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WENDY DAVY

HEART-STOPPING SUSPENSE...TENDER ROMANCE...  
FROM THE FIRST PAGE TO THE VERY LAST,  
YOU WILL BE GLUED TO THE STORY.

*LOVE-2-READ-NOVELS ON DEADLY CHASE*

YOU CAN'T HIDE

# You Can't Hide

Wendy Davy

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## **You Can't Hide**

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Cover Art by Nicola Martinez

White Rose Publishing, a division of Pelican Ventures, LLC  
[www.pelicanbookgroup.com](http://www.pelicanbookgroup.com) PO Box 1738 \*Aztec, NM \* 87410

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### Publishing History

First White Rose Edition, 2013

Paperback Edition ISBN 978-1-61116-323-0

Electronic Edition ISBN 978-1-61116-280-6

**Published in the United States of America**

## Dedication

For Grandma Lilly, one of the strongest women I've ever known. I will love you always and forever.



## Praise for Wendy Davy

“Ms. Davy crafted 232 pages of perfectly balanced action, spine-tingling suspense, and heart-tugging romance in *Deadly Chase*. A word of caution, though. Once you start reading, you won't want to put it down until you read the last word!” ~ Dora Hiers

*Reluctant Bridesmaid* 2010 SARA Merritt Award Winner ~ “Ms. Davy shows her expertise while penning this work of art. This book is, in my opinion, one of her very best. I highly recommend this book to all. It is written so that young adults can enjoy it as well as any others who enjoy a beautiful storyline...” ~ The Romance Studio ~ Brenda Talley





*"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Proverbs 23:7*

# 1

"Don't ask me to do this." Gage McKenna gripped the cell phone tight against his ear. "I'm in no shape to protect anyone."

"I don't believe that. Besides, you've been holed up on Cedar Island long enough." Jonas Dalton's voice came through clear.

"You don't understand."

"I do understand. I was in Colombia when it all went down, remember? You'd be dead if it weren't for me."

Gage cringed and dragged a hand down his whiskered face. "I can't believe you're playing that card."

"Believe it, pal. This is personal. My sister's life is in danger."

"Why don't you protect her yourself?"

"I've got to get back to Colombia before my cover's blown. I need you to take her in ASAP."

"Why me?"

"I don't trust anyone else."

Gage stood, testing his strength. Searing pain shot up his left leg, and he fought to keep a moan from escaping his lips. He wasn't ready to protect anyone, no matter what Jonas said. "I want to be left alone."

"Why? So you can pity yourself to death? It's time

you come back to the land of the living.”

His friend might have a point, but he didn't like it. “I'm not leaving Cedar Island.”

“I'm not asking you to.”

Gage tensed. “No way. She's not coming here.” Not to his sanctuary. With only a handful of houses remaining on the Eastern Shore barrier reef island, he was virtually alone, and he liked it that way.

“Do you think I have other options?” Jonas's tone took on a heightened sense of urgency. Normally calm and cool under pressure, that could only mean one thing—this situation must be serious.

“What about witness protection?”

“Not going to happen. She was in Colombia at the time, and she didn't actually see anything. The only protection the government is willing to provide is to arrange for a Baltimore police cruiser to canvas her neighborhood.”

Gage ground his teeth as he looked out the window, searching for the solace he craved. With the tide rising, the Atlantic Ocean's waves stretched across the beach. The protected island teemed with endangered species of birds and other wildlife, and numerous seashells covered miles of desolate sand. He'd known this house and all its outbuildings would become available long before the Coast Guard retired the place. He'd watched and waited for the opportunity, and his patience had eventually paid off.

Gage valued the view from his home, but he valued his privacy more. Even as these thoughts passed through his mind he knew he couldn't deny Jonas. He owed the man his life.

“Tell me about her.”

Silence, and then an exhale sounded over the line.

"I knew I could count on you. Cara works at the Cherry Hill Library in Baltimore—"

"I'm not asking what she does. Tell me who's after her."

"Mercado."

Gage's chest tightened, and his vision narrowed. "That's all I need to know."

