



The Closer You Come

Gena Showalter

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New York Times bestselling author Gena Showalter introduces the Original Heartbreakers, where three not-quite-reformed bad boys are about to meet the women who will bring them to their knees.

Just released from prison, Jase Hollister has a dark and twisted past. And now, he has only one goal: stay out of trouble. Strawberry Valley, Oklahoma, sounds like the perfect place for him and his two brothers-by-circumstance to settle down and live a nice, simple life. But model citizen isn't exactly this rugged bachelor's default setting—especially when it comes to a certain hot-blooded Southern beauty...

Brook Lynn Dillon has always been responsible. Not that it's done her much good. The down-on-her-luck waitress is broke, single and fun-deprived. Until Jase comes along. He is dangerous, stunningly protective, breathtakingly sexy and as tempting as sin, and the passion sizzling between them is undeniable. But can it melt her resistance? After all, the right kind of trouble might be just what they both need.

The Closer You Come Details

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From Reader Review The Closer You Come for online ebook

Laura says

"You gotta love a man who builds a zombie-apocalypse bunker just for you."

Blurb: Just released from prison, Jase Hollister has a dark and twisted past. And now, he has only one goal: stay out of trouble. Strawberry Valley, Oklahoma, sounds like the perfect place for him and his two brothers-by-circumstance to settle down and live a nice, simple life. But model citizen isn't exactly this rugged bachelor's default setting—especially when it comes to a certain hot-blooded Southern beauty... Brook Lynn Dillon has always been responsible. Not that it's done her much good. The down-on-her-luck waitress is broke, single and fun-deprived. Until Jase comes along. He is dangerous, stunningly protective, breathtakingly sexy and as tempting as sin, and the passion sizzling between them is undeniable. But can it melt her resistance? After all, the right kind of trouble might be just what they both need.

Alright, so I was absolutely excited about this book because miss Gena Showalter wrote it and this was going to be my first time reading a contemporary novel by her and I *liked* the book. Just that.

I had a hard time getting through the first half of the book. It took me almost two days to get anywhere I liked.

And I don't really know what the problem was. I liked Jase (granted, I didn't love him but it was okay) and I liked Brook Lynn. I just, the feeling wasn't quite *there*. I don't know if it has anything to do with Jessie Kay because I didn't love her. She was a bit way too much for anyone to handle and so I don't know how I'm going to read a book based on her. Maybe I was not in the mood and I found this story a bit darker than I expected.

Maybe I felt Jase and Brook Lynn's relationship forced somehow.

They have great chemistry and I know Gena can write steamy scenes pretty good so I don't know why I didn't fall in love with this story.

The second part of the book was more enjoyable for me. I liked Brook Lynn taking control of things and Beck helping her but I was not fan of West in this book and I know he was suffering and all of that and he had some feelings towards Jessie Kay but I just didn't like how rude he was. Maybe I just do not like the whole Jessie Kay/West things.

Beck, however, I liked him a lot.

Like Jase said: Beck's screwed up, he just hides it better. I'd like to think I loved a book based on him and whoever the girl's going to be (I expected her to be Jessie Kay in the begining but yeah).

Overall the story was good but I just don't know why *I* didn't love it. I may re-read this book at any point and see if things get better because I know I was not in the right place for contemporary. And I'm still reading the following books because Gena is one of my fave authors and I love her.

Angela (Angel's Guilty Pleasures) says

Gena Showalter is well know for her paranormal romances. I love her *Lords of the Underworld* series, but I'm also glad I picked up her contemporary romance to try. I feel in love with Strawberry Valley and it's characters.

Jase Hollister has been out of prison for six months and is now trying to make a life for himself. His two best friends or bothers, have all come to Strawberry Valley to start fresh. All Jase wants is peace, quiet, and solitude. He bears some major scars from his time in prison and his past; before prison. He dons't show this on the outside, but inside you see he's scared and scarred.

Brook Lynn Dillon has lived in Strawberry Valley her entire life. Brook Lynn and her sister, Jessie Kay, have struggled to survive. Their past was wonderful until tragedy struck their family. Brook Lynn has and is working herself hard to support herself and her sister ,who is a loose party girl and besides all that she was treated unkind as a kid for her hearing ads.

To say Jase and Brook Lynn don't have a good first meeting is an understatement and to make it worse he's bedded her sister. As time moves on and they get to know each other, the chemistry between them sizzles. They both have issues and Jase doesn't make it easy for anyone to get close.

These two where a lot of fun. The slow build in their romance was enduring and the sexual tension was off the charts. When these two finally get together, oh my, do the sparks fly. They had to work through their issues and fight for each other. Jase and Brook Lynn have some good exchanges which where funny and enjoyable to hear and that "to do" list was a great addition to the story. I had a taste of this "to do" list concept in the novella and loved it so much, I was hopping it would show up in the other books and it did.

I really like the small town feel of Strawberry Valley and the characters were so reminiscent of what people go through in life. All the different trials, issues, and tribulations. Life is not easy. It has it's good moments and it's bad. We must learn to deal, move on, and fight for those we love.

