



Lay It Down

Cara McKenna

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Backbreaking days, wild nights, and the hard hum of steel between your thighs...

That's a life well lived, according to the Desert Dogs—four friends who call Fortuity, Nevada, their badlands home.

Vince Grossier is the self-crowned outlaw king around here. But when Fortuity's slick new mayor invites a casino development to town, greed isn't far behind—and it claims Vince's good friend as its first casualty. With the law turning a blind eye to the mysterious death, Vince must seek his own brand of justice. The pretty photographer hired by the developers might be the key to uncovering the truth. And she's a temptation too good to pass up.

Finally free of a controlling ex, Kim Paget's not looking to be taken for a ride—not on the back of some tattooed roughneck's bike and *definitely* not in his bed. But when she uncovers evidence supporting Vince's suspicions of murder, Kim must entrust her safety to a man whose body threatens danger of a whole different kind.

Lay It Down Details

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From Reader Review Lay It Down for online ebook

Andrea says

No one will be more surprised than me that I did not love Lay It Down. I don't even personally know of another reader who was more anxious to read this book. It's possible that my expectations were too high, but I honestly don't think that's it. As much as I wanted to love this book, I didn't.

Here's why...

Cara McKenna is a master at writing stories with a bit of quirk. It can be that the character has an unexpected kink, personality or occupation. Or they story might revolve around an unusual circumstance. Whatever it is, I go into a McKenna book just knowing there will be some sort of hook that will have me dying of giddy as I read. Lay It Down didn't have that. It was mainstream, which is fine. I'm sure that this novel will find a huge audience for that very reason. But for some reason, deserved or not, I just felt somewhat let down.

Lay It Down is not an MC book. And fine, that doesn't really bother me, and it's not promised in the book description, but.... it's kind of implied. A lot of readers are going to look at that cover and assume. Vince Grossier is a dude who just happens to ride a bike while trying to solve a murder mystery and get into his favorite gal's pants.

Lay It Down read like a cross between a modern-day western and romantic suspense. The story is set in northern Nevada, with the townspeople, led by Vince, dismayed over a casino development. There's a lot of talk about the red dirt and quarries and shafts (not the fun kind). Though it's actually fit the story, it didn't turn my crank. The same for the romantic suspense element. There's an old murder, a new possible murder and bad guys who'll stop at nothing to get their way. The story does not end on a true cliffhanger, but there seems to be a big series arc. I just don't have a lot of luck with the sub-genre.

Something I love about McKenna's other work is her ability to make me believe in a couple, despite impossibilities. I've believed in a hermit alcoholic with a penchant for ropes and his sweet lady love. I've believed in a Parisian male prostitute and his virgin lover. I've always felt that connection. With Kim and Vince, I totally bought the physical, but didn't really understand why exactly they fell in love.

There's an element of magical realism in Lay It Down, and it just didn't work for me. Vince's mom and his brother both have "the sight". They're able to predict the future and it does play an important role in the story, at least on the mom's end. I don't know, it felt unnecessary, to me.

As long as I'm wearing my tightest pair of rantypants, let me just add one more issue. I love the swears. I use the swears a lot in real life. I like to mix things up which means I vary my swears. But geez, it felt like every other sentence started with the word "Goddamn..." I mean, I get it, it's a great swear word but what about the other greats? They were vastly underused. I swear, I got so annoyed that my eye started twitching every time another sentence started with that word.

Okay. I know this review is coming off as pretty negative, but I did like Lay It Down well enough. The main characters were fairly engaging, as were the secondary characters. I'm hoping future books will focus on different leads, particularly Rayna and Vince's brother Case. The story was interesting, it just didn't pull me in. My favorite part, to no one's surprise, was the sex. McKenna is always stellar at the physical interactions between her characters, and Lay It Down was no exception.

So. Do I recommend Lay It Down? I do, but long-time McKenna fans should be prepared for something completely different.

Favorite Quotes

She spoke to his throat, watching the pulse tick there. "I want you to know, you're the most obnoxious man I've ever met."

He nodded thoughtfully, looking not at all surprised. "That's why I dialed back my usual wooing tactics."

"You banged a guy named Vince... Holy shit. That is so awesome. Are you his old lady now? Do you have to get his name tattooed on your cleavage?"

"He's not in a gang you spaz. Though he is on parole..."

