

# [PDF] When You Dare (Edge Of Honor)

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**Description:**

**About the Author** Lori Foster is a New York Times and USA TODAY bestselling author with books from a variety of publishers, including Berkley/Jove, Kensington, St. Martin's, Harlequin and Silhouette. Lori has been a recipient of the prestigious RT Book Reviews Career Achievement Award for Series Romantic Fantasy, and for Contemporary Romance. She's had top-selling books for Amazon, Waldenbooks and the BGI Group. For more about Lori, visit her Web site at [www.lorifoster.com](http://www.lorifoster.com).

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Midnight came and went with only the quiet buzz of meager traffic along the beach. An occasional

horn blew or tires squealed. Two people exited a bar nearby, laughing too loud before piling into an SUV and steering drunkenly onto the road.

In the shadows of a weed-ridden parking lot at the back of the rundown motel, no one noticed them. Avoiding the glow of the full yellow moon, they stood behind the south wall beneath a broken security lamp.

A lamp Dare Macintosh had broken.

Ocean breezes stirred the air and heightened his senses. While scanning the area and repeatedly peering at the black van he'd rented when first arriving in San Diego, Dare waited. His friend, Trace Rivers, embraced his younger sister with choking emotion.

It had been a long two days filled with frantic preparation, little sleep, less food and loads of pumping adrenaline: the conditions in which Dare operated best.

With the job done, and then some, he desperately wanted something to eat and a place to sleep. Even more than that, he wanted to check on the skinny, abused woman still out cold in the backseat of the van.

"Tell me," Trace said, not to Alani, whom he kept crushed close, but to Dare.

After again glancing at the van, Dare nodded. He'd

found Alani and returned her to Trace as he'd sworn to, but neither man knew yet what she had suffered.

"She was in Tijuana, as you said. Locked in a trailer with some other women in an isolated area."

"Heavily guarded?"

"Yes."

Trace drew a strained breath, and uttered what they both had known: "Human traffickers."

Dare nodded. "Not much in the way of food or drinks. Dirty, airless with the windows screwed shut. They had the women□" He hesitated, knowing how Trace would take it, but he needed to know. "They were leashed, chained to grommets in the floor, with just enough chain to reach a toilet. No sink."

"*Fuckers.*" Overcome with rage, Trace knotted his hand in his sister's hair and squeezed her tighter, protectively.

She didn't complain.

Trace never used coarse language in front of his sister, which meant he was on the ragged edge, barely aware of what he said or did. Dare looked away from them, understanding the lack of control.

He focused on the rented van. "I had to go through several lookouts and a few armed guards to get her out of there."

"Quietly." Trace made it a statement, not a question.

"There wasn't much fuss." Dare always worked in efficient silence; an alarm would have brought more armed guards, possibly too many for him to combat. As much as he wanted to kill them all, he hadn't.

Only those most responsible.

By the time the empty trailer was discovered, Dare was already heading over the border into San Diego where Trace waited. Over the years he'd built up alliances

everywhere, and sometimes worked with the coyotes who made a living taking people back and forth over the border.

Thanks to those contacts, even with the extra cargo slumped in his backseat, no one had stopped him as he went through the border checkpoint. The van had been given only a cursory inspection, his weapons ignored, and the excuse of the women being tired never mind that one was beaten and haggard, only half-dressed had satisfied all questions.

Both men were damn good at what they did. But Trace couldn't go after his sister himself as he'd wanted, because the men holding her knew what he looked like. Before he'd have even gotten close to Tijuana, Trace would have been spotted by lookouts.

So Dare had gone and come back with more than he'd bargained for.

Making a small sound, Alani tucked her face in closer to her brother's shoulder. The siblings shared blond hair and light brown eyes, but that's where the physical similarities ended. Trace was thirty, of an age with Dare, eight years older than his sister. He stood six foot three and weighed over two hundred pounds all of it muscle.

Next to him, Alani looked tiny and fragile and, presently, wounded. Even since Dare had removed her from the trailer, fresh bruises continued to show on her arms and around her narrow wrists. Because the bastards had planned to sell her, they hadn't harmed her face.

Innocence was a huge commodity, and at twenty-two, having led a sheltered life, Alani gave off a definite vibe of innocence. Blond-haired, blue-eyed women brought the most profit, but he had a feeling that Alani's golden-brown eyes, in contrast to her very fair hair, would have fascinated the sick pricks.

