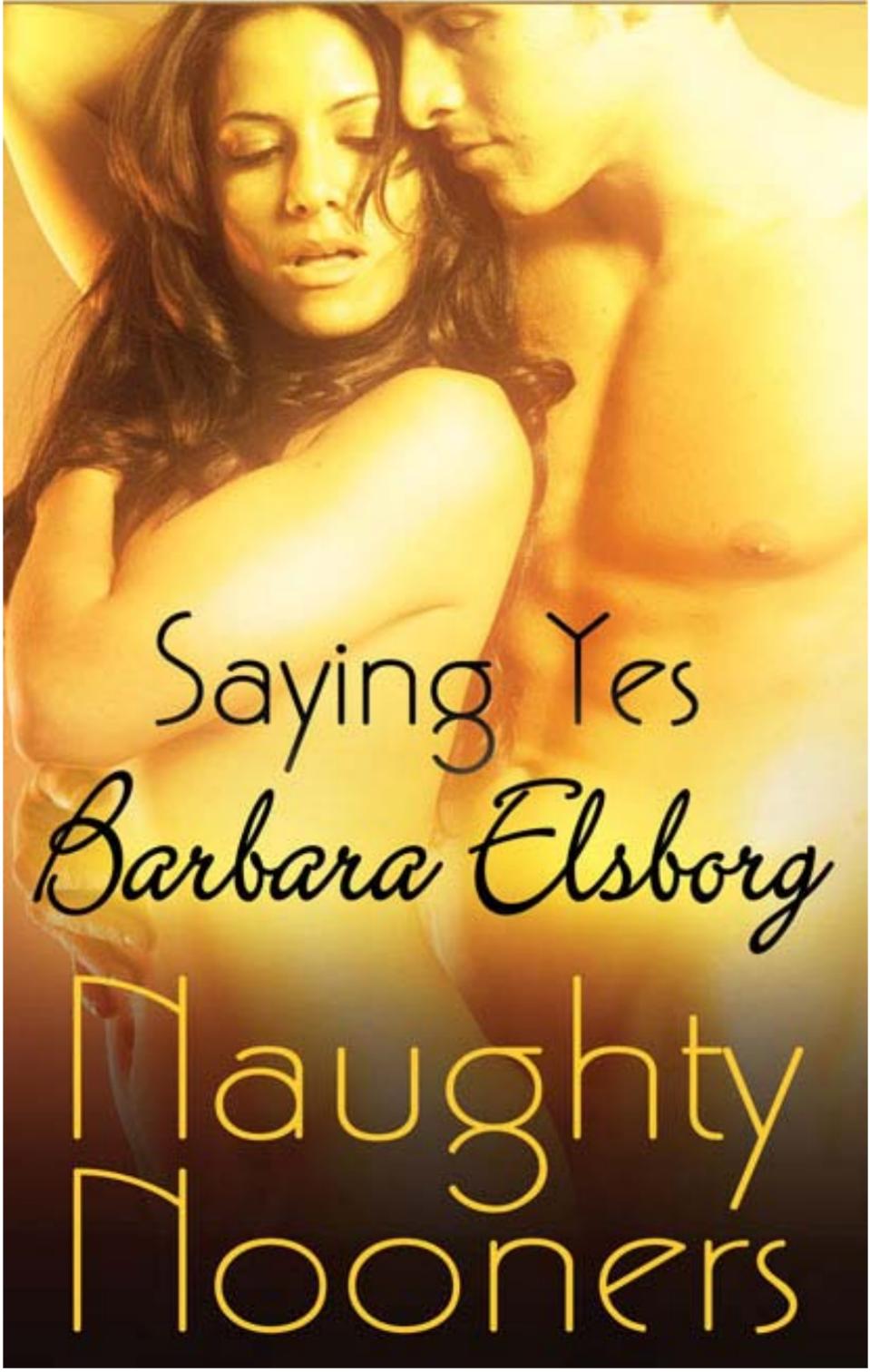


ELLORA'S CAVE *Moderne*



Saying Yes
Barbara Elsborg
Naughty
Nooners

Saying Yes

Barbara Elsborg

Zadie's negative attitude leads to the loss of her boyfriend, job and flat. Now she's determined to be a *yes* girl. Yes, she'd love to flat sit while the owner is away, but one look at the mess and she wishes she'd said no.

No is the last thing Tristan expects to hear when he proposes in front of his girlfriend's family. Humiliated, he hides out in his brother's empty flat without asking because he really doesn't want to hear another no.

What he needs is a woman who'll say yes...yes...yes... Could that be Zadie?

An Ellora's Cave Romantica Publication



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Saying Yes

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SAYING YES

Barbara Elsborg

Chapter One

Zadie Whittington walked out of King's Cross station into a cloudburst. To be fair, the torrential downpour only started once she was trapped in the middle of the road. How was she supposed to be positive when crap like this always happened to her? Zadie stood with water dripping down her neck, willing the red stickman to change color.