A pause. Jesus Christ, Kimbo. I don't think I've seen you go through a major breakup before, but when you're in the market for a bad-idea rebound, you do not fuck around."

"Apparently not."

"You're my new hero. Tell me everything."

Kelly says

I'm a fan of Cara McKenna's and I usually like her books, but this one really didn't do it for me. I liked the characters, the writing was good and the story held my interest, yet something was missing.

Will I read the next book in the series? Absolutely! There's still a lot of questions that need answering, plus it's Duncan and Raina's story. That should be very interesting.

◆*Arianna◆* says

Lay It Down is the first book in Cara McKenna *Desert Dogs* series.

Despite the cover, *Lay It Down* is not a MC book, which I liked, because I'm not really a fan of MC books. However if it was the case, I would have read it anyway, because Cara McKenna is one of my few favorite authors.

Vince Grossier lived all his life in Fortuity, a small town in Nevada. Even if he had seen the inside of a jail a few times, Vince is not a bad guy. He doesn't live an exciting life in Fortuity, but he likes his small town exactly how it is. Needless to say he's not very happy when some corporation wants to build a casino in his

town. He knows it's a great opportunity for Fortuity and that it will bring money, but he also knows the local business will be affected and some things will change with the casino's opening.

Something changed for sure when Vince's finds out that his friend, Alex, was killed in drunk driving. He starts to suspect that Alex's death was not an accident, but his friends don't believe him. He is determined to find what really happened with his friend so he start his own investigation.

Kim is a free agent, hired to take pictures for the casino's promotional materials. She just break up with her boyfriend of two years, but this doesn't stop her attraction for Vince.

When Vince meets Kim Paget he doesn't know what he wants to get out of her, but he is curious about her role with this corporation who wants to build the casino.

You're a very unusual man.

You're a very attractive woman.

When Kim find herself involved in this crazy investigation, she is determined like Vince to discover the truth no matter what.

Vince and Kim are drawn to each other from the beginning, even if they are so different. Vince is not exactly boyfriend material, he doesn't do relationship but he knows who he is, he seems to say exactly what he feels and he doesn't care about anybody thinks of him. He is attracted to Kim from the start, even if he knows she's too stylish and polished for him. Kim is not intimidated by Vince, she's cool and unimpressed when they meet, but she's intrigued by his rough, tattooed exterior. She isn't exactly scandalize by Vince's image because Vince is unlike any man she'd ever been with.

Soon, Vince and Kim can't run away from each other and from what they feel. Lust becomes more, feelings are involved and they're curious about where this relationship will go.

You're the kind of mistake I haven't let myself make before. But should. - Kim

And you, you're wrapped up in my troubles. I don't understand yet why the fuck you're a part of all this, or what to think about it. – Vince

The chemistry between Vince and Kim it's fantastic and it's there from the start and their connection it's palpable and strong. From the start I liked their interaction and how their relationship progressed. It felt real, natural. I liked both main characters. I enjoyed Vince cocky side and his dirty mouth and I like that Kim wasn't a weak heroine.

I don't know exactly what I love more about Mrs McKenna books, but she knows for sure how to write. When it comes to write a steamy scene, she's one of the best. Her choice of words is fantastic, she can make you see everything, but she can also make you feel. (And of course I wanted to feel Vince!!!). To say that I

enjoyed the sex scenes would be an understatement! They are so hot, so intense, so real and so...HOT. One think it's for sure, I read them very slowww, only because they are very well written and I wanted to experience every moment.

I also liked the setting of this story. I like when I read a book with something new, anything new, so the setting, Nevada, was a good part of this story for me. There are some mystic elements in this story. They didn't bother me (too much), but I didn't understand the author's need to use them.

Lay It Down it's a contemporary erotic romance with some mystery elements. I can't say suspense elements, because for me it wasn't a suspense romance. The suspense is very weak in this story. I guess I expected more action.

Overall, I really enjoyed this story and I can't wait to read the other books in this series!

♥Rachel♥ says

3.5 Stars

Lay It Down was an intriguing start to Cara McKenna's new series, and one that I hope to enjoy more as future installments come out.