\*\*\*\*

Cara inspected her suitcase's contents as anxiety knotted her stomach. Her tense muscles screamed for release, but she had no time for a jaunt on the treadmill or a trip to the gym—she had a brother breathing down her neck.

Jonas appeared in her bedroom's doorway, a cell phone pressed against his ear. "I'll call back with an ETA." He disconnected and deposited the phone into a camouflaged satchel. "We need to go."

"It took me weeks to prepare for my trip to Colombia. You can't expect me to walk in the door and repack in five minutes." She brushed past Jonas and yanked open her dresser. "It would help to know where I'm going. Do I need sweaters or short sleeves? The weather in May can be as unpredictable as you are."

"You really don't get it do you?" Jonas scooped up clothes and stuffed them into her suitcase. "This man we're dealing with has no conscience, no moral code, and absolutely no tolerance for betrayal."

"I still don't understand why you think I'm in danger. I didn't betray anyone, and I certainly didn't witness anything."

"It doesn't matter." Jonas grabbed her purse and

searched its contents. He plucked out her cell phone and dropped it on the floor before smashing it with his boot heel.

"Hey, what are you doing?" Her mind spinning, Cara couldn't comprehend this change in her brother. She'd never seen him like this before. Usually an easy going guy, he'd transformed into a ruthless machine.

Jonas slid her credit and debit cards from her wallet, and stashed them away in her nightstand. Intense green eyes met hers and held. "I'll tell you what I'm doing. I'm keeping you alive. The phone can be traced and the cards monitored. Anything you need, you can buy with cash." He stuffed a wad of twenty dollar bills into her purse, zipped it shut, and shoved it toward her.

"This is crazy. I need more time." She hadn't had the chance to wrap her brain around all that had happened in the past forty-eight hours, much less plan for a trip to who-knew-where.

"There is no more time." Jonas withdrew a handgun from beneath his jacket, and peered into the living room.

"You've got to be kidding." This was too much. "Do you really think this guy has followed us all the way to Baltimore?"

"Alejandro Mercado has money, power, and connections in every corner of the world. He will stop at nothing to protect his drug business."

"I told you I didn't see anything. It was too dark. The farming villages in Colombia are not very well lit, you know."

"I'm well aware." Jonas stepped down the narrow hallway.

Cara slung her purse over her shoulder, picked up

her suitcase and followed.

He stopped at the garage door, pausing long enough to meet her eyes. "It doesn't matter that you didn't see Mercado commit murder. As long as he *thinks* you did, he's going to come after you." He drew his brows together. "I still can't believe you followed me to South America."

"I thought you were on a missionary trip providing food and medical care to needy children. I wanted to surprise you and lend a helping hand."

"The only thing I told you was that I was going on a mission. I can't help it if you filled in the blanks with that overactive imagination of yours."

"I'm a librarian. I read books. Of course I have an imagination." She poked a finger at his chest. "Besides, you really should've told me you were some kind of James Bond."

"I'm not a spy."

"Then what are you?" She narrowed her eyes. "I still don't really know, do I?"

"I can't discuss it."

"Right. It's top secret." A strange sense of loss swept over her. She had thought she'd known her twin so well, and to discover she really didn't know what Jonas spent his time doing had not only shocked her, but rattled her sense of security.

"It's for your own protection. The less you know the better."

"I wish you hadn't said that." As much as she'd like to deny it, she really was in deep trouble.

Compassion leaked through his gaze. "You're going to be all right. I'm leaving you with a man I trust with my life."

"You're not going to stay with me?" Her legs

weakened, and she leaned against the door frame.

“I can’t. I have to go back to Colombia and finish the job.”

“What if I don’t want to go live with some stranger?”

“Would you rather end up dead?”

## 2

Cara chewed on a Snickers bar, folding the wrapper back as she ate. The cumbersome drive south from Maryland through Virginia's Eastern Shore seemed to take forever on the four lane highway. Each small town they entered, the speed limit slowed to a crawl.

"Are we there yet?" She nudged Jonas.

"Now I know what Mom and Dad felt like when we were kids." Jonas cracked a smile, but it only lasted a moment before worry lines returned. "Remember, if I need to contact you I'll call Gage's secure satellite phone."

