a moth to a flame, just as it did every time he spoke. She followed the line over his Adams apple to his sensuous lips. Her breathing got shallower as she fought to control her heart rate. She finally made her way up to the pools of blue that were heated with intensity.

“What do you want, Mr. Mitchell?”

He groaned and grasped her chin with his thumb and index finger. “Cut it with the Mr. Mitchell shit. You know what I want.”

She pulled her face back. “Actually, I don’t. First my office and now here. How many lines do you intend to cross?”

“As many as it takes to make you mine.”

“I’m here with someone else.”

Lake crossed his arms over chest and stared her down with a smirk. “You might have come with Nick Slade, but you won’t be leaving with him. He’s down the hall in “Gluttony” sandwiched between three women.”

Eliza sighed and looked away. It wasn’t disappointment that had her in its grips, it was frustration. She wasn’t mad at Nick. In fact she was relieved. But she needed to leave. She wouldn’t walk through the door labeled “Sloth” with Lake or anyone else and she couldn’t just go back to the bar. It was an epic fail.

“What do you want, Eliza?” He closed the gap she created with one step. Her body ignited with the nearness, burning from the inside out with heated lust and irritation. They were walking a fine line. “Look at me, beautiful, and tell me what you want.”

She gave into his demand but didn’t give him the words she knew he wanted. She didn’t know if what she felt for Lake was just fascination, infatuation or desire. She couldn’t feign apathy and disinterest. She was affected by him and he knew it. He brought his hand up to caress her cheek. She didn’t pull away from the intimacy of his touch. The alcohol was finally pulling her under, her defenses were slipping away and she was powerless to do any less than fold into the warmth of his hand like an affection starved animal. “I want to go home.”

It was the only definitive want she could muster with one hundred percent surety.

“You need to stop fighting the inevitable.” Lake leaned into her face, and she could feel the warmth of his lips next to hers. “This time I’m not going to ask.”

Lake's mouth came down over hers, taking her breath away. His warm tongue slid smoothly over the seam of her lips and teased her tongue to play. Eliza no longer had the will to fight her desire of him. Wrong or not, at that moment, she wanted to give in. She needed his kiss. She had to know if what she felt for him was real.

His kiss was sensual and filled with unspoken meaning, unsaid words that lingered thickly in the air, hot and steamy... a balm of heady lust. It should have felt wrong, but it didn't. She should have pulled back, but she dove into his mouth with pent up anguish and unmatched need. She brought her hand up around his neck, tangling her fingers in the dark, thick hair at the back of his head. It was the invitation he needed. His body pressed into hers and the kiss deepened. She moaned into his mouth, unable to control the deep-rooted hunger... the yearning. It was the music, the environment and the hottest, most dominant man she'd ever met, pulling her under the abyss of lust.