



Dare to Run

Jen McLaughlin

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The *New York Times* bestselling author of the Out of Line Novels takes readers to Boston, where one gang of criminals knows how being bad can be so good...

She knows what he's like on Boston's mean streets. Now she's going to find out if he's got some heart.

Lucas Donahue is not ashamed of his criminal past, but after a brief stint in prison, he's ready to go legit and live a normal life. The problem is, no one leaves the gang without permission—even if he is one of the boss's top men. Plus someone's placed a hit on him. And then there's that feisty little bartender who's going to cause him even more trouble.

Heidi Greene knows to keep her distance from a ladies' man like Lucas—even if she can't keep her eyes off him. When he rescues her from an attack in the alley outside her bar, she's forced to stay by his side for safety. But the longer she spends time with him, the greater her chances are for getting hurt in more ways than one.

Dare to Run Details

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Author : Jen McLaughlin

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From Reader Review Dare to Run for online ebook

Lindy says

My Thoughts:

Dare to Run is the first book in the all new, The Sons of Steel Row Series. I was attracted to the cover, book blurb, and the fact that Jen McLaughlin was the author. I have read a few of her books, and really enjoyed them. Dare to Run was a story filled to the brim with suspense, danger, conspiracy, betrayal, and passion. It was a great read, and I am looking forward to continuing this series.

Lucus Donahue has grown up in the gang lifestyle. He has been a part of the Sons of Steel Row, since he was a teenager, and needed to raise money to support a terminally ill single mother, and younger brother. Lucas deals illegal arms in the slums of Boston. Freshly out of incarceration, he finds himself back in the midst of the dangerous lifestyle of a gang member.

Unfortunately, Lucas' life has gotten complicated when he learns that his younger brother, Scotty, is conspiring to kill him, in order to get Lucas' powerful promotion in the gang. To top it off, he stops beautiful bartender, Heidi Greene, from getting raped by a rival gang, resulting in another enemy gunning for him. Now, Lucas has taken Heidi under his protection. Will these two survive such violent and dangerous enemies?

Dare to Run had two main characters that I enjoyed getting to know. Heidi was a feisty, brave, independent, and strong-willed woman. She didn't let her fear show, and I loved her gutsy personality. Lucas was very closed off, stoic, and non-trusting. However, he was loyal, and even though he considered himself to be a bad man, we get to see little by little, that he is a good man that has just made some very bad choices. Together, these two had intense chemistry that turned into so much more. Heidi was able to get Lucas to pull down his walls, and bring out a side of himself that he had never experienced before.

The story plot was unpredictable, and delivered a shocking and hugely surprising ending! When you read a lot, it's easy to predict the sequence of events in a story. So, I was excited to get a story that caught me completely unaware.

My Rating:

I give, Dare to Run, by Jen McLaughlin, 4 Engaging, Dangerous Suspense, Passion turns to Love, Conspiracy Filled Stars! I'm looking forward to seeing if Ms. McLaughlin can surprise me again in the sequel, Dare to Stay.

*To Read More Book Reviews, Visit <http://www.abookishescape.com>

1-Click Addict Support Group says

“Run with me. If you run with me... I'll go.”

Lucas Donahue and Heidi Greene call South Boston their home. Warts and all, they are comfortable here even if it is not the easiest life. Lucas was used to working the streets as a high ranking gang member, even if dealing guns was easier than dealing with people, especially women.

Heidi knew firsthand what those streets were like but was satisfied working the pub she called her own now, her home. When the aftermath of a violent attack brings the two in close quarters, they come together to fight a common enemy but end up fighting the attraction they have for each other even more.

“Your halo may be tarnished, yet you still saved me. That means more than if you were the hero type.”

I loved the two main characters in this suspenseful romance that gives a stark peek into the violent world of gang life. Lucas was an ex-con but still loyal to his family—both gang and blood alike. He loves his brothers but has never fallen for a woman. Until now... Heidi is a breath of beautiful fresh air in his life that is all about darkness. She is strong and capable with a caring and compassionate nature that he can't help but be drawn to though he fights it tooth and nail.

“I might not be willing to let her get too close to me, or to trust her... But damned if I didn't want to.”

Lucas' appeal is no less compelling.