Vince may come off as big, bad and tough, and he is, but he's also a loyal friend, son, and brother. So when his longtime friend, Deputy Alex Dunn winds up dead in suspicious circumstances, Vince makes it his mission to find out what happened. Meeting Kim, a photographer for Sunnyside, the developer of a new casino, fits nicely into his plans of investigation, he just doesn't expect to feel so deeply for her. When she comes into danger as the mystery unfolds, Vince's top priority is keeping her safe.

Kim is on assignment in the little dusty town of Fortuity, photographing the future site of a big casino, a project none of the locals are happy about. During her stay she runs into the big, brutish, and gorgeous Vince. She's completely fascinated and hopelessly attracted. He's not her type at all but Kim's ready for some passion, and maybe a little danger.

With a punch of hot curiosity, she let herself imagine what a guy like Vince would be like in bed. What he'd say. What he'd want, and how he'd likely bully his way into getting offered whatever that was,

just like he'd strong-armed her into staying for the beer. And though that seemed kind of dangerous, it was also exciting.

As she becomes embroiled in the mystery Vince is hell bent in solving, Kim gets way more than she bargained for.

Cara McKenna's writing is beautiful and she is a pro at writing scenes that can make you seriously hot and send your pulses racing! Vince was outwardly tough and maybe a little arrogant, but I wouldn't complain:

He was a giving lover, in his own cocky way. If Vince was selfish, it was purely in how he wanted to master a woman, during sex. And that was a breed of male pushiness she could actually get on board with.

Yes, please!

I enjoyed Lay It Down overall, but I had some trouble investing in the story. For some reason the characters felt a little superficial, and I never felt like I had a good read on Vince or Kim. I'm not sure if it had something to do with the third person narration, which is not my favorite and usually makes me feel less connected. Also, I felt like the mystery, even though only a small part was solved, should've been fleshed out more to give us something to grab onto and wonder about in the next book. I guess the mystery will be part of a story arc continuing on into the next books.

Because this is the start of the series, it may be that we're just getting the groundwork here, getting to know the characters and building on the overall story. I plan on picking up the next book to find out.

A copy was provided by Signet Eclipse in exchange for an honest review.

SamJ ★Needs a HEA★ says

[No (hide spoiler)]

Kim Bailey says

3.5 Stars

It took me a while to understand how I felt about this book. It was NOT what I expected from this author. Normally Cara McKenna can woo me, wow me, totally turn me into a big pile of melty goo. But this book is a lot more suspense, mystery, and much less steamy erotica. And she added a touch of the paranormal? Odd & it didn't seem to fit with the rest of the story.

The writing is very good. The characters are well developed and interesting. I liked the general idea of the book and the romantic storyline was excellent.

But overall this book was just **ok** for me. Perhaps it was timing & not getting what I was looking for. Or perhaps it was the crazy predictions? I don't know.

I still plan on reading the next in the series. But I will go in with a different mindset.

Lana ✿Dirty Girl Romance**✿ says**

OH.MY.GOD!!

I need this book!

But August 14?!!! I think I just died a little

Belle Aurora says

This is the first and only Cara McKenna book I did not finish.

I love Cara's work, normally, and her writing is ALWAYS phenomenal but this story wasn't for me.

In saying that, give it a go because it might be your cup of tea ♥

Baba says

4.5 oral-fixation stars. Full review posted August 11, 2014

Rating clarification

An extra half star for the orgasmically fucktastic sex! Besides, it's well-deserved because it includes the hottest dry hump ever. My favorite, however, was smexy time #2.

If you have been wondering if there's any pun attached to my oral-fixation stars...yes, absolutely! I love Vince's dirty mouth and his lips; I love the way he speaks, his deadpan humor, and I love watching him going down on Kim, and I definitely adore his dirty mind. How could I not volunteer?

Vince is having a drink at Benji's, when an attractive, bespectacled blonde woman enters the bar. Never been a shy guy, he's joining her at her table and starts chatting with her. Fortuity is dealing with a huge change. Sunnyside is going to build a casino that will not only provide prosperity for the town but might also endanger the old-established shops. Fact is, the solvent investor is always on the lookout to do a buy-out and, according to Vince, the attractive stranger came right on cue. Due to marketing reasons, Kim came to Fortuity, a town set in Nevada, for five days to take promotional photos. Vince is intrigued and offers to lend her a hand, playing the tour guide and showing her the most spectacular places. Of course he's also keen on keeping an eye on Kim. Soon enough, the story takes an interesting turn and Kim's stay in Fortuity expands

beyond the five days. Kim had always stayed on the safe side and her ex had been quick to spoil any fun. Meeting bad boy Vince, who's on parole, is tempting her to take the exit and go for a little adventure...