Audio Narration: Savannah Richards was wonderful. Her narration was enjoyable and she brought out each character, handling the different voices and genders splendidly. She also brought the slow burning romance alive and the emotional issues to life.

I'm hooked! I had a lot of fun with The Closer You Come. It's sweet, emotional, fun, and sexy with a little bit of suspense. I plan on picking up the next book in audiobook for this series.

Rated: 4 Stars

◊◆ Naomi says

THE CLOSER YOU COME by Gena Showalter is the first full novel in her ORIGINAL HEARTBREAKERS series, and while I really liked the prequel novella, this one was a bit more disappointing. Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed it but the main characters weren't my favorites and I found the plot not that intriguing.

"You are pleasure to my pain, hope to my fear. You are everything I've ever needed but didn't think I'd be lucky enough to have."

Jase Hollister was just released from a nine years sentence. He isn't looking for any kind of attachment, he has his two best friends, Beck and West, with him and that's enough. Brook Lynn Dillon has two full jobs, tons of bills to pay and a (big) sister to take care of, she does not have time for a man in her life. But, one night, while looking to rescue her sister for the gazillion times, she finds herself at Jase's house. In his bedroom to be exact. With his sister in his bed. Naked.

She doesn't know Jase at the time but still, she's attracted to him in a big way and it's all kinds of awkward since the guy just slept with her sis. Anyway, a fight ensues with her sister, Jessie Kay, because the latter does not want to leave Jase's bed and Brook Lynn wants her home and ready for work the next morning. Anyway, long story short, Brook Lynn ends up working for Jase as his assistant and things start to get complicated...

I did not like Brooke Lynn that much. She had her good moments but I found her annoying and naive for the most part. She's a nice girl, who loves her sister deeply and who works her butt off to care for both of them but her attitude at times was so frustrating and childish.

Jase was better, I enjoyed reading about him. Mostly because he has tattoos everywhere. Just kidding. Or not. Heh. He's a good guy, who's trying to fix himself but it's not easy. And I understood that part of him, he spent the last nine years in prison, he was assaulted (in every way) and trying to keep the darkness at bay isn't always easy.

But, there is a but, he was so frustrating as well. Oh my god, hot and cold, hot and cold. Just stop and make a freaking decision, I beg of you! He was attracted to her but then no because he was bad for her but then yes because she made him want to be better but then no because what if she didn't want him once he told her the whole truth about himself...

This book was trying for me but I made it. Both of them were frustrating and I was very happy when they finally decided to be together and be done with the what ifs. They actually worked together, they balanced each other out.

The secondary characters were in between. I loved Beck and West and I cannot wait to read their books, that's for sure. It was also great to see more of Kenna and Dane from THE ONE YOU WANT. But, I didn't

really like Jessie Kay. She redeemed herself toward the end but still, what a selfish brat. Seriously, the woman was so freaking selfish, childish and annoying, I was so pissed when I learned that she was going to have her own book...but then it's Gena and she worked her magic, and I'm actually curious to see how things are going to play out with her and West.

The plot now, well, it could have been better. I'm not saying it completely sucked but my heart didn't race, I wasn't shocked at what I discovered, it was just meh. I was still surprised by a few things even if I thought they were a bit rushed.

I'm still very excited to read the next installment because I'm not done with these bad boys.

Lana ✶Dirty Girl Romance✶ says

2.5-3 Stars

Once wasn't going to be enough. He realized that now. He wanted her countless times in countless ways. Underneath him. On top of him. Beside him...

When I saw that Gena was coming out with a brand new contemporary romance series, I was thrilled! I loved Catch a Mate and I've been dying for her to write more in this genre. Having read both of her PNR series, I already knew I love the snarky and humor characters she creates and the synopsis sounded right up my alley. Three bad boys, one small town, a guaranteed recipe for enjoyment, right? Well...kind of.

Unfortunately the book managed to start off on the wrong foot with me. See I'm one of those ridiculously picky readers that when something bothers me enough in the very beginning, it will set the tone for the entire book. It's terrible really, but something I can't change. And the fact that when Brook Lynn first meets Jase is when she walks in on him as he's getting dressed after sleeping with her sister?

Yeah, not exactly the best way to start. Now it's very clear that he's not interested in Brook Lynn's sister from the beginning and their night together was anything but spellbinding, but still. I just kept thinking in my head, 'her sister? really?'. Suffice to say that I had a tough time moving on from that.

I'm a big fan of the small town settings in books, and this was definitely no exception. Strawberry Valley had this really endearing quality to it that I really loved. Brook Lynn was also a fantastic heroine. She grew up in the small southern town, and it's all she's ever known. Having lost her parents at a young age and then a conman uncle leaving them broke and alone, she's come to rely on herself. With a dream of one day owning the town's small jewelry store, Brook Lynn works her butt off on two jobs, trying to support herself and her party loving sister. This brings me to another thing that didn't quite work for me; Jessie Kay. I'm pretty sure I spent the majority of the book wanting to hit her in both ovaries. Her constant irresponsible behavior constantly leaves Brook Lynn paying the price, while she's off either partying or sleeping with another man. It does give the reader a little insight later on about the why's of her behavior, but it just wasn't enough for me. That, along with her penchant for the word "dude" pretty much made me want to throttle her. The girl straight up drove me batty.