“You might not be a nice guy, or someone I should like, but tough st. I do like you. I like you a lot...”**

He doesn't want to fall for her and she knows she shouldn't fall for them. Watching them dance back and forth though as love grabs hold is funny, sexy and all-around wildly hot and entertaining. Lucas, for all his tough guy demeanor—and he *is* tough, no question—is also capable of deep emotions and caring. The way he protects those he loves is done with casual confidence and, no matter what corner he is boxed into, he continues to fight. Strong and confident—yah, that isn't attractive at all... Oh wait, hell yes, it is!

Heidi is equally strong and willing to do what she has to, to protect the ones *she* loves as well. When rare, true love is at stake, anything is possible! And she does it with style, even if she can't stand the sight of blood!

This story was everything I'd hoped it would be—and more! I can't wait to read more of the Sons! ~ Diane.
4.5 stars

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Lucas Donahue is a criminal. A killer. A gangster. He just got out of prison and he's quickly rising through the ranks of his gang—earning respect for being cold, calculating, and fearless. Now, there's a bounty on his head and a beautiful feisty bartender who doesn't seem to be able to stay out of trouble. Lucas has kept his heart locked away, but when he saves Heidi Greene from an attack in an alley outside her bar, he doesn't realize that he's just entangled himself with the one woman who has the key to unlocking that heart. It's dangerous, and sexy, and a little bit heartbreaking—but ever so slowly these two chip away at each other's walls and discover the family they've been looking for all along.

Holy buckets, this was an incredibly engrossing read. I was completely hooked almost immediately and—even when I thought I had everything figured out pretty early on—I still found myself biting my nails in suspense as everything unfolded. I loved Lucas and Heidi—both super strong characters exploring

feelings they've never encountered before. Lucas may be the typical alpha gangster, but Heidi is no push-over—she won't go down without a fight, and she's not afraid to stand up to anyone trying to push her around. This, of course, lands her in heaps of trouble, but I admire her pluck. I don't think she does it in a stupid way. She's just a fighter. She's not going to let anyone take her fate out of her own hands.

The push/pull in this book was incredibly sexy. Lucas, the alpha, is constantly trying to gain control over Heidi in order to keep her safe. She's constantly rebelling against that control on principle, because that's not who she is—she's not a woman who bends to someone else's will. This creates a lot of sexy stand-offs and heated banter that I found completely irresistible.

Gritty and sexy with sprinkles of emotion laced throughout the story, I really enjoyed this story. I loved how it painted a sort of unforgiving picture of gang life, while keeping the story from drifting into really dark territory. I felt like the ending maybe wrapped up a little too neatly and conveniently, but it definitely left me curious about where the series is going to go from here. If you're looking for something with a sexy alpha edge to it, this one will definitely satisfy! ~ Shelly, 4 stars

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## ? Kimberly says

### Five Reasons to grab *Dare to Run*

I love the Boston setting and McLaughlin takes us into the underbelly of the city and into the lives of its locals. The criminal gangs run deep in this story and their hands reach into the pockets of local law enforcement and its politicians. Lucas's membership and ranking within the gang and its mentality added an edge to this romance. I favor romances where we get both perspectives and *Dare To Run* had alternating chapters between Lucas and Heidi.

Lucas Donahue is sexy, intelligent and lethal. He entered the gang and moved up the ranks out of necessity. After his release, he struggles with breaking free and finding normal, but circumstances and family and making that difficult. McLaughlin peeled back his layers and made me fall for this bad boy. Being inside of his head was fantastic and his voice rang true. His inner dialogue was hilarious and made me sigh.

Heidi Greene's story may be just as tragic as Lucas's but intervention from a stranger changed things for her, and she has done the same for another. Heidi has spunk and is loyal. She knows Lucas is all wrong for her, but when he steps in to help her, they find themselves together. The more she learns about the man, the more difficult it becomes to resist him. Her inner struggles felt real, and I quickly connected with her.

The plot of *Dare to Run* was intense, action-packed and offered some edge of your seat suspense. A few twist will catch some readers by surprise. McLaughlin added subtle clues so I figured out aspects of it but this did not diminish my enjoyment of the story. The storyline was addictive and I kept reading late into the night. Secondary characters from bosses to Lucas' brother and best friend Chris notched up the suspense and believability of the tale.

