

A Special Preview

This is a selected excerpt from *Two Seasoned Women of Cloverson, Texas*. Enjoy this special preview featuring Lois and Cat.

Lois has always found peace in tending her garden, but one afternoon that peace is shattered.

Shaken, she turns to the one person she knows she can count on—her lifelong friend, Cat. Cat doesn't hesitate. Armed with determination, a handgun, and her unfiltered sense of humor, she heads straight to Lois's house to make sure her friend isn't facing the night alone.

This following offers a glimpse of the friendship, suspense, warmth, and humor that weave throughout.

IN THE GARDEN OF LOIS

Lois was planting seeds in her vegetable garden one late afternoon when there was a nice breeze outside. She looked forward to this task each spring and never minded breaking a little sweat and getting her hands and knees dirty. She loved the smell of soil. When she was a little girl, helping her mother in the garden gave her so much joy. Better yet, she loved harvesting and eating the fruits of her hard labor.

She stood up and brushed the dirt from her knees. That's when she heard a very alarmingly loud... BANG!... not too far away. A high-pitched swishing sound followed, ripping past her ear that made her flinch. She said out loud, "Lord Jesus. Is that what I think it is?" It was a familiar sound to her, though she wasn't quite sure what to make of it. Looking all around to see where it was coming from, she saw nothing—no one at all. She hesitated for a while, wondering if she should continue planting. As she bent down to pick up the bucket of seeds, it happened again. It was the same sound, except this time she saw the head of one of her scarecrows sail over the garden fence and land on the ground near her dog, Brick, where he lay resting. Startled, he jerked his head up, quickly stood, and began barking nonstop.

Having grown up around guns, *I do believe that was a gunshot.* She stopped dead in her tracks, bewildered, and stared at the head of the scarecrow on the ground. Before she had time to process what had just happened, the head of another scarecrow went flying past her. In a panic, she dropped the bucket and ran for the back door to the kitchen. Once inside, she slammed the door shut, her hands trembling

uncontrollably, then locked it, and engaged the deadbolt. She crouched down in front of the kitchen sink, slowly pulled herself up, and gently folded back the corner of the curtain to peek through the window. She saw no one. With knees wobbling from fright, she slumped to the floor dazed and confused and sat with her back against the cabinet doors with legs stretched out in front. *What just happened? I know a gunshot when I hear one. I'm not losin' my mind.* She wanted to crawl to the phone on the kitchen wall to call someone, but too afraid to stand up, she decided to stay put. She closed her eyes and prayed fervently.

The house was dark when she finally opened her eyes. She had fallen asleep on the floor while praying. "My God, what time is it?" she muttered. Drained by the earlier scare, she crawled to the wall and reached up to switch on the light. Just as her finger was about to flip the switch, her body stiffened. Her mind was willing, but her body wasn't. She ached and was sore from sitting so long on the hard floor. Slowly, she struggled to her feet.

Finally, she stood there, feeling helpless, replaying in her mind what had happened in the garden. *They might see me if I turn on the light.* Instead, she reached for the phone and called Cat

"You stay right there. I'm on my way," Cat said in a commanding voice.

"What about your salon? Don't you have customers? What in the world can you do anyway?" Lois asked.

“It’s Thursday, and I’ve only had three customers all day. Just sit tight. I’ll call you when I pull into the yard. I’ll let it ring once so you know it’s me.”

Scared, hungry, and tired, she sat down at the kitchen table in the dark and prayed out loud, “I trust you Lord that you will watch over me and keep me safe from any hurt, harm, evil, or danger, seen and unseen. Amen.”

Cat told her mother what had happened and she was going to spend the night at Lois’s house. Bertha was living with her now. Luckily, Gloria, a government on-call assistant, was available to come stay with her mother overnight. Lonnie was due to arrive the next day, so she told her mother to send him straight to Lois’s. He was coming to prepare the deed transfer paperwork for Lois.

Cat packed the handgun she kept in the house for protection. Jake had given her lessons at the shooting range several times, and she certainly knew how to use it well. Twice a month, he met his friends at the range, and she would go with him, bringing lunch to serve afterward. His friends always looked forward to Cat’s visits, especially her cooking. After Jake would say goodbye to his friends, he would give Cat shooting lessons. There was no doubt she could protect herself.

Jake would often ask Melanie to come along and learn how to shoot, but she never liked guns and had no interest in going.

The phone rang once, and as instructed, Lois went to the door and let Cat in. After assuring Lois that everything would be fine and making sure she ate the food she had brought, Cat decided to keep watch in the armchair in the living room. She persuaded Lois to go to bed and get some rest.

Around one o'clock in the morning, Cat dozed off but was awakened by loud thumps outside. She reached for her gun, rose from the chair, started pacing angrily back and forth gripping her gun tightly, and yelled. "OKAY, YOU SON OF A BITCH. YOU WANNA COME IN HERE? COME ON. I'M GONNA MAKE IT EASY FOR YA. I'M GONNA GO TO THE FRONT DOOR AND OPEN IT. THEN I'M GONNA GO TO THE BACK DOOR AND OPEN IT. AND THEN, I'M GONNA SIT MY ASS DOWN AND WAIT FOR YOU TO COME IN. JUST PICK ANY DOOR YOU WANT. I'LL WAIT!

As soon as she sat down, she heard.... **End of excerpt.**

I hope you enjoyed this sneak peek into the world of Lois and Cat.

Thank you for reading!