It didn't. *Bloody men.*

Dumped because Dickhead said her first response to anything was always "no", Zadie had spent last week convinced her life had spiraled down a black hole. No, Zadie didn't want to go camping. No, she didn't want to stay in and watch football. No, she didn't want to go halves on a fifty-inch TV. No, she didn't want to be woken up for a shag when Dickhead rolled in at two in the morning.

Red turned to green. Zadie yanked up the handle on her suitcase and it broke off. By the time she'd struggled to turn the case the other way up, the green man flashed, warning not to cross.

Bugger that. She was "yes" woman. Zadie hauled the suitcase across the last section of the busy road only for a cyclist to race between her and the curb straight through a huge puddle. A wave of dirty water sprayed her from head to toe. Shocked and frozen in place, Zadie squeaked when a car bumper nudged her case. Before she got flattened, she dragged herself to safety.

Too late to seek shelter now—she was soaked—Zadie kept walking through the rain to her temporary home while she looked for a new job and a place of her own. Her friend Stef, currently en route to China with her boyfriend Fabian, had dragged Zadie from the slough of despond that was her stepmother's bijoux bedsit in Belgravia and

given Zadie the key to Fabian's apparently gorgeous flat. And if Zadie's innate sense of direction hadn't gone the way of her life, it should be just around the corner.

The rain slowed and the sun came out as Zadie stopped in front of the glossy blue front door. Fabian's flat was on the top floor. Zadie let herself into the smart communal reception hall, populated by a line of chained-up, expensive-looking bikes, and hauled the suitcase up the stairs, leaving a wet trail behind her like a slug.

Gasping by the time she reached the top, Zadie slumped onto the edge of her suitcase and heard the catch snap.

"Oh no," she groaned, and then clamped her lips together. *Think positive.* "Fabulous flat, here I come."

Zadie unlocked the door and gasped so hard her lungs locked. *Burglar.* Her fingers reached for her mobile until she remembered she'd thrown it in the Thames. Another glance inside and she rethought her original impression. Not ransacked by a thief, just incredibly untidy. Zadie pulled her suitcase inside and closed the door.

Hard to see the furniture under the piles of books, beer cans, food cartons and newspapers. But underneath the clutter, this *was* a spectacular flat. She stood in a large, airy room with a vaulted ceiling. At one end, three huge windows overlooked a landscape of rooftops with London's city center towers rising in the distance like alien castles. Zadie recoiled when she saw the kitchen and reversed to open a fingerprint-smearred door revealing an unmade bed, a carpet obscured by clothes, piles of pizza boxes, beer cans and — Zadie kicked the porno magazines under the bed.

The bathroom wasn't too bad, though damp towels hung everywhere. The tub was huge, a freestanding claw-footed monstrosity with central taps, sitting in the middle of the room. Zadie longed for a warm soak but not until she'd cleaned the flat. Maybe Fabian had to rush for his plane or something, and to be fair, he didn't know he'd have a picky house sitter.

Zadie stripped to her bra and pants, put her case in the bedroom and piled her wet things next to it. No point putting on more clothes to get them dirty while she cleaned.

She filled black trash bags with takeout cartons, beer cans and newspapers.

Bundled up the bed sheets, trying not to look too hard at them.

Loaded the washing machine.

Freaked out at the three human fingers lurking at the bottom of the fridge.

Breathed a sigh of relief when she worked out they were very old carrots.

Hung up Fabian's cleanish-looking clothes and put the others in a pile for washing.

Vacuumed, dusted, polished and finally slumped on the couch to look round at a gleaming, tidy flat and realized she hadn't thought about Dickhead once.

Well, that wasn't quite true. One thing she'd picked up had made her think about him. A small blue box on the mantelpiece held the most beautiful diamond ring. Lucky Stef. Zadie felt bad that she knew before her friend that Fabian intended to pop the question, and then fought a stab of jealousy that it wasn't going to happen to her. A year of her life down the drain. She should have said no when Dickhead first asked her out. The irony wasn't lost on her.

The only thing Zadie needed to do before she sank up to her ears in a luxurious bath was shop for food. She'd moved Fabian's clothes to one side of the closet and hung up hers. Zadie pulled a black-and-white linen dress from a hanger, slipped on a pair of sandals and her jacket, then trailed up and down the stairs three times to take all the rubbish to the bins along with her useless suitcase.

As she made her way to the minimart on the corner, Zadie felt like skipping. Yes, from now on life was going to be perfect. *Yes, yes, yes.*

* * * * *

Tristan had drunk enough to anesthetize an elephant, but to his amazement remained conscious. He'd hoped to whizz through the I'm-very-clever stage where every word he uttered was a gem if only he could remember it, but unfortunately he'd gotten stuck there. With no one else appreciating his urbane wit, Tristan left the pub and went home.