Fine, busted. "I was...just wondering...if you were any good at kissing," she finished in a mumble.

"Oh, were you then?" he asked with overdone surprise.

"Don't act so satisfied."

"Quit giving me reasons to."

"Shut up and let's kiss," she decided. "Then at least we'll know whether or not all this flirting is a waste of time."

Guess what I will remember for a very long time? The. Awesome. Sex. Cara McKenna has sprawled her humble self all over my shelf labeled *best-sex-scenes*. What a feat!

"Are we fucking tonight?" she asked him, point-blank. No need to be subtle with this brute.

He looked scandalized. "Goddamn, woman. Here I thought you were just after a good-night kiss."

In reference to Rock Addiction where the sex had been shockingly bad, the sex in Lay It Down was shockingly good. Although it didn't come as a surprise because I know that Cara McKenna writes delicious sex scenes. Besides, less is more, isn't it? I prefer high-end quality over quantity any day. I have no clue why an author would fill a book with tons of short, poor, and gratuitous sex scenes when you can have **this**? This. Is. Insanely. Good. And. Insanely. Hot. Sex. Only a few super-duper steamy scenes but holy Mother of God was thispantymeltinghot! My windows were fogging up and my entire flat could have served as a sensuous sauna.

Yeah, Baba, memorize it. It turned your little world inside out. Fact is, Vince is a completely and utterly memorable lay, right up my alluring and dirty alley.

These few highly erotic scenes were incredibly fervent and exquisitely well-written. A. Total. F@cking. Turn. On. They are buried in my entire body, branded in my bones, imprinted in my brain. Gawd, I love how Cara not only writes sex but makes me want to get dirtied myself. And, folks, she does it with such style, it blows the mind. That's being dirty, talking dirty, and doing the dirty deed on one seriously classic level. Kudos, I am mighty impressed.

"Shall we head to Elko?" she asked, grabbing her shoes.

"Yeah. And we've got some business to take care of there."

She raised her brows. "Aside from dropping off my rental?"

"Unfinished business. Kind that's going down between our two bodies. You follow?"

She snorted. "A dog could've caught that innuendo."

"Good. 'Cause you've had enough surprises for one day. When I take you later, you'll sure as shit see it coming."

At first, I was a little bit miffed that up until the 22 % mark we got only two scenes that involved the main characters. Readers should be aware that Lay It Down isn't solely focused on Vince and Kim having an entertaining journey at finding their HEA under the mean Nevada sun. Cara did lay it all out when she introduced her readers to a rather vast yet very eclectic cast of secondary characters. I loved Miah and Raina and their dynamics with Duncan. Surprisingly, I even liked The Dick, Duncan Welch immensely. That guy has a hard and stubborn stick up his ass but, geez, is he one intriguing specimen of a snobbish and tightly wounded male with some serious personal s@it going on. I can't wait to see how this is going to pan out with

Raina. Frankly, I can't shake off a feeling that he's either kinky (and domineering) or (more likely) he might even submit to a woman in the bedroom. Truth be told, I'd love to see him going down on his knees for a woman. Anyway, I have no clue yet but something is off and I could see Raina taking over the reins effortlessly. And Casey...what did he do in his past when he was away from home for nine years? It's hinted at but I couldn't quite grasp his character yet. There's definitely an interesting story buried somewhere, too. Oh my, I can practically smell the great potential and with this first book, the bow came off its packet. The wrapping and content, however, have yet to be unraveled.

To be honest, the (rather weak) mystery wasn't what kept me reading and I figured out who the main bad guy was pretty early on. This being said, it didn't prevent me from enjoying the story. And, friendly heads up, don't expect too much from the action department either because you won't find it here. Another benefit came into play, however, and that's the fact that Lay It Down is a very character-driven story and accomplished to intrigue me consistently.