She finished the last bite of her makeshift dinner, and washed it down with lukewarm soda. "You could've called me directly if you hadn't smashed my phone."

"As I said before, any calls made to your cell phone could be traced."

"Right. All this espionage stuff is giving me a headache." She stared out the window, not really seeing anything. "What else should I know?"

"Any contact with the outside world could lead Mercado directly to you."

"Am I supposed to hide in this guy's house and not talk to anyone?" She was an introvert by nature, but being totally isolated was a stretch, even for her.

"I'll leave that up to Gage. You'll do what he says

without question." His lips drew together in a tight line as if he expected her to argue.

"The last time you looked so intense was when you told me Mom and Dad's sailboat had capsized off the Pacific Coast." She thought of the three long days they'd waited for word of their parent's fate. She'd been overwhelmed then, and now her world had spun out of control again.

"Yeah, well, let's hope this situation turns out better."

"It's been five years, but I miss them as if we just lost them."

Jonas wrapped his hand around hers and squeezed. "I know. Me too."

He'd always looked out for her, but after losing their parents, he'd gone overboard with the big brother routine. "I still think you're overreacting to all this."

"Think what you'd like. I want you safe." Jonas released her hand and fiddled with the GPS on his phone, checking their coordinates. "We'll be there within the hour."

Her nerves spiked. "Where exactly are you taking me?"

"Cedar Island. It's one of Eastern Shore's many barrier reefs. One side of the island backs against Foley Creek, the other faces the Atlantic Ocean. Most of the land out that way federally protects endangered wildlife, but this island has a few houses on it. Gage McKenna owns the largest one, and it's far away from the others. There are a few fishermen that traverse the creek, some commercial crabbers, but for the most part, the area isn't populated. You'll be safe."

"Who is this Gage guy, anyway?"

"A friend."

Cara lifted her brows. "That's all you can tell me? A friend?"

"I've worked with him for about five years. He can be rough around the edges, but once you get to know him, you'll like him." He eyed her empty candy wrapper. "Sure you don't want something else to eat before we turn off Route 13?"

"No, thanks. I haven't had much of an appetite since all this started." But, if she could get some answers out of Jonas without having to pull out his teeth, maybe she'd feel better about her circumstances. "What exactly does rough around the edges mean?" She almost didn't want to know, but considering she'd be staying under the same roof, she should know something about him.

"Gage has had a hard time recently. He's had some...life changing issues to deal with."

"What kind of issues?"

"You'll learn soon enough." He checked the GPS, and then turned left off the main highway. "Just don't let him catch you looking at him with pity."

"Why would I do that?"

"You'll see."

"More cryptic answers." Cara gave up her inquiries and looked out the window. Greenery whizzed past. Although pretty to look at, after a while, it all looked the same. She stifled the urge to ask again if they were there yet.

"Storm's heading in."

Cara glanced at the sky as the sun began to set. Gray clouds billowed along the horizon, creating an ominous looking background. "Tell me this island has a bridge."

Jonas crinkled his nose. "Sorry. You'll have to ride

a mile or two in a boat through Foley Creek to get there.”

“I’m going to be trapped on an island with your friend, with only a boat as means of transportation?”

“Don’t think of it as trapped. Think of it as...secured.”

“Well, in that case...” Cara couldn’t keep the sarcasm from her voice. “At least I still remember how to drive a boat in case I need to escape.”

“Don’t get any ideas. I can guarantee if you leave the island without Gage it would not bode well with him.”

Cara crossed her arms. “So, he gets to tell me what to do?”

“He gets to keep you alive. And, yes, you’d better listen to him.” Jonas took another turn before making a phone call. “Yeah, it’s me. I’ll have her there in less than ten minutes.” He disconnected and looked at Cara. “I don’t like the looks of those clouds. I’m afraid you’re going to have a wet ride.”

“What about you? Aren’t you going to stay at least for one night?”

“Sorry, sis. No can do.”

Cara’s anxiety reached an all-time high. She already longed for the quiet and comfort of her own home, and for her normal routine. Had it only been two days ago she’d boarded the flight to Colombia? “I don’t know about this.”

“I do. You’ll be safe with Gage.”

