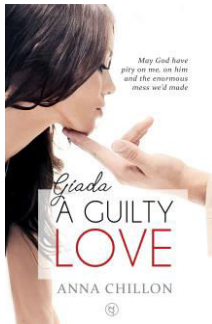


EXTRACT OF



Giada A Guilty Love

ANNA CHILLON

Translated by
Sally Ibba

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www.annachillon.it
annasallybooks@gmail.com

Warning, spoiler alert.

I squinted my eyes with suspicion. “What are you doing?”
“Just another little demonstration, there’s nothing to worry about,” said the spider to the fly.

The scarf was not so soft now. At the first knot one wrist

was roughly squeezed against the other, I emitted a sound like a hiccup. The sensations from just before were multiplied.

I thought maybe he didn't realize that he had tightened too much, that maybe he didn't really know what he was doing, that it was basically just an experiment.

I tried to look over my shoulder, twisting to see what he was doing. He twisted and twisted the scarf that had become like a rope, pulling and jiggling without a shadow of hesitation and I was became more and more immobilized. This was something very different from the last time. With that scarf he wasn't just tying my arms, but legs, mind and heart, with ties that were visible to the naked eye.

It was an unimaginable effect.

After completing his work, he looked at me with his arms folded.

"How does it feel?"

I wanted to speak, but I didn't know how to answer. I blinked my lashes over and over, hoping to suddenly see the truth of what was happening and understand something. Of course, I opened my mouth to say a few syllables, but I just came out with a pant and with a dull cry I collapsed onto the top of the island.

"Good," he said, moving away to pour a glass of water.

Had I answered without realizing?

Whatever movement I tried to make with my arms, my skin was pulled, pinched, but still without loosening the scarf by a millimetre. I couldn't see, but I knew that my forearms must have become red and white striped, tightly squeezed.

"Do you feel pain now?" Vincent blissfully enjoyed the show, sipping his water. "It's not how you imagined it, is it?"

No, in fact it was something more.

I whispered something like "you're crazy" and "fuck you" while my heart galloped in my chest. Sitting on the next stool, Vincent pushed away the empty glass, leant his elbows on the island with his head in his hands, so that he was almost at the height of my face.

“You're free to let yourself go and do anything, baby. You can laugh, cry, wiggle, swear or fall to pieces. The rope will keep you together.”

Thank god, because I really was at risk of losing a piece of myself on the kitchen floor. Like an arm or my self-esteem, or some other small part like that.

A six Euro purchase had the power to hold all my weight, physically and mentally. It was surprising and could have appeared liberating. But I wasn't free at all. My heart rate increased or decreased as Vincent approached or moved away, the feeling of power and vulnerability was almost infinite.

But what made me feel worse was the question that would bother me for a while: why had I let him do it? What was wrong with me?

I could've blamed my innocence, say I trusted a family friend and that I couldn't have imagined that such clever and wicked eyes would conceal an un-controllable man, although the previous night ought to have been an example. The sad truth was that what I didn't want was what I frequently went searching for. And then to discover that I didn't know how to protect myself from the inevitable result.

“Untie me,” I whispered with a muffled voice to make sure that he didn't hear that I was on the verge of tears.

“But that's not what you want,” he replied, looking across at me with his head resting on his fists.

I was suffering. He was stretched out as if he was on the couch at home watching his favourite program.

“How do you know what I want?” Even I had doubts.

“I just know,” he remarked. “You just want to complain and complain to me because I'm the only one here. I can prove it to you: Would you prefer I untie you or kiss you? What do you need most?”

I tightened my lips, turning away from him. Anything not to give him that satisfaction.

Vincent took one of my braids, making me turn back towards him. He studied my glassy eyes, confused and

overwhelmed with emotion.

He had taken on a look that would've even intimidated an adult; laid on me it took my breath away.

"I have to talk to you, Giada."

He got down from the stool and came closer. Even though the seats were high, he was taller, looming with controlled authoritarian grace. "Maybe I didn't understand you well, it's my fault, I wasn't quite clear, you're too young and I couldn't expect you to read in-between the lines. This is my way of being more explicit." He stroked my sore sensitive skin. He checked the state of my arms that from overheating were now going cold. "Come on get up, straighten your shoulders. Stand up."

With his help I got into a sitting position, but my back was curved and my face bent toward my knees. He pulled my chin up.

"This morning I told you clearly not to overdo it with the sugar and you couldn't have cared less. I've been indulgent with you, but you forced me to listen to a Catholic radio station. You showed your pants to other men just to spite me. I asked you to do a simple thing in the car, and you couldn't even please me with that for more than a second."

"What are you talking about?"

He took hold of my knees and widened them. "You had to sit still, with your legs open. Were you able? My words have meaning and you have to understand, it's important to remove the distance between us, Giada. I would like you to pay much more attention to what I say and show me more respect. That was just a game, but I hope you're able to realize when it's no longer just a game."

My fingertips pinched, I couldn't concentrate on what he was saying. The tears began to flow fast because there was no way to express what I was feeling. It was not sadness, not even pain, although I felt it. He was rummaging inside me and had managed to find a sensitive spot.

"And do you understand me?" I asked him.

“That's what I'm trying to do, because you can be sure that if we don't understand each other, nobody else will.”

Bending down between my knees he dried my face gently with his white, immaculate handkerchief. The rope pulled giving me the strong impression that he himself was pulling it tighter, cutting into my wrists. “Do you want to tell me what you feel now?”

I breathed in heavily through my nose. “I don't know...”

“Be honest, tell me the first thing that goes through your mind.”

“I want you to touch me,” I replied impulsively.

“I'm already touching you.”

“More...”

“You don't want me to untie you?”

“Yes, it's obvious that I want you to.”

“I wouldn't say so. That's not what you said.”

“But I answered. Can you untie me now?” I begged.

He touched my hand to check if it was cold. “I know it hurts, but it's useful to make you understand a few things, about you and me. You have to wait a little longer.”

“How much longer? I can't resist.”

“I can't resist anymore, either baby.” His fingers slipped between my braids, loosening them, his hip rubbed on my thigh. “Me neither.”

Holding me up to stop me from leaning back and falling, he put his lips against mine. He kept them still for a moment, then moved them in tiny semicircles, causing mine to open. I found myself gently but inevitably open to the exploration of his tongue as we drank the salty drops that my eyes couldn't stem...