I think it's not a surprise when I tell you that Vince made the story for me. Of course I have a hero *fixation* and it's a basic requirement that every book I'm reading, should feature a gorgeous hero. If you want subtle then look elsewhere because Vince is a lot of things but subtlety is definitely nowhere to be seen. There's just something so enticing about a bad boy; a little wrong and a little dangerous. And Vince is a bad boy with a sexy mouth, a dirty mind but also a vulnerable side. Fact is, Vince has it all in spades. In bed, he's bossy and demanding yet giving and generous. But also outside the bedroom he's the man who's in charge and he loves it when a woman relies on him. His portrayal is done well, although I would have liked a bit more *fixation* on his personal issues. So, while he's cocky and devoted and a total gift to a woman between the sheets, a touch of bitterness filtered through his characterization that should have been explored more thoroughly. What I got didn't quite satisfy me.

The snappy interaction between Vince and Kim was terrific. I felt they made quite a stunning couple and complemented each other wonderfully inside and outside the bedroom. I also loved Vince's deadpan humor and he sure as heck conjured many smiles on my face.

I haven't adored every book by Cara McKenna but what I truly love about her work is her diversity and her courage to explore different kinds of heroes and settings. The sky's the limit, right? Not once did I have to read the same story with the same characters. All of her protagonists are unique in their own way and she does a mighty fine job at giving them a face, a mind, a heart, a body and a background with layers upon layers that simply demand to be unraveled.

Bottom line, Cara McKenna has penned yet another fascinating story with great and likable characters, a plot steamed up with a couple fantabulous sex scenes and the promise of more to come. The mystery is not completely solved at the end of Lay It Down and, romance-wise, the sneak peek of Give It All as well as the blurb are reasons enough for me to let my expectations shoot sky-high for the next installment. Bring it on, Cara, I'll be ready to dig in anytime!

"That was the best sex of my life. And we didn't even quite have sex."

"I rounded it up."

"Me, too."

Recommended read.

Ellie says

It's not an MC romance, but rather an intense romantic suspense thought the guys (and girls) do ride bikes and support each other without there being an official motorcycle club.

I loved everything about this story - the characters, the plot, the suspense, the romance, the hot love scenes and mostly the superb writing style of Ms McKenna!

Full review to come soon

So, here is my full review, also posted on <http://elliereadsfiction.blogspot.com/>

Cara McKenna is quickly becoming one of my favourite author of romance (including erotic romance). I love her writing style and the characters she creates feel so real, yet complex and unique, that I get completely lost in them.

This is my favourite of her books that I've read so far. It's not an MC book, though some of the characters can be described as bikers. It's more of a romantic suspense set in a small, run-down town in the middle of the Nevada desert. It's not an epic love story, but a love story of discovery. He is not her type, she is not his either, yet they get together, as a one-time hook-up, which grows into an affair, then into the forever-kind of love.

The hero, Vince was a typical Cara McKenna's character - rough around the edge, a small-time criminal, fighter, yet he was honourable, loyal to his friends and family, to his town and ultimately he was on quest for justice.

He was not romantic or gentle in his pursuit of the heroine, Kim. On the contrary, he was pushy and insistent, rather direct and blunt in expressing his desires. Yet, the relationship which developed between them took him by surprise - he developed feeling for her, feelings that were new for him - he wanted her to stay, to be his, he wanted to take care of her, to protect her, to love her.

Their relationship was journey of revelations for her, a sort of self-discovery. Kim had been sheltered all her life, discourage from taking chances, so her stay in Fortuity and her affair with Vince was all about tasting freedom, risking her heart (and life) to experience love (life) to the fullest. I liked her a lot and it was easy for me to relate to her. He had her doubts and insecurities, yet she was curious and determined, in a way brave both in love and in helping Vince solve a murder mystery.

My least least favourite aspect of the story was the vision/prophecy of Vince's mother. It added a different dimension to the romance (and the suspense). I felt it was down-played eventually but I'm not sure how well it fits into the rather realistic story.

Ms McKenna introduces a cast of great supporting characters around the main couple, whose stories will be feature in the next books in the series. Raina and Declan are to the in the center of the next release, and they are both rather unique and intriguing characters, especially him. He did good for Vince and his friends but I'm still not convinced of his good nature or intentions.

The romance was honest and real, very intense and emotional which is one of the things I like the best in Ms McKenna writing. The suspense was strongly present in this book, though it didn't overshadow the love story. It did give fast pacing to the story and kept me turning the pages in a hurry to find out what happens in the end.

There is no cliffhanger ending, Vince and Kim get a nice HFN, yet there is a lot to look forward to in the next books, both for them and for their friends (and enemies).

