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Willoughby

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Willoughby

A prescription for death....



Suzanne Elliott

Exciting excerpts from “Willoughby”

***He was a deadly and determined man - determined
to make her his victim!***

Damn Bitch! It wasn't working out the way he'd planned and it was all Elizabeth's fault! Sweat dripped from his forehead. He blew out a quick breath. He'd almost keeled over when he removed the bullet from his shoulder. He gritted his teeth. The pain would subside in a minute he told himself, but the minute was soon over and the throbbing continued...

Elizabeth stepped from the shower. Beads of water glistened on her skin. She draped a towel around her shapely body. Her luxurious dark hair hung to her shoulders in wet curls. She grabbed another towel, wrapped her head turban style...

A shiver shook her body. Her eyes scanned the room. She almost expected to see someone jump from behind the bathroom door. *It was as if she was being watched.* The feeling was so strong, she felt violated!

There was a thunderous roar that sounded like a freight train... Willoughby jerked violently. Another strong gust hit the side of the boat sending it out to the middle of the river. Bam! She was Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz. Elizabeth was thrown hard to the floor. The boat spun in circles so fast she felt like she was on a Tilt-a-Whirl...

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Willoughby contains descriptions concerning physical injuries and treatments for those injuries. Nothing in this work is, or should be considered or used, as a substitute for, medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The characters and their methods of treatment do not constitute the practice of any medical, nursing or other professional health care. Never disregard, avoid, or delay in obtaining medical advice from your doctor or qualified health care provider because of something you have read in this story.

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PROLOGUE

Sweat broke on his brow. He swiped the wetness with his forearm and with a shaky hand placed the last of the surveillance equipment behind the grill of the speaker. The hook-up completed, he scooted the speaker back in place. He stepped back to scan the area. Hands on his hips, he let out a pent-up breath. “Perfect!” he murmured. *Looks can be deceiving*, he thought. A smile of satisfaction formed on his handsome face.

His gaze wandered around the room. He had to admit Elizabeth had impeccable taste. The condo not only projected a cozy atmosphere, but understated elegance and sophistication, just like the woman herself.

Acid boiled in his esophagus. He swallowed back the bile, the taste unpalatable - the prescription medicine obviously not working. He shoved his hand in his pocket and retrieved a roll of anti-acid tablets and plopped a couple in his mouth.

His anger rose. He slammed a fist against the wall, leaving a slight indentation. *How dare she dismiss him like a naughty schoolboy!* He vowed vengeance. He cuddled his hand

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in pain, and swallowed pure acid. “Damn it to hell!” he muttered.

He squatted to gather his tools in the doctor’s bag. He’d spent three hours setting this up. But it was worth the time and effort. This was one house call he was happy to make...

He rubbed his chest and out came a loud belch.

“Ah... relief at last,” he grumbled.

He continued to check each room to make sure he hadn’t left any trace of his presence.

“With the condo under scrutiny she won’t be able to make a move without his watchful eye,” he acknowledged out loud.

He started to salivate. The anticipation was exciting. *Elizabeth. You have no idea what I have in store for you. I’m going to teach you the true meaning of fear...*

He patted his pocket to make sure he had the duplicate key he’d made from a wax impression he’d collected before the attack. Elizabeth never had a clue. After all, it was only natural for her to leave her keys lying on the hall table in her own home. Little did she know the simple act would come back to haunt her.

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“Thank you, Elizabeth,” her attacker voiced to empty air.

Cautiously, he cracked open the front door. Satisfied no one was about; he set the lock and stepped into the hallway and entered the elevator. A smirk returned to his face. “Revenge... just what the doctor ordered,” he hissed, and laughed heartily. The elevator doors opened to the lobby. He sneaked past the doorman and continued on to his car, whistling.

CHAPTER ONE

The aroma of perked coffee permeated the air. Elizabeth placed cookies on a plate and poured coffee into the serving pot. She placed them on a tray along with cream and sugar, and carried the refreshments to the living room.

She had no more than set the tray on the cocktail table when two arms grabbed her from behind, twisted her around, and slammed her back against the wall.

“Dessert? You bet!” Her visitor mocked through clenched teeth, and he tore the blouse from her body.

“No!” she screamed, and shoved him away.

He came after her again. He reached for her breast and ripped her bra, exposing the flesh. She clawed his face, gave him a kick in the shin, then kneed him in the groin. He bent over double, cussing...