Walking in a straight line wouldn't have been a problem if he hadn't been distracted by the cracks. Tread on one of those, he'd get eaten by a bear. *Fucking clever dick of an older brother.* He tripped over one of the bikes in the entrance hall, and when he tried to prop it up, knocked over the whole line of them like a row of space-age dominoes. *Shit.* Tristan didn't have the energy to sort the tangle out. He tiptoed up the stairs, crawled the last flight because they started to wobble like a suspension bridge and then fumbled for his key.

One foot inside and he stepped out again. *Wrong fucking flat. How drunk am I?* Tristan made for the next flight of stairs only to find they didn't exist. He turned back in confusion. It *was* the right flat. Back inside, he closed the door and looked around. Where had all his stuff gone? He'd almost amassed enough pizza boxes to construct a ziggurat coffee table to match the magnificent beer can footstool. Tristan started to move forward and froze.

His brain sighed with relief, having completed the tricky mental deduction. Fabian had a cleaner. Tristan sniggered. So his perfect older brother wasn't perfect after all. Tristan staggered around the flat, feeling both relief and guilt. He shouldn't have let it get into that state, but once it had, he seemed incapable of doing anything about it. Cleaning required a purposefulness he couldn't handle. Only now the bed looked too clean to wank in, the couches too tidy to slouch on and the kitchen—yeah, well, he didn't really use the kitchen except as a place to store beer and to throw up. He'd puked into the dishwasher, thinking it was easier than cleaning the floor, only it turned out dishwashers didn't like regurgitated booze and curry.

Talking of which. He needed something to eat.

Damn. Empty fridge. Tristan went out again. *Buy food and beer.* He might not need a drink right now, but he'd need one later, otherwise he wouldn't get to sleep, and he really needed to sleep. Unconsciousness constantly eluded him like some pesky fly, almost but never quite within his grasp.

He zigzagged along the pavement toward the minimart, only realizing when he reached the corner the store lay in the other direction. *Oh fuck it.* Tristan paused near a cafe. Two mini-skirted women sat outside at a silver table. A blonde and a brunette. Either of them would do. Or both. Would they say yes and not no?

Tristan went in, had a brain meltdown at the choices and emerged with a large black coffee, except it wasn't called that. The moment he sat at the table next to the women, they got up and walked off. Tristan tried not to take it personally. He lifted his hand to scratch his back so he could sniff his armpit. He took it as a good sign his eyes didn't water. A hand in front of his mouth as he exhaled reminded him he liked beer better than coffee. Except when the traffic spun in circles and the pavement looked too much like a rolling sea, coffee had to be better for him than more beer.

He took a sip and spat it back into the cup. *Shit – hot.* He glanced around to make sure no one noticed and sighed. Maybe it was another good sign that he cared what people thought. Maybe it meant he wasn't the idiot he appeared to be.

Except he was.

Chapter Two

Zadie filled the fridge with food. She might be on a limited budget until she found work, but she didn't intend to starve. She'd even bought a bottle of inexpensive champagne to celebrate her freedom and tucked it in the bottom of the fridge. After stuffing another load of washing into the machine, she stripped off in the bedroom. The relief of being on her own, not having to worry about what Dickhead thought and not having her stepmother criticizing the way she breathed, made Zadie want to dance naked in the sunshine. Except it was raining again and getting dark outside.

She lit the three fat candles on the windowsill, filled the bath with hot water and poured in half a bottle of rose-scented gel that had to be Stef's. While she waited for the tub to fill, Zadie shaved her legs, armpits and other bits. She cleaned off the remains of the pink polish from her toes and filed her fingernails. With a deep-conditioning purple goo smeared on her hair and a lurid green scrub plastered all over her neck and face, she climbed into the tub and lay back.

Bliss. Closing her eyes, she tried to think positive thoughts. Dickhead's cock wilting when he climbed into bed with his new love. The bastard's hair falling out. Zadie's stepmother turning up at a party in the same dress as three other women. A new man for Zadie who didn't complain if she sometimes said "no".

* * * * *

By the time Tristan got back to the flat, he was soaked to the bone. Instead of wallowing in his customary lazy alcoholic slump, the coffee and rain shower had gone a long way to sobering him up. He didn't like being sober. It allowed him to think. He considered walking past the flat and going to the minimart to buy a ready meal and a bottle of wine, instead of his customary pizza and beer, but he was so wet, he couldn't be arsed.

He stripped off inside the front door – no point wrecking the cleaner’s hard work – and left his clothes where he stepped out of them. He needed a shower. The fridge was sort of on the way to the bathroom, and Tristan vaguely remembered not checking the vegetable drawer for a beer.

When he pulled open the door of the fridge, his jaw dropped. Pasta, salad, humus, lemons, smoked salmon, bread and – champagne. His face lit in a smile. Maybe Fabian was less of a prick than he thought. A week late for Tristan’s birthday, but since he’d also missed Fabian’s, it’d be churlish to complain. He grabbed the champagne bottle and then put it back. Then took it out again. A shower and a bottle of bubbly. He might even feel human. And if he didn’t, he’d be pissed again, which was just as good. In Tristan’s case, even better.

