

First pages

Charis Gantzoudis



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CHARIS GANTZOUDIS

First pages

Short stories collection



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“I am trying to learn to begin to begin to begin”

Erica Jong

Dark Feelings

March 2012

Despina's testimony

"I won't let you marry him, I'd rather kill you than lose you". Yes, I saw the note. Anna had thrown it on the couch. When I entered the house she looked distraught. Shaking like a leaf. She told me that Stelios had come to see her the night before. He was waiting for her outside the house and begged her to take him back.

I can't believe he killed her. I never thought he could get to that point. I was telling her on a daily basis to end their relationship and move on with Dimitris. Not that he was perfect, but at least their relationship was normal. Anna was a good person. She didn't want to harm Stelios. She pitied him because of the rough years he'd been through.

Yes. He was a troubled child. His father died when he was two years old. One year later, his mother married our father, who never loved him like his own child. He treated him violently. I remember one time when he broke our neighbour's window with a ball. He hit him so hard that his nose started bleeding. Our mother couldn't do much. She was of weak nature. But as troubled as he might have been, the sexual attraction he felt for Anna could not be justified.

One day, when I came home from cram school, I saw Stelios peeking on Anna bathing. I caught him by surprise. He lost his temper and left without saying a word. He was a quiet child. Didn't express himself. Didn't have any friends. He had left school at age of 14 and got daily wages from any job he could find. But even I didn't think it was that big of a deal. We were children, how should I know?

A few months later, Anna confessed to me in tears, that Stelios had raped her. I couldn't believe it. He was telling her that he loved her. At first I thought she'd gone mad. If our father ever found out anything about this, I'm sure he would have killed him. He had a weak spot for Anna. She was at a loss. She loved Stelios and didn't want to harm him.

This "relationship" went on for the next two years. Anna turned 18. That's when she met Dimitris. He was crazy in love with her, but also excessively jealous. Once, he hit her in the middle of the road, because he thought she was looking at someone else. In one of our conversations, Anna, told me that he had become violent many times. If our brother Stelios hadn't been found dead next to her, I'd think he killed her.

Stelios didn't like that relationship. I remember, one time, I told him to let her live her life. He responded that he wouldn't let anybody take her from him. Neither me, nor my sister ever talked to anyone about Stelios' passion. Those things remain unsaid in closed societies.

I am a year younger than Anna. I always looked up to her. She was the prettiest girl in school and the best student. We were very different, but loved each other very much. Anna, as I said before, was our dad's weak spot. He loved me too, of course, but Anna always stood out for him. I was mum's favourite. If she was still alive, she'd tell you. She died last year, at Christmas, from cancer. I'm sure dad will pass away soon, too. He won't be able to handle Anna's death.

I cannot believe it. Just imagine, a few days ago we went shopping to find a wedding dress for her. I don't know how to keep on living without her. I'm sad for Stelios too, but it is all his fault. I can't talk anymore. If you don't need me for anything else, I'd like to go home.

Dimitris' testimony

Anna called me on Friday at the office. It was about 12 o'clock noon. She sounded troubled. She told me about the note. She had found it when entering the house. I never took it seriously. 'A joke probably' I thought to myself. To calm her down I suggested that she should call Despina, to have someone around until I got home. It wouldn't be long. Banks close early on Fridays.

She's never told me anything about her brother. She must 've been embarrassed. I found out everything later, from Despina. That bastard. How could he do something like that? He seemed to be a nice guy. A little distant though. When I visited them to ask for Anna's hand in marriage, he didn't sit with us. He drank a quick drink and left without a word.

I met Anna one year ago. It was love at first sight. Her big brown eyes sent out a catching warmth. First I had met Despina. We had a mutual friend. We were sitting at a table in our village's local coffee shop. After a while, she showed up. Almost two weeks passed until she agreed to go on a date with me.

Yes, I was jealous. Who wouldn't be with such a beautiful creature? But I knew she loved me. And she knew I loved her, too. I lost my temper once and slapped her. I know Despina has already told you. She was jealous of my relationship with Anna. She never said anything, but I could tell from her looks. Once, when we were alone, she confessed her love to me, but said that she didn't say anything for her sister's sake. They were loving sisters. I never, not even once, saw them fight. After all, who could fight with Anna? Once I told her what I

thought about her sister and that I thought she was jealous. She didn't talk to me for three days. I went nuts. I thought I'd lost her.

All of this time, Stelios never came to visit us. Anna always had excuses ready for him. I don't know what else to tell you. It doesn't matter now anyway. That was it. I will never see her again. Oh my God. I'm sorry.

Confession

I thought we were done. I don't understand why you called me in again. Show a little respect for my mourning. It's not even been ten days since my siblings' funeral. What new evidence could you possibly have? On the day of the murder, I waited for my father to come home, made him dinner and then went to my mother's grave. The candle has to be always lit.

No, I wasn't jealous of my sister, I loved her. I don't know what Dimitris told you. I didn't want to say it, but he kissed me once. I kept it from my sister. She would've been devastated. Fortunately, he didn't bother me since.

A few days ago I had an accident. I fell down the stairs. While trying to get up I injured my hand. This is where the bloody clothes in my closet are from. I would never kill my siblings. Why won't you believe me?

Stop it, can't stand listening to you anymore. Yes, I killed her. I couldn't stand living in her shadow anymore. Since we were children, Anna was the best at everything, from school to friends. Boys always noticed her. When I met Dimitris I fell for him, but he chose her.

Stelios was part of the plan. I knew he had a gun in his bedside table. I took it. He wasn't at home. He was at the coffee house. I found him there and told him we had to go to Anna, because something bad had happened to her. I had the note ready in my pocket. I killed them and left. Everything about Stelios' attraction to her was a lie. Why are you looking at me? You cannot understand how it is to always be second. I have no regrets. I am ready to pay for what I have done, but I have no regrets.

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