Dare prayed they hadn't raped her, knowing a woman ill-used would bring less, but he left that uncomfortable discussion for Trace.

Hearing a noise like a soft moan, Dare zeroed in on the van with his senses on alert. He'd left the rear door open so he'd hear her if she moved, if she awoke. But she did no more than readjust.

Three hours had passed since he'd carried her out of that trailer. Worry gnawed at him.

Why didn't she awaken?

"Dare?" His eyes filled with pain, rage and relief, Trace whispered, "Thank you."

Alani gave an audible swallow, and then she, too, said, "Yes, thank you. So much."

Putting a hand on her shoulder, Dare replied without words. He'd known Alani for years, watched her grow up, and felt like a pseudo big brother in many ways. He'd attended her graduation, both from high school and college. He'd been there with Alani and Trace when they buried their parents.

They had become part of his hodgepodge family.

Two days ago human traffickers had snatched Alani outside her hotel while she vacationed near the beach. Tomorrow she would have been sold, and finding her after that might have become impossible.

Right now, what the siblings needed was time alone, and Dare needed to sort things out with his remaining passenger. "I should get going."

Trace followed Dare's attention toward the van, saw the slim, dirty foot that appeared out of the open rear-passenger door, and lifted one eyebrow in an expression of disbelief. "You have a passenger?"

"A small complication, that's all."

"You're serious?"

Dare shrugged. "There were six women in that small trailer, Trace. Four of them were local and scattered as soon as I got them free." He nodded his head toward the van. "That one was drugged, near starved, grimy." And in many ways, even in the cramped confines of the rusty trailer, she'd been separated from the others, kept alone.

For certain, she wasn't the typical woman kidnapped for the growing sex trade.

Trace grew curious in that quiet way of his. "An American complication?"

"I think so." From what he'd seen of her grubby face, she didn't look foreign. "She hasn't come to yet, so I haven't been able to talk to her."

Alani turned in her brother's arms, and she, too, looked toward the van. "She fought them whenever she came to. She called them names and almost egged them on." Alani shivered in remembered fear. "It was so horrible. The men slapped her around for being mouthy, but she didn't stop. She just cursed them more."

Dare frowned. The little idiot might have been killed. "Foolhardy."

"I think she was really angry." As if she couldn't fathom such boldness, Alani took a breath. "Even when they held her down to force more drugs on her, she didn't cry. She raged."

"Did she speak English?"

Nodding, Alani said, "She sounded American to me. I mean, no accent or anything."

Considering all that, Dare said aloud, "She wasn't there for the same purpose as the rest of you."

"Probably not. Sometimes four or five of them would come in the trailer, but they'd stand around her and I couldn't see what they did. As far as I could tell, they

never really leered at her like□" She bit her lip, shivered again. "Like they did the rest of us. They never seemed to be sizing her up for anything. They just picked on her."

Trace hugged her again. "It's all right. You're safe now."

She nodded, shored up by the courage her brother had given her, and faced Dare. "She was there when we got there, already looking pretty bad. Once, before the men drugged her, she told me her name was Molly."

"Molly what?"

Alani shook her head. "We weren't supposed to talk, so I was afraid to ask her anything."

Trace tucked her back in close and asked over her head, "What are you going to do with her now?"

"No idea." Dare thought of her insubstantial weight when she'd been over his shoulder, of that tangled, light brown hair that had concealed much of her bruised face. "Hopefully someone will pay me for bringing her home."

Without releasing her brother, Alani reached out and punched Dare for the callous comment. He grinned, caught her wrist and kissed her knuckles.

She'd been given a terrible fright, and two days had probably felt like a month, but Alani had spirit. She'd get through this, thank God.

But the other one. How long had they had her? And why? Impatient with thoughts of her, Dare said, "I gotta run."

"Hold up a sec." Trace caught his arm, then dug in his jeans pocket and pulled out a fat envelope.

Pissed, Dare took a step back. "What the hell is that?"

"Expenses. And don't curse in front of Alani." Hell, just because he usually hired out didn't mean he'd

charge a friend□a brother. He'd have gone after Alani if he'd had to crawl the whole way. "I don't need it."

Solemn, Trace held the envelope out to him. "But I need you to take it."

It hit Dare anew how difficult this was for Trace, not just that his sister had been hurt, but that he hadn't b...

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