Tristan twisted open the wire on the neck of the bottle as he made for the bathroom. He nudged open the door with his backside and flipped out the cork as he walked in and turned round.

“Jesus Christ,” he yelled.

Champagne frothed down his hand as he stared at the creature in the tub. He’d never drink again. Ever. Just one mouthful. He chugged the bottle. The green thing gave a weird sort of closemouthed cry and disappeared under the foamy surface.

“Shit, shit.” He clutched the bottle tighter and stepped toward the tub. Under the froth of purple-and-green-tinged bubbles he could see frantic movement where he’d just seen its head. One half of his brain knew full well what this was, the other half tried to convince him a monster from the sewers had somehow crept up the plughole and brought its lagoon with it.

A head surfaced, green around the hairline and eyes so wide he could see white all the way round. The other half of Fabian’s present? A woman who got paid to say yes? What the fuck was his brother thinking? Her mouth was small, her lips plump, and purple ears stuck out of her short, wet locks. She looked like a little elf and Tristan jerked the champagne bottle down to hide his instantly intrigued cock.

"Who are you?" she asked.

Tristan opened his mouth and burped. *Shit.*

"That's my champagne," she said.

His for the moment. No way was he moving the bottle. Not a gift from Fabian then. Neither the booze nor her. A squatter? He must have left the door ajar when he went out that morning. *Idiot.*

"What are you doing in my tub?" he asked.

"Your tub?"

Maybe she wasn't very bright and had wandered into the wrong flat.

"This is my brother's place," he said.

She groaned and slumped deeper into the foam. "Fabian's your brother?"

Tristan glared. "Yeah, he's out of the country with Stef, his *girlfriend*." He stressed the last word. "So you're too late, sweetheart. He's no longer available."

"I'm Zadie. Stef's friend. Fabian said I could stay here while I looked for a job and a place to live. No one said you'd be here."

Yes, well, he shouldn't be. He'd helped himself to the spare key Fabian left with their mother. And if he'd been thinking straight, he'd have registered the food couldn't be for him since no one knew he was there.

"He must have forgotten," Tristan said. "So it was you who cleaned the place and filled the fridge, and not a fairy?"

"Yes."

"Thank you. What a transformation. I was a bit scared to look in the closet in case I ended up in some mythical kingdom. I'm Tristan."

Zadie's heart was using her stomach as a trampoline. Oh God, he was gorgeous. Tall, tanned, shaggy dark hair, eyelashes longer than hers, silvery-blue eyes and a slight

curve to his mouth as if he longed to smile but didn't quite dare. She ought to be telling him to get out. "Get in" hovered on her lips.

"Can I have the champagne?" she blurted. *Coward.*

"In a minute." His fingers tightened on the bottle. "Want to share?"

What did he mean? Champagne or the bath? Was "yes" the right answer regardless? She covered her bases. "Do you?"

"It's your champagne," he said.

Bugger. Zadie's cheeks flushed with heat.

"Ah shit, I can't stand here all night, trying to wish the damn thing down." He lowered the bottle.

His cock rose out of a nest of dark curls, standing thick and hard against his belly, his balls heavy beneath. *Don't look.* Zadie almost sniggered. Now her sensible voice decided to chime in? Though sniggering at a guy's erection was not the way to his heart.

"You've probably used all the hot water," he said. "Can I get in?"

"Yes." *Oh fuck, did I say that?* The word had slipped past her brain's quality control.

The almost smile on his face turned into a full-on beam, and Zadie's pussy gurgled "I'm here". As he settled at the other end of the tub, the water level rose in parallel with her lust. He leaned back and stretched his legs out either side of hers, his toes tickling under her arms.

"Want a taste?" he asked.

Zadie wondered how she could do it without drowning and then noticed he was offering her the bottle. *Oops.* She took a swig and sighed as the cold, fizzy liquid slipped down her throat.

"You still have green slime on your face," he said.

She winced. "Beauty mask."

Tristan took the bottle from her hand, set it down on the floor and then reached out to wipe wet fingers over her chin and down the sides of her face. There was something about the slow, careful way he removed the smears that sent bubbles of pleasure zooming around her stomach.

"You don't need anything to make you look more beautiful," he said.

Her breath stuck in her throat until she reminded herself he was a guy, she was naked and he'd say anything to keep her that way.

"It was supposed to draw out impurities and excess oil, and help prevent spots while relieving stress." *Why did I tell him that?*

"Not make unsuspecting males fear a monster's escaped from the sewers?"

Zadie laughed. He leaned back and blew at the foam between them. Flecks fluttered into the air as he made a shallow hole in the bubbles.

He sighed. "I was hoping to see the rest of you."

"Sure you can cope with the scales and my enticing tail?"