“You keep saying that.”

“I keep meaning it.” Rain sprinkled on the windshield, slow at first, then large drops splattered against the glass. Jonas set the wipers on high. “We’re almost there.”

"How long do you think it'll take to put Mercado away?"

"Weeks. Maybe months. It's impossible to tell."

Cara's stomach pitched. "Uh, Jonas?"

"Yeah?" He answered absently, intent once again on navigating the roads.

"I only have two weeks of vacation time approved. I've already used up a couple of those days. If you don't apprehend this guy by the twenty-third, I'm going to have to get back to Baltimore or risk losing my job."

"Sorry Cara. Until I'm sure Mercado is no longer a threat, you cannot go home. No matter how long it takes."

Cara opened her mouth to argue.

"Not going to happen." His tone indicated the conversation was over.

He drove the vehicle into an empty gravel lot and parked. To the left stood an old, ramshackle house, looking long ago abandoned. To the right, marshland stretched as far as she could see, which wasn't far considering the torrential downpour. Straight ahead, a long, narrow dock and a boat ramp led toward a winding creek.

*Lord, help keep all of us safe on this journey. Lead us. Protect us. Guide us.*

"There he is."

While Jonas sounded somewhat relieved, Cara's heart leapt clear into her throat. She searched the darkening area. "Where?" She didn't see another living soul.

"He's got his Carolina Skiff tied to the dock. Looks like he's ready for you."

"What if I'm not ready for him?"

“It’s too late. There’s no turning back now.” Jonas climbed from the car, leaving Cara to question her sanity as the rain continued to drown the landscape.

Why had she gotten the notion to hop on an international flight and take a jaunt to Colombia in the first place? She’d never even left the country before. If she’d listened to common sense, she would’ve been snug inside her apartment, sipping hot cocoa and enjoying a suspense novel instead of running for her life.

Too bad common sense had lost, and she’d boarded that plane.

Jonas jogged to the end of the dock and bent low to speak with the man in the boat. The two shook hands, and then Jonas ran back toward the car. After opening the back door, he tugged out her suitcase. “All set. Let’s go.” He called over the drumming of rain.

Cara gave up all notions of trying to stay dry, and exited. The downpour instantly soaked her. Cold rainwater flowed from her head all the way down to saturate the insides of her tennis shoes. She shivered, hoping she wouldn’t catch pneumonia before all was said and done.

Ducking her head, she followed Jonas to the dock, careful not to slip on the wet boards. A small boat floated several feet below the dock’s surface, the shadowed owner standing steady within.

“The tide’s out.” Jonas gestured toward the low water. “You’ll have to climb down the ladder.”

Cara couldn’t see any ladder, other than a crooked piece of wood nailed about halfway down. Not a fan of heights, her nerves pinched tight and the base of her skull began to throb. Cold, wet, and miserable, she shook from the inside out. And, she hadn’t even set

foot inside the boat yet. She wondered what Jonas would think if she refused to get in.

Jonas tossed the suitcase. The man caught it between his large hands. Although she couldn't make out his features hidden beneath a hooded raincoat, his expansive shoulders and tall stature couldn't be disguised.

Cara's throat dried. He looked intimidating even as she stood several feet above him. She leaned close to Jonas. "Are you sure about this?"

"Don't worry. He'll take good care of you." He smoothed back the hair plastered to her face before pulling her into a tight hug. "I'll be in touch."

Jonas released her and jogged away without looking back.

A wind gust swept around Cara, replacing his warmth with a cold emptiness. What if he didn't return? Gut wrenching fear took hold. Why hadn't she told him to be careful? What if...

She took a step toward his retreating back.

"Let him go." A man's stern voice halted her.

She jerked her gaze toward the man in the boat. His face was hidden in shadows, but he held up his hand as if to guide her.

"Turn around and step onto the ladder."

She hesitated. Perhaps she'd feel a little more at ease if she could see his features, but aside from asking him to remove his rain gear and shine a light on his face she could do nothing about it.

She glanced again toward the parking lot. Jonas was gone.

"You're going to have to trust me eventually. Might as well start now." He shouted over the relentless rain.