Elizabeth covered her breasts with her hands and looked for something to use as a weapon. Spying a letter opener, she took a step toward her desk. He snatched her by the hair. She turned and went for his eyes. He slapped her cheek and caught

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her lip in the process with his ring. Blood spurt from the tear and dripped down the side of her chin.

“Get out!” she shrieked, and gave him another hard kick to the groin, her high-heel giving a direct hit.

“Bitch!” he spat. “I’m not done with you yet!” Like a wild bull he knocked over furniture and sent lamps crashing to the floor. He stumbled to the front door; his body hunched in pain and slammed the door back so hard against the wall, it hung by one hinge.

She ran to the phone to call for help, then to the kitchen for a knife in case he came back. She gripped the knife tightly ready to defend herself. Police found her huddled in a corner with the knife still in hand. Her face was colorless, her eyes dilated. Dried blood smeared her face. She was treated by paramedics and transferred to the hospital overnight for observation.

Two months later...

Elizabeth awoke in a sweat. Blood chilled through her veins. She sat up, tossed the covers back and dangled her legs over the side of the bed, and tried to obtain a stable equilibrium.

When she decided sleep was no longer an option she grabbed her robe and slippers and padded to the kitchen. She filled a teapot with water and set it on the stove to boil. She walked to the window over the sink, and looked out at the lights of the city. Lightning streaked across the sky. Thunder roared in the distance hastening the feeling of unrest. Normally, she enjoyed the view, but now...

She hugged her arms to her chest and tried to ward off the chill. Tears slipped down her cheeks. She reached into a cabinet and got a mug and placed a tea bag in the cup. Reliving the attack over and over was taking its toll. She swiped the moisture from her cheeks. The teapot whistled. She removed the pot from the stove and poured boiling water into the cup. She waited until the water colored, then removed the tea bag. She added cream and one teaspoon of sugar and stirred. She blew on the cup, and then took a sip.

All this time the rage on his face was mirrored in her eyes. The attack happened two months ago, but in her mind, it was as clear as if it had happened yesterday.

Aside from her obvious trauma, there was added worry. Police had found no trace of him. Was he going to pop up when

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least expected? She suspected that was the cause of her nightmares. She strummed her fingers on the granite counter...

The tapping was interrupted by the ring tone of her cell. Her hand froze. It was three a.m. Who would be calling at this hour? She grabbed the phone from the counter.

“Hello?”

Music played in the background. “Hello,” she repeated. Heavy breathing accosted her ear. She slammed the flip shut. Could it have been a wrong number? After all she reasoned, her phone number was changed after the attack and once since. Maybe someone was just trying to call the person who had this number previously and she was upset over nothing. Regardless, the call gave her an eerie feeling. She definitely was going to contact the phone company first thing in the morning and have her number changed again. She turned the phone off and let out a restless breath. She heard the creaking of floor boards and she stiffened. She waited and listened, then tiptoed into the living room. Her mouth became dry. She grabbed the fireplace poker and continued her tour, her pulse pounding. Checking windows and doors, she found her front door unlocked. She swore she'd locked it when she came in. Damn! She shook her head. She refused to believe she was paranoid. She returned to the kitchen.

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With a shaking hand she poured more tea, the warmth oddly comforting. Despite the decaf she was drinking, her heart rate was outrageous. She knew it wasn't from the tea. She feared it was going to be a long night. *If she lived through it!* She broke down in tears.

Elizabeth stepped from the shower. Beads of water glistened on her skin. She draped a towel around her shapely body. Her luxurious dark hair hung to her shoulders in wet curls. She grabbed another towel, wrapped her head turban style and sat down at her makeup table. A quick glance at the time reminded her she needed to hurry to make her flight.

A shiver shook her body. Her eyes scanned the room. She almost expected to see someone jump from behind the bathroom door. *It was as if she was being watched.* The feeling was so strong, she felt violated!

Self-consciously, she adjusted her towel. With a shake of her head she fought the incredulous thought. Totally disgusted she had let herself succumb to fear, she unwound the turban and blow-dried her hair. Applying a quick application of makeup, she headed to her bedroom to finish dressing. Her land

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phone rang. Her hand shook as she reached for the receiver. She glanced at the display, and let out a pent-up breath.

“Hi Pam.”

“I’m glad you’re home. Want to meet for lunch?”