Tristan's face lit in a grin. Zadie lifted the bottle and took another swallow before she handed it to him. This might be easier if she was a bit drunk. He put the bottle down without drinking.

Zadie almost shot out of the water when she felt his fingers touch her calves, the gentle but confident strokes liquefying her organs more effectively than the hot water. He lifted her leg, tugged her ankle onto his shoulder and grabbed the soap from the dish by his head. Soap would make the bubbles disintegrate and Zadie worried he might not like what he saw. She was tall, though he was taller, and curvy rather than wafer thin. She also had an unfortunate tattoo.

Tristan kissed her toes, wrapped his hands around her leg and rubbed the soap over her skin, working up a thick, white lather.

"Your skin is so soft," he whispered.

And his chin had a sexy five o'clock shadow. Why would someone as good-looking as him be interested in someone like her?

He's not, doofus. He wants to fuck you, not marry you. Still going to say yes?

His hands moved over her knee, and as his fingers ventured higher, Zadie gulped. This was so unlike her, she wondered if she was imagining it. Almost as though he was aware of her concern, once his fingers reached the top of her thigh, he pushed her leg under the water and washed away the soap.

"My turn," he said.

When he put his foot on her shoulder, it propelled Zadie down until the water covered her nose. Her backside collided with his thigh and she spluttered back to the surface.

"Sorry," he said, but he didn't look it. "Catch."

Tristan flipped the soap toward her but it slithered through her fingers and she dropped it. The thin bar skittered all over the bottom of the tub as Zadie tried to grab it, bubbles popping merrily in its wake. Her fingers brushed his balls and Tristan caught her wrist before she could jerk back. He leaned up and reached out to touch her face with warm, soapy fingers.

"You're really cute." His silvery-blue eyes smiled before his mouth did. The way he stared as he explored the lines and planes of her face sent Zadie's heart into free fall. Dickhead had never looked at her like that, as if he wanted to eat her.

"Come closer," Tristan whispered.

Zadie surged forward to slide her heels behind his butt and brought a tidal wave with her. Water slopped over the edge of the tub onto the floor.

"Oops," she said.

Tristan brushed the slabs of disintegrating foam from her chest.

"Oh God," he mumbled. "Gorgeous breasts. Am I dreaming? Did I get knocked over by a car? Am I lying in some drunken stupor?"

Those were almost her lines. He had a gorgeous face and fantastic body, no fat on him, just hard muscle. Then his lips settled on hers and Zadie's brain stopped working. A soft brush of his tongue across the seam of her mouth and she opened to him. He groaned and pulled her tighter as he deepened his kiss. Zadie's hands roamed the contours of his back as he caressed her spine. His tongue explored the textures of her mouth, the line of her teeth, the curve of her hard palate before he let his tongue dance alongside hers. Electricity sizzled along her veins as her heart rate soared. Zadie had never had a kiss like it.

His fingers traveled up her back to stroke the nape of her neck, his other hand fondled her hip, urging her ever closer. Her breasts flattened against his chest and her thighs rode over his until her belly pressed tight against his cock.

"Okay?" he whispered.

Only one possible answer. "Yes."

Chapter Three

Tristan thought his head was about to explode and his little head would follow. Zadié tasted as sweet as honey, felt like liquid velvet under his fingers and he didn't need the champagne because the scent of her was intoxicating. She made him forget why he was unhappy. Her "yes" obliterated the other "no". She was all his birthdays and Christmases rolled into one. He kissed his way along her chin, down the slender column of her neck, and she arched back into his palms as he wrapped his lips around her nipple.

The tiny bud hardened under his tongue and Tristan moaned into the rounded globe of her breast. He wanted to taste all of her then sink his cock into her and fuck her senseless. But not in the tub. Not the first time.

He rose to his feet and pulled her up with him, the dripping foam making them look like melting snowmen.

"Perfect height," he said, and looked down. "Oh God, perfect body."

She was tall. He didn't have to crane his neck to kiss her. She curved in the right places. Tristan stepped from the tub and lifted her out.

"Where are —?" he asked.

"Washing machine. Except that one."

He picked up the blue towel, which had thankfully escaped the tub's tsunami, and wiped the foam from her body, starting with her face. She had her palm plastered to her hip and didn't move her hand when he tugged.

"What are you hiding?" he asked.

"An error of judgment."

"Show me?"

Zadie let her hand slip and when he saw the tiny tattoo, he bit back his laugh.

"Bruce not the man you thought he was?" Tristan asked.

"He dumped me, sacked me and threw me out of his flat. The next day, he had someone else in my job and in his bed."

"Ah."

Tristan knew what it was like to be hurt and humiliated, and felt a rush of fury it had happened to her.

He grabbed the champagne, scooped her up and carried her into the bedroom. Once the bottle stood safe on the bedside table, he dropped her on the bed. Zadie bounced and squealed. She lay on her back laughing, and he dived onto her.