It's a highly recommended read!

Jacqueline's Reads says

DNF 60%

HUGE SIGH

I like MC books and when I picked up Lay It Down, I had high expectations. I wanted something steamy, dangerous and intense.

I didn't get that.

Lay It Down didn't seem like an MC book to me. It's about a guy, who is a biker, trying to solve a mystery. The pace was very slow and I found myself skimming. It took a good portion of the book before any direction was in place.

Then, finally when I got to the steam, it was so descriptive and so long, I was wondering, why couldn't some stuff just be edited?

I really did try to give this one a go. I would start it and put it down within twenty pages, it took me a month to finally put it aside. I don't think there isn't anything "wrong" with Lay It Down. It just didn't work for me.

An ARC was provided in exchange for an honest review

Alex is The Romance Fox says

Wow...this is some hot and wicked romance with a dose of suspense thrown in. What a start to Cara McKenna's Desert Dogs Series.

After being so disappointed with the last book I read by this author, I am over the moon finding this series.

Set in a small town in the Nevada boondocks, with interesting and not your average characters that you cannot help liking.

Vince Grossier is king in this town..never mind that he's been in jail...not for any really bad things....and together with his friends, who call themselves the Desert Dogs since childhood , make things really interesting around Fortuity, He takes his responsibilities very serious...cares for his mother who some call mad but actually she sees things before they happen!!!! He also has a rather interesting brother who has returned home after being away for years....something mysterious about his absence which we never find out about....

Anyway, strange things are happening in this rather unremarkable little town with the coming of a casino being erected in the area.

Vince's friend and one of the members of the Desert Dogs dies under mysterious circumstances and asking questions about the death opens up a can of worms.

Kim arrives in town to photograph the area for the casino contractors and wow....Vince takes one look at her and the sparks fly!!!!

Vince is just one hell of a sexy seducerI could so understand how Kim was unable to resist this man!!!! He's sexy, funny, caring, lovable...please can I have him for myself??? And in bed...HOT!!! He sizzles. He sure knows how to please a woman...lucky Kim.

I was totally captivated by the way the story evolves....I was never bored. I devoured every page, every word. Couldn't get enough of the Fortuit characters.

There are some wonderful, quirky and even wacky and mysterious characters that I can't wait to find out more about them in the next book.

The two characters in particular...Raina , the owner of the local bar and tattoo artist and the stuck up Englishman Duncan Welch. I can't wait to see if these two go anywhere together!!!!

I am so glad to rediscover Cara McKenna again!!!!

Amanda says

Apart from the really HOT dry humping scene that everyone was talking about, this book didn't really hit the mark for me. Vince is a fun hero that is full of humor and a tad sarcastic. Kim, the heroine is a sassy one. The romance was okay, but lost steam after half way because they were mostly sleuthing around. The suspense didn't capture my interest. From the beginning, I didn't really care who kill Alex Dunn.

Mandi Schreiner says

Despite the cover or what you may have heard, this is not a motorcycle club book. There is a murder mystery, a sexy and gritty romance and a desert setting that contributes a lot to this story. I have a fondness for Cara McKenna's voice, and I really enjoyed this book. It's different from her previous work and surprised me a bit.

Vince Grossier lives in a very small town in the desert of Fortuity. He has lived there his entire life and even though it can sometimes be a shitty town, it's his town. When word comes that a corporation named Sunnyside is going to build a big casino, the locals are not happy. Yes it will bring jobs, but it will also drive out all of the local businesses and bring in annoying tourists. Construction is in full swing with lots of corporate reps in their fancy business clothes completely out of place in his town. One night one of his long-time friends calls and drunkenly talks about some bones he saw out on the construction site. These bones really scared his friend and he asks to meet. But before he can, he dies in a drunk driving accident. Vince knows his friend was drunk, but would never drive drunk and this bones story makes Vince very suspicious. He alerts the police and tells his friends he fears suspicious play may have been involved in his friend's death, but no one is convinced.

Enter our heroine, Kim. She is a photographer in town to take pictures for casino brochures and to convince people the town is beautiful. Being in the desert, it really, truly is a magnificent place and she has plenty of scenery to film. She meets Vince in the local bar one night and he is immediately intrigued by this woman. She is very put together and proper - nothing like one of the locals. He tries his charm on her, but his charm is let's say...menancing. What intrigues him more is that Kim is a cool cookie. She doesn't go after his lusty words or crude flirtation.