“I’m sorry, Pam. I can’t. I leave in just a few minutes. But I’m glad you called. Would you mind watering my plants while I’m gone?”

“No, of course I don’t mind. I still have the spare key. How soon should I water?”

“In about five days. I watered them all this morning.”

“You’re going to be gone that long?”

“I’m not sure just how long. My uncle’s estate was just settled. In his will he left me a river cruiser. Miami is not far from the marina where the boat is docked. I decided to take care of business while in the area. I need to get the boat ready to sell.”

Her throat tightened. Was it a premonition or was she just antsy? Tears welled. She cleared her throat and continued in a strained voice.

“Pam, thank you for taking care of the plants. You’re a good friend. I’ll be at Bay Harbor Marina if anything comes up. I have a new cell number. It’s 321 777-3300.”

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“No problem. I wrote the number down. Good luck with the boat. Let's do lunch when you get back.”

“You bet. Hi to your husband! Good bye, Pam.”

Elizabeth disconnected and looked around. It was almost as if she could feel the evil lurking in the air. The hair on her arms stood in protest. She stepped into her walk-in closet, took her uniform from its hanger and hurried to dress. The memory of meeting her attacker on a flight was still fresh in her mind. Never for a minute did she think he was capable of violence. Up to the time of the attack, their relationship had been purely platonic. She shook her head. It was amazing how one could be fooled. She grabbed her purse, her laptop, and pulled her suitcase to the entry. After a quick glance around, she exited, feeling instant relief.

Hot air rose to greet her as she descended the ramp into Miami International. The humidity made the heat that much worse. She wiped her forehead and entered the cool lobby.

“Whew!” She mouthed. What a relief. *Thank goodness Texas is dryer*, she thought. She hoped the boat had air-conditioning.

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She wondered what condition she would find the vessel. Was the paint peeling? Would it be full of spiders? Closed up for months, she could probably add mildew to that same list of worries. She mentally braced herself. Hopefully, she'd be able to get some rest and not spend all the time fixing up the boat. She bit her lip in thought. At least she would be away from the condo for a while. Since the attack, the place gave her the jitters.

The car rental counter was knee-deep with customers from recent flights. She chose a line and prepared for a long wait. She checked the time and estimated it would be around four-thirty p.m. before she arrived at her destination. That is, barring problems with traffic, she mentally added. She dug out the number for the marina and gave them a heads up on her approximate ETA.

It was after five when she turned off I-95. She chewed her lip hoping there was still someone in the marina office. She pulled into a space in front and said a little prayer. She pushed through the door to the office and yelled, "Hello."

"I'll be there in a minute," a voice answered. Elizabeth looked around. This was definitely a man's environment. She picked up a boating magazine and thumbed through it.

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Momentarily, a middle-aged man appeared. His kindly smile welcomed her.

“Elizabeth?”

“Yes. Sorry to keep you overtime. The traffic was horrific. I had no idea I’d be this late.”

“I figured traffic was the cause. No problem. Here are your keys. The large one is the gate key. Just follow the road back, turn left at the first street and you’ll end up in the parking lot. You’ll see the gate to the dock from there. Your slip is at the end of the dock. Willoughby is on the river, not the channel side. We’ve turned the power on, but when you get down there, you’ll need to turn on the water. It’s not good to leave the water on when no one is aboard. If you have questions, give the office a call in the morning.”

“I will. Thank you for waiting.” As she walked out, her cell rang. The phone display read restricted. She tensed.

“Hello,” she said, her voice strained.

Silence....

“Who is this?” she demanded. “What do you want?”

A grunt and heavy breathing was the response. She could almost feel the hot breath in her ear.

Her heart raced. She slammed the flip shut. Darn it! She

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had a new unlisted number. Who was doing this and how did they get this number? She grimaced and massaged her forehead to try to ease the persistent headache. The call hadn't helped. Her blood pumped so hard, the roar in her ears was deafening. Was she delusional or was someone trying to scare her?

After being attacked, Elizabeth Gibbs calm life turned into a nightmare. Recently inheriting a boat, she travels to the marina where it is docked to prepare the boat for sale. Her slip neighbor, detective Lance Michaels, offers his protection and love as the threats continue and the perpetrator vows to collect his revenge by issuing a prescription for Elizabeth's death. Fear becomes her constant companion. A must read!

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