The romance was sweet, heartbreaking and at times sizzling hot. I really connected with the couple emotionally and felt their feelings were genuine. Heidi is independent and Lucas's inborn nature to protect and often created tension in the form of banter. These two had me laughing aloud.

Copy provided by publisher, This review was originally posted on Caffeinated Book Reviewer

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## Alyssa says

4.5 stars. HOLY. CRAP. This book was amazing. And the twist at the climax? I DID NOT SEE THAT COMING! What a lovely ending, in spite of that twist but... WOAHH. I cannot WAIT to read Chris's book!

\*\*\*Review posted on The Eater of Books! blog\*\*\*

Dare To Run by Jen McLaughlin  
Book One of The Sons of Steel Row series  
Publisher: Signet  
Publication Date: February 2, 2016  
Rating: 4 stars  
Source: eARC from NetGalley

\*\*\*Warning: this is an adult book, and for the eyes of mature readers\*\*\*

Summary (from Goodreads):

The New York Times bestselling author of the Out of Line Novels takes readers to Boston, where one gang of criminals knows how being bad can be so good...

She knows what he's like on Boston's mean streets. Now she's going to find out if he's got some heart.

Lucas Donahue is not ashamed of his criminal past, but after a brief stint in prison, he's ready to go legit and live a normal life. The problem is, no one leaves the gang without permission—even if he is one of the boss's top men. Plus someone's placed a hit on him. And then there's that feisty little bartender who's going to cause him even more trouble.

Heidi Greene knows to keep her distance from a ladies' man like Lucas—even if she can't keep her eyes off him. When he rescues her from an attack in the alley outside her bar, she's forced to stay by his side for safety. But the longer she spends time with him, the greater her chances are for getting hurt in more ways than one.

What I Liked:

This is definitely going in the books as one of my favorite romance novels of the year! It's early yet, but I'm very confident in the statement. I've already reread this book at least a dozen times already. (not only my favorite parts! The whole book!) I simply do not have time to reread books these days, so you know it must be a good one, for me to reread it! What's more, I picked up this book on a whim. It wasn't part of my reading schedule or review pile! So much love for this book.

Lucas Donahue is one of the baddest Sons of Steel Row, one of the boss's right hand men. But he wants to have a more normal life, even though he knows he can't leave. One night, he witnesses several men from the Bitter Hill gang approach the feisty bartender of the bar near his apartment, and he doesn't think twice. He saves her from an almost brutal attack, but now she's stuck with him. Heidi doesn't like being strong-armed into living with the sexy redhead who has been visiting her bar and now has saved her, but there is something

good about him that draws her to him - not just his rugged charm and good looks. But the Bitter Hill men are not the only ones with their eye on Lucas and Heidi - someone else is out to hurt them.

DID I MENTION HOW MUCH I LOVED THIS BOOK?! All caps are totally necessary! I didn't know much about this book when I decided to give it a shot. It was a Friday night and I was bored at home... I started reading this book and literally did NOT stop reading until a few hours later, when I finished the book. Sweating, might I add. (This book was super sexy but also the ending was nerve-wracking and so unexpected!)

Lucas has been recently released from prison, and he wants to change his life. At the same time, he's one of the higher men in the food chain of the Sons of Steel Row, and he's promotion-bound. I love how macho and tough Lucas is, and how he THINKS he is those things (which he is, in all fairness). It doesn't necessarily come off as cocky or arrogant - he is commanding and alpha and completely confident and accepting of who he is. If that makes sense? He also trusts no one and tries not to get involved with anything or anyone - which is why it's a surprise to even himself, when he saves Heidi from being raped.

I adore Heidi! She is incredibly feisty and spirited, a potty-mouthed, tough-as-nails bartender who owns the bar and takes no s\*\*t. She isn't so feisty to think that she can take on four guys who are trying to rape her, but she refuses to go down without a fight. I love how tough Heidi is, throughout the entire book. The attack didn't slow her down, she never let it have power over her. She picks herself up and continues to be the kickbutt lady that she is. Heidi never lets Lucas boss her around (at least not without a good reason), so it's funny to see them butt heads (because he is VERY bossy).