Tristan smiled. "Going to let me kiss you all over?"

"Yes, as long as I can do the same to you."

"I was counting on it."

This was crazy. He didn't know her, she didn't know him, but she was just what he needed. Tristan felt desperate to be what Zadie needed. He lifted her hand and sucked each of her fingers, kissed and licked his way up one arm and down the other. He laved her breasts with the flat of his tongue, pulled at her nipples with his teeth while she wriggled beneath him, her devious hands driving him equally mad. When he fluttered his tongue around her navel, her skin jumped and twitched, and Zadie released a long groan.

"Oh God, can I keep you? You don't need batteries, do you?" she whispered.

Tristan smiled as his lips skimmed the tiny tattoo on her hip, stopped smiling as his mouth hovered over her glistening folds. *Oh Christ*. He liked the no-pubic-hair thing. He could see the little swell of her clit; he could hear her panting, feel her heart pounding. Tristan slid his finger forward and back over the valleys and folds of her sex, and the hitch in her breath echoed in his. His cock revved up, urging him to hurry and

get to that part of the fun, but for the first time since he could remember, Tristan wanted to go slow.

He looked up into Zadie's face as he slipped a finger deep inside her and watched her eyes darken as pleasure swamped her. She threaded her fingers in his hair and massaged his head. When her tongue slipped out to lick her lip, pre-cum surged up his cock and his balls yelled a warning. His thumb settled on her clit and he rubbed it as he pushed his finger in and out of her. Her muscles tightened around him and his cock leaked furious tears onto the clean sheets.

Tristan faltered. She'd changed the sheets. They'd been— He cringed at the thought. Could he blame Fabian for the state of the bed? Then Zadie came around his finger, her muscles spasming while she gasped, and he wondered what the hell he was doing thinking about his pain-in-the-neck brother when he had this siren to play with.

"Oh good God," Zadie groaned.

Tristan dropped his face between her legs and swallowed her cream. His head fogged with desire. Zadie arched into him, and as he speared her with his tongue, she came again. *Wow, that's a first.*

Impossible. Except it obviously wasn't, Zadie thought. Tristan had made her come twice within the space of a couple of minutes. Dickhead had never managed that. To be fair, he'd never attempted it. Once he'd brought her off, then it was his turn. Tristan crawled back up the bed with a cheeky grin on his face.

"I'm the cat that got the cream," he said, and when she laughed, he kissed her and she tasted herself in his mouth.

Zadie sighed with happiness when he wrapped himself around her and kissed her more deeply. Somehow she'd gotten out of the habit of kissing, had forgotten how enervating it was. She felt hyperaware, every cell primed to respond to his touch. Electricity flowed in her veins. His cock was rigid between them, getting harder and

hotter as they bucked and thrust and rutted, laughing into each other's mouth. Tristan licked and nibbled her ear and she came again, pressing herself against his solid thigh.

"My little firecracker," Tristan whispered.

"My lightning rod." She wrapped her hand around his shaft. "I think you're due an explosion."

As she began to nibble her way down his body, Tristan went as stiff as his cock. "Ah shit."

Zadie looked up at him. "What's the matter?"

He pushed himself up on his elbows. "Apart from the prospect of spontaneous combustion the moment you even breathe on my cock? I don't have any condoms. I don't suppose..."

"No."

"Oh fuck." He groaned. "I'll have to go—"

"You swear you've been careful?" she asked.

His eyes widened. "Shit. I've never... God. Yes, I've been careful."

"So have I. You don't need to go out. I'm on the Pill."

Tristan blinked at her. "You trust me?"

"Shouldn't I?"

His mouth curved in a smile. "I wouldn't lie about something like this. As far as using a condom's concerned, I'm destined for sainthood."

"I've never had sex without a condom either. Though I should have asked before I said you could get in the tub if you're married or have a girlfriend or something."

He shook his head. "No lawful impediment why my cock and your lips should not be joined together. Unless," he gulped, "you think you have to just because—"

"I don't do anything I don't want to. But I'm learning there's more and more I want to say yes to. Close your eyes and relax." She waited until his eyes were shut and then took a mouthful of champagne.

As she drizzled it over his cock, he jerked upright. "What the fuck?"

Zadie laughed and slurped her way from the tip of his cock to the root and he sank down with a deep sigh. When she wrapped her mouth around his velvety tip and dipped her tongue into the slit to suck up pre-cum, he whimpered her name. The sound of it on his lips made her heart sing. The taste of him made her mouth water. A few fast, tight sucks at his cock head, and Tristan trembled and gasped while his hands fisted the sheet.

"Jesus, Zadie. You're playing with a bomb, be careful. My swimmers are about to make a false start."

"I like to live dangerously."

She took another mouthful of champagne, tightened her fingers around the base of his cock, wrapped her lips around his crest and let the champagne dribble down to his balls and her hand.

"Oh my God." Tristan groaned. "I'll never look at champagne in the same way again."

