

Introduction:

*The novel **Sorpresa** is a relational novel describing the lives of Gianna, Jakob, Anna, Isabella and Charlie. One man, four women, a past filled with entanglements, a complex personal change, everyones inevitable Karma, the choice of two people that cannot live without each other and their unlimited love inspite of tragedy. The novel unwinds in The Netherlands and Tuscany and I hope to be able to finish this work around the summer of 2007 to have it published.*

*The excerpt is an unfinished draft of a work in progress. Although some autobiographical elements are there, **Sopresa** is fiction. The persons in it do not exist in real life, at least not in the one person as they are in the story. **Sorpresa** tells foremost the story of love between people.*

Alice.

--- excerpt ---

Chapter 1. The welcoming

Stumbling and shaking the little blue car drove downhill on the constantly deteriorating gravel road. The flight to Pisa was beautiful, the car trip after words too. The view on the Alps with the clear skies had been breathtaking. The Aletsch glacier resembled a stream of molten ice with two traces of chocolate coming from the now so small Jungfrau, Mönch and Eiger. And above the Thyrranean sea, which was overflown in a shallow curve, the sun gave a silver shimmering over the azure blue surface underneath which one could see the greenish waves of the bottom of the sea.

After about four and halve kilometers on the gravel road that meandered over the edge of the hill the stone building came into sight. Build strongly with solid stones and rocks and lightened by a yellow evening sun. After another tiny kilometer the car noisily came to a standstill on the gravel. Just behind the big white fluffy dog, he actually looked like a sheep, the owner came quickly outside to welcome his new guests. In the far distance you could hear a tractor torturing the Tuscany hills. Even further away a church bell rang. It was six o'clock.

Gianna was excited. The first time out together with a man. With Jakob, the artist and bohemian. Old friend. Jakob was beautiful with squared shoulders and arms in which you had to feel safe. With Jakob you felt like a woman, that's just what he did.

It all came as a surprise. Spontaneous after a romantic evening with just a little too much wine. Jakob was tired and melancholic. He'd been like that for some time lately. Gianna didn't know why. All of a sudden he'd asked wether she'd like to go on a holiday. Just a week away, together, away from it all. Not for a long time but just enough to recuperate from the past months. Without thinking too much on it she'd said yes. Jakob let her choose a destination and so it became Tuscany which could be so nice at the end of summer. She'd been there years ago and the paradise like surroundings had never left her mind and heart.

Gianna didn't want to be missing the children, especially little Isa, for too long a time and she knew that their mother Anna also urgently needed a couple of days rest. So, the next morning they offered Anna and Isa to come over for three days. The two eldest kids, Jos and Annebelle were perfectly able to take care of themselves for a few days and if needed grandma was in the vicinity to keep an eye on them. Jakob also liked to see Anna and Isa again for a couple of days. Anna had asked if there was a special reason to meet again in this way as she hadn't spoken Jakob since he and his Charlie split up. And if it was ok that

her walking friend Isabel would join them because they originally planned for that week to do some walking in the Achterhoek and she would find it awful to disappoint Isabel. Gianna had doubts for a second on Isabel, they didn't match all that well, but of course she agreed. She would have a full week with Jakob, interrupted for a couple of days by the visit of Anna and Isa. It would be so good to be together again.

After a short tour at the Podere, after all it was a restored farmhouse, Jakob did the obligatory suitcase carrying. After everything was moved upstairs the owner explained the menu for the evening and situated his guests at a small square table placed on the grass in front of the house. Accompanied by a good glass of land wine and a breathtaking view overlooking the valley. Their eyes traced the lines of the hills on the horizon, over the stone roofs of the abandoned houses further uphill to the little village in the distance. Along the church tower that a while ago echoed over the valley, through the break of the pregnant figs trees in the forefront until they finally rested in the woods at the bottom of the hill on which the house was built. Everything radiated warmth and tranquility. There was no traffic you could hear except for that same slowly working tractor in the far distance.

'How long ago is it now, Jakob?'

'What do you mean?'

'How long ago is it that we've met for the first time?'

'O that. That must be about fifteen years. Charlie's premiere I think. Her first real role, do you still remember that? But why do you ask?'

'I don't know. Maybe melancholy? It is so beautiful her and all of a sudden I had to think about the first time I was here. When everything was still so different from now.'

'Not better than it is now, is it?'

'Oh no, not better. Different. And so much more difficult. I wasn't happy then. I was this proud guy, funny actually. It's so far away now, just if I was someone else then.'

'Oh you were, you absolutely were. Not so nice to look at that's for sure.'

They laughed at it. Jakob tapped his glass to hers carefully. 'Here's to your second life, lady. Make it something worthwhile.'

'Do you ever see Charlie nowadays, Jakob? I never understood that she left you.'

'I think I drove her away from me. I just had to be that artist while she was so much better at that. I haven't seen her for six years now. She's probably very occupied with another whim. Ah well, she was too quicksilver for me. Constantly having something new. I was probably too old for her or she too young for me. At the end I felt old and tired when she came with the next 'marvelous and exciting idea'. She surely would think of me now as old aged.'

Gianna laughed out loud. 'You, too old? You'll never get old, you will always be that darling young god and I really don't see your beginning belly.'

--- end of excerpt ---

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