The pair has SUCH great chemistry! They meet before Heidi is attacked - Lucas has been coming to her bar for a week, before the attack happens. There is sexual tension swirling between them before they even know each other's names, let alone start living together. And when Heidi relocates to his place... get ready to fan yourself! Heidi dodges him and he doesn't want to get involved with her, but the attraction is there and the chemistry is pretty overwhelming. I loved seeing them lose control with each other!

So, yeah, the steamy parts of this book are REALLY steamy. This book is on fire, people. McLaughlin definitely knows her way around some really hot scenes. I read all kinds of romance novels but this one...  
\*fans self\*

The chemistry was wonderful but I'd also like to mention that the romance was equally wonderful. I loved watching Heidi and Lucas fall for each other, bit by bit. Heidi realizes that she loves him kind of quickly, but given how powerful their connection and attraction is, I was on board with this. And Lucas, being the stubborn, willful alpha that he is, admits to nothing for as long as possible.

While the romance and steamy chemistry are really important in this book, the other aspect - the crime/gangs part - is very important as well, and very well-written. Often with romance novels that aren't strictly contemporary romance, you'll find that the romance is very "there" but the other aspect of the book (paranormal, suspense, historical, thriller, etc.) might not always be as solid. In this book, the crime world is well-written and the story very structured and intriguing. We're trying to figure out what Lucas's brother is up to, what the Bitter Hill men are up to, and who is after Lucas and Heidi... well, it all shakes down to be very, very exciting.

And unexpected! The climax and the ending of this book shocked me! I can't believe McLaughlin got the drop on me - I'm usually very intuitive about these things! Well done, author. Nevertheless, the ending is pretty great, all things considering, and Lucas and Heidi's story wrap up well. I can't wait to read the next

book!

What I Did Not Like:

Just a small thing - I'm so irritated with one specific character! I think we'll get to explore his mind in future books but ah! How could he! I can't be any more specific than that, so you'll have to read the book and see what I mean. In any case, this was well-written by the author, but I'm a bit hurt over here! I liked that character. \*Liked.\*

Would I Recommend It:

Guys guys guys I SO recommend this book! Get the ebook version if you can't deal with the cover (mmm, that abdomen though). This is easily a 4.5-star read and a favorite! Given how many times I've reread it in its entirety - I would highly recommend it!

Rating:

4.5 stars -> rounded down to 4 stars. Only because of this one thing (that will bother me until I read future books) is this book getting a star knocked off. It's so good though! Romance-reading friends, please don't miss this one! Read it if only to meet Lucas!

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## **CD {Boulder Blvd} says**

This is a seriously hot cover, but somehow doesn't seem to represent our H, Lucas.

Ms. McLaughlin is a very good writer and is a good story teller - the words flow, etc. The characters (except our heroine, Heidi) and the Sons of Steel Row gang are an interesting and intriguing group. They are pretty well fleshed out and the setting in the slums of Boston fits a gritty story and these gang characters.

There were two good scenes in the book - the first scene and the last scene before the epilogue. I really liked them. Where the story lost me was everything between these two scenes.

This book is in alternating 1st person POV. Definitely not my first choice. Although the author tries not to present the same scene in both of the H and h's perspective; it still happens to some degree which means aspects of the story are told twice. Telling a story twice happens a lot when using alternating 1st person POV which is one of the reason I'm not fond of it. I hate redundancy.

And talk about reading something more than once, we get to hear them thinking, "angsting" and waffling back and forth over their feelings for each other throughout the whole book. It felt like 90% of this story was each of them dissecting their feelings, thinking one thing, saying something else in scene after scene after scene. There would be minor changes to the scene but it felt very repetitive. Nothing was really happening. And because it's in 1st person, its all tell and no show. There were numerous times where I was so bored I had to skip hoping for something to happen. The first 100 pages could have easily been edited down to 20. The next 200 pages, again could be greatly reduced if you eliminated the repetitive angst.

Our heroine, Heidi, had some TSTL tendencies so I wasn't too fond of her. She was independent and could take care of herself. I myself would have had a little bit less confidence if I had gangbangers after me. One



thing that had me rolling my eyes was that she repeatedly thought about how Lucas's Boston accent really did it for her. And I kept wondering why was his accent so different than everyone else's? They all grew up in Boston, they all had Boston accents. It's not like he was transplanted in the Midwest or the South, where his accent would be unique. Maybe it was just me being bored with the story and starting to pick it apart.