Zadie squeezed around his root as she licked at the tip with the flat of her tongue. She could see him watching her and the look in his eyes made her stomach lurch. Zadie twirled her tongue around him, sucking up salty-sweet pre-cum as she pumped with her other hand.

Tristan cupped her cheeks. "Much as I'd love you to keep going, please stop. I'd rather make us both happy."

"You think I wouldn't be happy sucking you off?"

"This first time, I want to be inside you. Remember I've never done this without a condom."

She felt a zing of delight. "Need stabilizers? Want me to hold your hand?"

He growled. "You cheeky monkey."

Zadie squeaked as Tristan flipped her over onto her back and straddled her body.

"Close your eyes," he whispered.

Zadie shrieked when he upended the cold champagne over her stomach and breasts. He tossed the empty bottle aside and plastered his mouth over her body, drinking, licking, slurping as she wriggled beneath him and he kissed his way to her mouth. Then he held himself over her.

"Sure, sweetheart?" he asked.

Zadie wrapped her fingers around his cock. "Yes."

Chapter Four

Zadie's touch poured oil on a runaway blaze. She positioned him against her soft folds and Tristan slid into her. One long, slow, glorious slide into tight, slick heat until he could go no farther. He lowered his forehead to hers and sighed. Warm, wet heaven. She clamped around him, her pussy holding him tight. The feeling was exquisite.

Tristan lifted his head and stared into her eyes. He felt a surge of possessiveness, a need to protect her. He knew this was lust and yet still hoped for more. Her hands skated over his backside, trickled down the cleft and lingered in a way that made his stomach clench. His cock twitched and swelled inside her and he groaned.

How not to impress. *Spurt two seconds after you get inside a woman.*

He willed his balls to stay calm and took a couple of deep breaths. Didn't help. Tristan felt jittery, as if he were a teenager doing this for the first time. He wanted to make this perfect for both of them.

"Have you forgotten how to do it?" Zadie whispered. "Pull back and then push in again. Think you'll find that works a treat."

Tristan turned his laugh into a growl. He began slowly, gritting his teeth as he fought to control his body's urge to empty himself into her. Zadie's pussy sucked at his cock as he pulled out, tightened around him as he pushed in. How was he supposed to resist her? She had everything on her side.

Zadie spread her hands over his chest, teased his nipples, and Tristan's control slipped. He flexed his hips and drove into her, gave her what she wanted, what he wanted. His balls slapped noisily at her backside and she began to thrust back into him. He slipped his hands under her back and cupped her shoulder blades to pull her into him as he powered down. Tristan was already moving fast but somehow he moved

faster. Zadie was gasping beneath him, her fingers sliding over his ribs to dig into his back as she wrapped her legs around him. He wasn't sure if he was still breathing.

The rhythm was manic, but the powerful sensations sweeping through his body overwhelmed him with such pleasure, Tristan couldn't stop. His head ached, his balls throbbed and he loved it. He felt the moment her climax started, the tighter, rhythmic clamp around his cock, the sensation incredible with no condom, and it dragged his release along with hers. The rush rampaged through his body, soared up his legs, bolted down his spine to detonate his balls.

"Yes," they cried together.

Tristan came and came and came. As he bathed her pussy in his cum, he was filled with a deep sense of satisfaction.

He rolled to one side and took Zadie with him, held her tight while their hearts and breathing calmed. They kissed each other down from the high, arms and legs entwined, and he trembled at the knowledge that he might never have known her. That the wrong one might have said yes.

"God, you're gorgeous," he whispered. "What the fuck was Dickhead thinking?"

"You really want to know?" Zadie whispered.

The question had been rhetorical, but Tristan realized he *did* want to know. He hoped she didn't tell him something that made his cock wilt.

"He didn't like me saying no."

His brow crinkled.

"I'm too negative," Zadie said.

"Do you like me?" Tristan smiled.

"Yes."

"Can you forgive me for the mess the flat was in?"

"Yes."

"Want to go on top next time?"

Zadie grinned. "Yes."

"See? You're not negative at all."

"You want me?" she asked.

"Oh yeah. You're mine," he whispered in her ear, and felt the hitch in her breath.

* * * * *

Zadie hadn't realized sex could be so energetic. She'd learned more in the last four days than in the previous four years. Four days of sex only interrupted by eating and sleeping and talking. They went to sleep entwined in each other's arms and woke the same way. They only dressed when they ran out of food. They tossed for who did the shopping and who ironed, and Tristan set up the ironing board for her in the bedroom before he left.

When the doorbell rang, Zadie assumed Tristan had forgotten his key and buzzed him in. She left the flat door open and went to make coffee.

"Fabian?" called a woman.

Zadie dragged herself back to the door and blinked hard. The petite woman in front of her had a flawless complexion with ruby-red lips. She was sleek and elegant, from the dark hair cascading past her shoulders to her vertiginous heels. After four days of feeling beautiful, all Zadie's insecurities roared back to bite her on the butt.