"You're coming off kinda bipolar, Vince. I can't tell if you're trying to get in my pants or run me out of town on a rail."

"Me neither, but it's turning me on. How about you?"

Unknown to Vince, Kim is freaking out on the inside. Having just broke up with her boyfriend, she is kind of ready for a wild fling, and Vince is all wild and all man.

When a man came built like Vince Grossier, it told you one of two things; Either his job was backbreaking, or he made violent love to his weight bench every morning.

There are four main things I want to talk about. First, the mystery, admittedly the weakest part of the story for me. It's a murder mystery of sorts, and while the events that lead to the truth worked okay for me, Vince's ill and erratic mother can see visions of the future, and alerts Vince and his friends that Kim will eventually be involved in the investigation. I call this unnecessary woo-woo. I don't like woo-woo in my otherwise non-paranormal stories. Her woo-woo is accurate too, having had many visions in the past come true.

Second, the romance. Hot damn this romance is very McKenna-esque. It's gritty, it's raw, and surprisingly, she makes us wait a darn long time for the actual sex to happen. It's okay though because the sexual tension is done so well. Vince is so masculine and rough...not smooth. He doesn't have charm or grace and he doesn't care or apologize for it. But somehow he fits pretty well with Kim. She is a tough cookie, very smart, good head on her shoulders, and weak for the leather wearing, bike-riding huge man. And there is this:

He didn't rush her. Didn't force her or even urge her, didn't do a thing aside from stand there, tense with anticipation. She rewarded that with a lap across that smooth, sensitive skin, and was repaid by a harsh suck of breath above her. Beg me, she wanted to say. She wanted to hear proof of how bad he wanted her, like those needy whispers in the hotel room, even as his body ha owned hers.

Another lap, another, but she held back taking him for real. Beg me.

In that deep voice, came the softest, "C'mon."

Close enough.

Third the setting. I loved that this book is set in the desert among the red sand. It makes everything that more dirty but beautiful. The blazing hot sun during the day. The cold temperatures at night. The town is poor and it's a hard life to live there. Being in jail or out on parole is a normal thing. The hatred for the casino being built and the loyalty the locals feel for their businesses and their people resonates well.

And finally, my favorite part – the characters. I really like Vince and Kim, but this entire cast of characters made me smile. We have what Vince calls his Desert Dogs. A group of friends that became close when they were young, but some moved out of Fortuity – and have now found their way back. Besides Vince, we have Miah, who works on his family's ranch. We don't know a ton about him, but he is a hard worker and a good friend who used to date and is still in love with the local bartender Raina. Oh Raina, I liked her. Hard ass woman and takes no shit from anyone. She intrigues me so much and her book is next. If you look on Goodreads you can see who her hero is going to be and I'm very excited. Vince's brother Casey comes roaring back to town and his mouth made me laugh so hard. He is such a crazy, loud-mouth dude. I love him.

And finally Duncan Welch. Not a Desert Dog, but an uppity lawyer with Sunnyside. He plays a big role in this book. He is the kind of character that you initially think umm okay, he is going to be the token creeper, loser, annoying dude. That he is too prissy and rich to belong anywhere near Fortuity But....just wait.

"Ready?" Idling, Vince tossed Welch the extra helmet.

"Close enough," the man said. He eyed Casey's seat with misgiving.

"Hop on, motherfucker. I don't have cooties."

"That's reassuring," Welch said as he adjusted the helmet's strap. He managed to mount up with surprising dignity, likely down to his long legs as much as anything.

"Feel free to get friendly," Casey said.

The characters in this book excite me for this series. They are big, sexy, loud, opinionated and kind of crazy. You never know what they are going to do or say. Can't wait for book two.

Rating: B

Goodreads | Author Website | Series

Kindle | Nook

-y.a says

2.5-stars

Is this romantic suspense novel intense? No. The pace is slow.

Banter? Yes.

Are the characters well-developed? Yes.

Does the mystery hold my attention? Not really. It is very predictable.

Am I curious about their small town? Uh...no.

Vince and Kim are likable characters. But I feel that their relationship lack strong emotional connections. Honestly, I don't even care if they got their HEA.

The uniqueness I find in some of the Mckenna's books is simply missing in Lay it Down.