At the end of the book, I was disappointed. It could have been so much more - it had tons of potential. If you're a fan of never ending angst, insta-lust/love and alternating 1st person POV you may appreciate this more than I did. I'm intrigued by the next book in the series, but...

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## Shayna says

**"This is a mistake, but, sweetheart, I'll make sure that I'm the best mistake you've ever made,"**

Dare to Run is my first read from author Jen McLaughlin. I've had tons of recommendations to read one of her books and when this arrived from the publisher I was excited to dive in. I mean look at the HOT COVER! What romance reader wouldn't want to start this on the look of the cover alone? It started a bit slow and I was worried that I would lose interest, but the chemistry and the great banter between the two lead characters kept me on track. Halfway through the sexual tension had me on pins and needles and the flow of the book picked up and had me turning pages faster and faster.

**"I loved him. Completely, utterly, loved him. And he would break my heart in the end if I let him. And, God, I was going to let him."**

I'll be honest and say that even though I enjoyed this book, it was a bit predictable. This is the only reason I rated DARE TO RUN in the middle. It was sexy, it was a bit suspenseful. It had its gritty and raw and emotional moments, but in the end I knew what was coming. Believe me, sometimes I'm okay with predictable. As long as your character's have chemistry and I can connect emotionally with the male and female lead, you're golden, it just won't get a stellar rating from me in the end. I'm excited about where the story is going, and even though I didn't FALL IN LOVE with this book, doesn't mean I'm not going to continue on with this series. The Sons of Steel Row has a lot of potential and I for one, will be picking up the next book in the series.

\*Gifted copy provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review\*

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## Juliane says

Lucas ist gerade erst aus dem Gefängnis gekommen und schon muss er sich seinen nächsten Herausforderungen stellen. Nicht nur, dass sein eigener Bruder versucht ihn umzubringen, er begeht auch einen Fehler, denn er ist einmal nicht egoistisch und rettet die Bardame Heidi, bevor sie vergewaltigt wird. Doch seine heroische Tat hat gravierende Folgen, denn nun steht Heidi unter seinem Schutz, ob sie will oder nicht. Und Heidi will das alles überhaupt nicht, denn sie ist eine eigenständige, toughie Frau und braucht keinen Beschützer. Doch ohne Lucas wäre Heidi wieder "Freiwild" und eine Vergewaltigung noch das harmloseste was ihr passieren könnte. Denn Steel Row ist keine Gegend mit Einfamilienhäusern und weißen Gartenzäunen, dort herrschen Drogen- und Waffenhandel und es wird erst geschossen und dann nach dem

Grund gefragt. Also sind beide gezwungen eine Scheinbeziehung zu führen, um Heidi zu beschützen. Doch was passiert, wenn zum Schein Gefühle dazu kommen und diese nur einseitig sind?

Obwohl Lucas Mitglied der Sons of Steel Row ist und ein harter, abgebrühter Gangster ist, ist er trotzdem loyal bis in den Tod und glaubt immer noch an das Gute im Menschen und vor allem glaubt er immer noch an den Zusammenhalt der Familie. Und Heidi, tja Heidi liebt Lucas mit all seinen Fehlern.

Das alles ist Stoff für eine echt gute Story. Mit einem, für mich, nicht vorhersehbaren Ende, was ich persönlich absolut toll fand. Denn vorhersehbare Geschichten gibt es ja zur Genüge. Ich freue mich auf die nächsten Teile.

Von mir also eine klare Leseempfehlung.

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## **Svenja says**

Danke an NetGalley und LYX für das Bereitstellen eines Rezensionsexemplares.

### **Inhalt:**

Nach zwei Jahren im Gefängnis hat Lucas Donahue nur ein Ziel: eine Führungsposition bei den Sons of Steel Row. Doch zwei Dinge stehen ihm dabei im Weg: sein eigener Bruder, der ihn umbringen will, um selbst an die Macht zu kommen, und die Barkeeperin Heidi Greene, die er vor einer Vergewaltigung durch eine rivalisierende Gang rettet und unter seinen Schutz stellt. Nun muss Lucas nicht nur gegen sein eigen Fleisch und Blut vorgehen, sondern findet sich in einer fingierten Beziehung wieder, die sich mehr und mehr echt anfühlt.