"He's not here," Zadie said.

"I really wanted his brother. I didn't know where else to look. I'm Veronique, Tristan's fiancée. Oh, is that my ring?" She strode to the mantel and opened the box.

Zadie's knees wobbled as the fantasy of the last four days teetered and began to fall.

Veronique put the ring on and walked back to wave her hand in front of Zadie. "I'll have to change it for something more stylish."

What a bitch. Stupefied and disappointed as Zadie felt, she had enough brain power to realize something wasn't right. "If you're engaged, why weren't you wearing the ring?"

"I told Trissy I wanted to think about it."

Trissy?

"Vero?" Tristan stood in the doorway, his tanned face pale.

Little Miss Perfect flung herself into his arms and the bags dropped from his fingers. Zadio winced when she heard something break, along with the crack in her heart.

"Yes, yes, yes. I *will* marry you," Vero said, and reached up to press her red mouth against lips Zadio had stupidly thought belonged to her. *Four days, idiot.*

The pain in Zadio's heart was horrible, like an animal had crawled down her throat to claw at her. She grabbed her purse and shuffled out.

"Zadio, don't go," Tristan said. "Please."

Realization dawned in Vero's glittering eyes. "Yes, do go. Trissy and I have been a pair for ages. Our parents are friends. His parents vacation in our home in the Cayman Islands. Tristan's been offered a job in my father's company. How could you think he'd want you?" She looked Zadio up and down and sneered.

"Shut up, Vero," Tristan snapped.

Zadio blinked back the tears that threatened. She wanted to run but she didn't. If Dickhead had just arrived, how would she feel if Tristan walked away without waiting to hear what she said? She walked over to Tristan and stood next to him. He took hold of her hand and squeezed her fingers.

"I don't want the job, Vero. I never did," Tristan said.

"But you wanted me," she whispered.

"You said no."

"I changed my mind," Vero blurted.

"So have I."

Vero yanked the ring from her finger and threw it him. Tristan ducked and it missed. Vero strode to the door and slammed it as she left.

"I'm sorry," Tristan said.

Zadie sighed. "I thought that ring was Fabian's. I've been practicing how to look surprised when Stef told me."

"Sorry, sorry."

"Veronique was the reason the flat was a pigsty and you were drinking?"

"Everyone assumed we'd get married. I think it made us assume it too. I got down on one knee and asked her in front of her family and she said no. Not just no. She recited a long list of why she wouldn't marry me while everyone stood and stared at me still kneeling on the floor. I didn't know I had that many faults." He sighed. "I don't think I've ever been so humiliated."

"Your mum didn't dress you up for Halloween as a sperm whale then?"

He let out a choked laugh and Zadie took hold of his other hand.

"You should have told me," she said.

Tristan stared into her eyes. "I didn't want to look stupid. I've spent so long feeling sorry for myself, her bloody 'no' echoing in my head. Then one look at that creature in the bath and my life changed forever. I've had more fun the past four days than I ever had with Vero. She and I weren't right for each other, but we are." He kissed Zadie's nose. "I think you and I needed to find what was missing in our lives."

"Monkey sex?"

He laughed. "You make me happy, Zadie."

She chewed her lip. "Even though I have another man's name tattooed on my hip?"

"I've been meaning to talk to you about that. My name's Tristan Bruce McDonald. Want to add the other two?"

Zadie smiled. "I'll think about it."

Epilogue

"What if they don't like me?" Zadie asked.

"They'll love you, just like I do." Tristan tugged her toward his parents' drawing room.

He did love her. She was the light of his life. Zadie made him see possibilities, encouraged him to strive harder for the things that were important. With her by his side, he could do anything.

She squeezed his hand a little harder and they walked in together. Maybe it was Tristan's imagination but he thought he saw a look pass between his mother and Fabian. Then his brother's mouth quirked in a grin and his mother was clearly trying hard not to laugh. Stef was there too and looked everywhere but at Zadie.

"They set us up," Tristan said.

Her chuckle pulled at his heart.

He tugged Zadie closer and smacked a kiss on her forehead. "Sweetheart, can you forgive my obnoxious family?"

"Oui. Si. Ja..."

His lips landed on her mouth before she said yes in every language.

About the Author

Barbara Elsborg lives in West Yorkshire in the north of England. She always wanted to be a spy, but having confessed to everyone without them even resorting to torture, she decided it was not for her. Vulcanology scorched her feet. A morbid fear of sharks put paid to marine biology. So instead, she spent several years successfully selling cyanide.

After dragging up two rotten, ungrateful children and frustrating her sexy, devoted, wonderful husband (who can now stop twisting her arm), she finally has time to conduct an affair with an electrifying, plugged-in male – her laptop.

Her books feature quirky heroines and bad boys, and she hopes they are as much fun to read as they are to write.

The author welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her [author bio page](#) at www.ellorascave.com.

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