### **Meine Meinung:**

Story: Alles in allem fand ich die Story gut. Besonders das Ende hat mir sehr gut gefallen, da ich absolut nicht geahnt habe, dass es so kommt. Ich habe vorher noch nicht wirklich etwas gelesen, dass in irgendeiner Weise etwas mit Straßengangs zu tun hatte, daher habe ich keine Vergleichsmöglichkeiten, aber an sich fand ich das Ganze gut und spannend umgesetzt.

Protagonisten: Das Buch ist aus den Sichtweisen von Heidi und Lucas geschrieben.

Ich liebe Heide. Sie war eine starke Protagonistin, die auch ihre eigene Meinung gesagt und vertreten hat und sich nicht von irgendjemanden hat runterziehen lassen. Auch Lucas fand ich super, man hat während dem Buch gemerkt, wie er sich entwickelt hat und gelernt hat, jemanden in sein Herz zu lassen und sich nicht jedem gegenüber zu verschließen.

Schreibstil: Das Buch lies sich schnell und flüssig lesen und der Schreibstil war sehr angenehm.

### **Fazit:**

Ein Buch mit tollen Protagonisten, dass zum Teil echt spannend ist und mit einem Ende, mit den eigentlich keiner wirklich rechnet. Toll für ein paar entspannende Lesestunden.

### **Bewertung:**

★★★★?

1 Stern Abzug, da ich glaube, dass die Autorin da noch einen drauf legen kann. ;)

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## nick says

Is it shallow to admit that I picked up this book without even reading the summary solely because of that cover? Thankfully, it turned out to be a pretty good decision because for me, the interior was as good as the exterior!

I'm not usually one to seek out books with characters that you wouldn't normally want to associate with in real life, like illegal arms dealers and criminals. So, you can imagine my surprise when I **ended up really enjoying Lucas' character** in *Dare to Run*. He was very much **rough around the edges**, but the moment he saved the heroine Heidi from a bunch of pathetic rapists, **I was in love**. Throughout the book, Lucas went to prove that despite him working for Boston's Sons of Steel Rows, a criminal gang, he wasn't that bad of a person on the inside, which feels really weird to type but this is fiction, so who cares! **His edginess coupled with his fiercely protective nature made for an interesting combo** that will surely have many readers swooning. More than I liked Lucas, I liked Heidi, his heroine. She was **tough as nails, feisty and unwilling to bow down to anyone** who gave her orders. I especially loved how she wasn't afraid to lash out at Lucas when the situation necessitated it. Not to mention, it was quite **humorous watching a tough bad boy like Lucas lose to a strong, independent woman like Heidi**. :)

*Image courtesy of Pinterest.*

Heidi and Lucas together had **a boat-load of chemistry** from the very start and they totally had me fanning myself. I especially loved how much **fiery banter** the two of them had. Watching them fall for each other even though they tried really hard not to was pretty much the highlight of the book for me. The romance was steamy for sure, but it also had **so many sweet moments that had the romantic in me giddy** with happiness. It was truly one of the **best romances** I've had the chance of reading! The story line was also a strong point of *Dare to Run*. It was **dark, dangerous and suspenseful from start to finish**. Jen McLaughlin caught that atmosphere so well with her writing. I'll admit that I figured out the plot twist regarding who was messing with Lucas pretty easily because my "this guy is fishy" radar was flying all over the place around this certain character, but that didn't take away from my enjoyment of the book one bit because I was very invested in the characters, main and secondary. I'm hoping that some of the secondary characters introduced in *Dare to Run* get their own books because I found most of them to be mysterious and I just want to unravel all their secrets. Fingers crossed!

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## Kristin says

Lucas is a rising member of the Sons of Steel Row. However, he doesn't want to be. He was just released from prison where he almost lost his life and he has no desire to go back to jail. However, once you are in the Sons, the only way out is death. So, he sticks the course. That is, until he sees Heidi being attacked by another gang. You see, Heidi is the bar owner from across the street from his place. He frequents her establishment a lot and has found her to be fascinating. She's got the same tough persona that he does and he finds that intriguing. So needless to say, when he sees her being attacked he intervenes and claims her as his. Which is the only way the two of them had a chance of walking away from that unharmed. Except, now everyone's interested in Lucas' girl and they find themselves needing to keep the ruse up lest the other gang gets wind of the falsehood of Lucas' claim. Meanwhile, pile on the fact that someone from Lucas' gang has a hit out on him, and you have one awesome read.

*"Your halo may be tarnished, yet you still saved me. That means more than if you were the hero type."*

I'm not normally a motorcycle gang fan. I find the men to be too boorish. I can't tell you how many times I have started a book only to be turned off by the "bad-ass" hero who was really just a piece of work. Thankfully that was not the case with Lucas. While the author shows his darker side with his job, she also shows his softer side with Heidi. He doesn't bully her, abuse her, or even talk down to her. Instead he respects her and cherishes her. Granted, at first he tried to command her to do things his way but he soon learned that Heidi was not someone you could command or manipulate into doing what you want. The fact that you have someone who you know has killed and tortured people, to make them be the good guy is mind-boggling, but the author was able to pull it off.

*"I snorted internally. The dude had just killed two guys in front of me, and I was thinking how sweet he was? What kind of crazy juice had I gotten into?"*

I will be keeping an eye out for more from this series. I wonder who the author will choose next.

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### **Jaclyn says**

I really enjoyed this a lot! However I felt the character went through a lot of back and forth problems with each other. It was as if they were going in circles of their feelings and while most of the time this can be endearing, in this book it just got a little tiring because I felt they kept having the same conversation in a different format multiple times. I did love Lucas and the story of him being in a gang was really interesting as I've never read a book like this before! I also liked the setting and I did the love chemistry between the two main characters! I wish they did more though. They stayed in the apartment majority of this book and I wanted to feel more of that danger when they would go out. The ending was fantastic and I loved the plot twist at the end! Overall I'm excited to read more of the series and get to know more about Chris and Scotty!

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### **Lana ❄️Dirty Girl Romance❄️ says**

#### **2.5-3 Stars**

***And that was why this whole thing was so scary. I knew he'd bring me nothing but trouble, and yet I still wanted him with every single breath I took.***

I struggled with my rating for this book for several weeks. I adore this author and everything she writes. I was a huge fan of her books under the Diane Alberts pen name, so when I saw she has a new series coming out with Berkley, I was beyond excited. Even more so when I saw this ridiculously hot cover. I was looking forward to a gritty and sexy read, and while this was definitely both of those, it also wasn't quite there either.

Lucas Donahue is no innocent. A member of The Sons of Steel Row, a Boston Gang that makes their money from illegal arms dealing, he's used to violence and he doesn't shy away from it. His recent stint in prison is proof positive. But after he gets out, he yearns for a regular life. He sees the gang suck his brother in deeper

and deeper and it kills him considering the lengths he went through to shelter and protect his younger brother when they were growing up. But no one just leaves the gang life, and Lucas knows that too. When he notices a rival gang attacking a beautiful woman from the bar next door, he knows he can't just idly sit by...but his decision just may cost him everything.

Sounds delicious, right? It was, for the most part. What I had trouble with was the heroine. Considering the woman knows who the rival gang is that is threatening her life and who the Sons are, she really should understand the danger she's in. But her 'I am woman hear me roar' mentality made her a bit TSTL at times. The things she's say, the decisions she made, her almost blatant disregard for her own safety was mind boggling at times. She smarts off to men that she should be running in the other direction from. I kept hoping she'd see reason, but this continued through the whole book pretty much.

I was also hoping the writing would feel grittier. I believe that this is the author's first foray into a genre like this and writing a true-anti hero, so I'm hoping she'll grow into her voice a bit more as the series progresses.

The plot was interesting and I loved Lucas as well as the secondary character of his best friend and the mystery of his brother. While I struggled to connect with the story for the majority of the book, it really did pick up in the last 20% and I loved the direction it took. So while this book wasn't exactly what I had hoped, I'm definitely sold on the series and curious enough with the events that took place at the end of it to continue on. This could have merely been a case of "the firsts" with the first book in the series and it'll get much better with the next ones. I for one am curious enough to find out.

*ARC courtesy of publisher in exchange for an honest review*

**Find me on:**

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## **Jessica says**

I have had this book on my shelf for far too long and, since the third book is coming out soon, I wanted to finally give this book a chance. With dangerous men falling hard for a woman he'll do anything to protect, I couldn't wait to dive in.

After spending some time in jail without giving up any information on Steel Row, Lucas Donahue is back working for the gang and finding himself climbing up in rank. While he'd love nothing more than to go straight and leave, no one leaves Steel Row voluntarily. Heidi Greene admits that Lucas is easy on the eyes and very intriguing, but she knows she can never get involved with a guy like him. But when he saves her from being attacked, Heidi finds herself having to be close to Lucas to ensure her safety from the guys who tried to hurt her, guys in another gang who don't like Lucas messing with them. While Lucas tries his best to resist the temptation of caring for someone as feisty and loyal as Heidi, he finds it harder to leave her alone, especially when her life is on the line because of him.

From the beginning, there is a threat of violence to both Lucas and Heidi, which kept me on the edge of my seat for the whole book. Any time they stepped out on the street, you had no idea if someone would pop up to try to kill Lucas and Heidi. I loved how Heidi took Lucas's life in stride and didn't cower like so many other heroines of books with dangerous men do. It was refreshing to have a strong heroine who could take

care of herself if she had to. It was so fun watching her bicker with Lucas and show him he can't always be the boss.

While I did enjoy the danger and romance, I wish our characters got to do more. In order to protect Heidi, she spent most of her time locked up inside of Lucas's apartment. I wish she got to go more places and do more things instead of be cooped up inside of an apartment while Lucas got to run around trying to find a way to save himself and Heidi. Being trapped in his apartment, though, allowed Heidi to slowly break down Lucas's rough exterior and make him realize that he could have a woman in his life who he really cared for.

Overall, *Dare to Run* offers a sexy and dangerous story where you want the rough guy in the gang to realize he really does have a soft heart. Heidi was the perfect woman to get under Lucas's skin and stand up to him. If you want a great romance with a dangerous, yet caring man who will do anything to protect those he loves, you need to pick up *Dare to Run*.

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## Michelle says

*ARC provided by author in exchange for an honest review*

**“For the first time in my life, I wanted to help someone without any thought to the cost. I wanted to help her.”**

**DARE TO RUN** is the first book of Jen McLaughlin's new series, *Sons of Steel Row*. Unlike Jen's previous books, **Dare to Run** is a thrilling and gritty tale that follows an anti-hero in Lucas Donahue.

Lucas Donahue is ruthless, calculating, merciless, and cunning. A criminal. A killer. A gangster. He is the guy that you wouldn't want to cross with. Growing up in South Boston, the streets toughen him up and he knew his rank in the gang. But after being released from prison, Lucas Donahue discovers that someone is ready to eliminate him. Now with the target on his back Lucas has to be careful. There is no one Lucas can trust but himself. So when he sees the bartender being attacked in alley outside her bar, Lucas jumps in and saves her from another rival gang. He makes it known to them that she's his girl.

**“Okay, yeah, I'd started a war over a woman. But what a woman she was . . . And she was all mine.”**

Heidi Greene doesn't know what to make sense of Lucas and his controlling ways. She knows that she should stay away from him because he is dangerous and trouble but for the life of her, she can't stay away from him. Like a moth to a flame, Heidi embarks on dangerous road as she lays her heart on the line as she slowly lets Lucas in. And the same can be said for Lucas, as walls begins to crumble and this hard emotionless man begins to show a caring and loving side.

**“This is a mistake, but, sweetheart, I'll make sure that I'm the best mistake you've ever made.”**

**Dare to Run** was a great introduction to what I can tell will be an exciting, gritty, intense, and suspenseful series. I loved that Jen McLaughlin was able to weave a sexy gritty story line with such raw emotions and vulnerabilities. So if you are looking for a story that was fast paced, thrilling, and sinfully engrossing then this book is for you.

*Review can also be found on Four Chicks Flipping Pages: <http://fourchicksflippingpages.weebly...>Jen McLaughlin*

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## **Anna's Herding Cats says**

Holy freaking #Covergasm! That is one gorgeous book! Totally squeed and scared the birds when I opened the mail. Can't wait to dive in :D

Reviewing for herding cats & burning soup.

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