Now Jase was a character I was equal intrigued with and slightly put off (see my sleeping with the sister comment above). Intrigued, because this is clearly a tortured man. Having spent the last 9 years in prison because he also covered for his 2 best friends has left him with plenty of scars; externally and even more internal. He's no longer the young boy that he went to prison as. He's harder, more jaded, but he's trying to move on. A gorgeous and bubbly blonde that tempts him beyond reason is the very last thing he needs.

Feel nothing. Want nothing. Need nothing.

But there's just something about Brook Lynn that draws him in, and the chemistry between them soon proves too strong to resist.

As much as I loved Jase and Brook Lynn together, there was always something that nagged me about them too. There was the ghost of sister's past. Then there was the annoying overuse of the "angel" endearment. But that aside I was really enjoying this book still. It had a little of Gena's signature snark and humor, or what I've come to refer to as Gena-isms. Though at times you can definitely see a little of a mix between her contemporary and PNR voice. I doubt this is something most would spot unless you've read her other work. Or maybe I was just nitpicking since I was already starting on the wrong foot? I'm not sure. But I can't say that it still wasn't good.

What ultimately ruined it for me was the last 30%. Until then, I found the book to be moving at a fairly slow pace. It wasn't boring by any means, but just slow. Then the last 30% you get one drama after another. First with (view spoiler) Say what? Maybe it was just me, but I really felt the book could have done without that. It added nothing to the story for me. Then there was a whole different drama that actually fit the story. But the combination of the two in the last 30%? Meh. It just felt too much.

I thought Strawberry Valley had become my home," he said. "But it's you, You are my home, angel. You're where I've put down roots.

I really wanted to love this book, but sadly it was just OK.

On a positive note, I absolutely loved Jase's two best friends; West and Beck. Beck with his manwhorish ways and hilarious come-ons completely sucked me in. I can't wait for his book, especially after getting that small peak into the heroine that will be bringing him to his knees. The polar opposites definitely have all the ingredients for an amazing read. I also really loved the broken and tortured West. As much as I want to read his book, I am a little afraid since it looks like he's going to be with Jessie Kay. Hopefully the girl will do a 180 in the next book and manage to endear me to her, because that certainly didn't happen in this book.

This was a light contemporary romance with quite a bit of steam, and quite a bit of cheese. While I could have done with less cheese and the last 30%, I'm definitely hooked on the series and can't wait to see what the next book brings.

ARC courtesy of publisher in exchange for an honest review

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***TANYA* says**

I liked it!! ("Tis the season for quick reviews, lol)

♥?elody says

Blerg. You set up such a raw gritty premise like this and yet it completely derails to the ground with the writing & transparently thin plot.

The issues I had:

You have an ex-con released from prison for a hardcore crime with serious abandonment and rage issues who morphs into an obsessive lovesick teenager following the girl of his dreams around town. -__- Seriously? SMH. Never mind the extreme insta-lust-love, this guy is so hung up and going mine mine MINE! just after their first *awkward* as hell meeting. (view spoiler) I got whiplash at the warp speed way this guy suddenly started pursuing the heroine and thinking about her all the time. That took the wind out of my sails completely and was an instant buzz kill. I swear I was expecting him to start doodling her name all over his walls. He's supposed to be this cold aggressive closed off hardened man, that's how he's presented but what you actually get?

"I'm going to check on the food. I won't be gone long."

"It'll still feel like forever."

"I missed you," he said.

"Because I'm the light of your life. Duh."

"You certainly are." He kissed the tip of her nose.

Jase's expression had just softened, his eyes going wide with wonder. "You are **amazing**"

Oh the sap. It's so thick you can choke on it. I've never read more sappy fluff in one CR book in my life. Especially one meant to be so dark. I'm confused and annoyed all at once. Like was it really necessary? I know GS loves the sugary talk in her books but here it was exxxtra thick. It just made no sense to me given the hero's background and supposedly 'cold' demeanor. I've never cringed at the endearment *angel* more.

Jase's two 'heartbreaker' best friends are no better with very little depth or development. Another surprise for me. I literally can't tell the difference between Beck and West except that one has a drug/alcohol problem and the other is a lothario. That's it. I could totally sense that Gena was trying to pick up some of the elements that work in her PR world and drop it in here with her cocky emotionally-scared damaged alpha heroes who carry a lot of baggage. But unfortunately what's fun, intense, intriguing in there, came off super flat, stale and disingenuous here. Everything was slapped in and trying extremely hard. The set up and intro of the story was so jarring and manic with info dumping about characters readers know nothing about. The first chapter was one big jumbled mess with a bunch of names that sound very similar.

Brook Lynn's obsession with a zombie apocalypse?

NO. Not cute Gena.

The thing that bugged me and kept throwing me off is that this felt very much like a YA/NA book rather than an adult CR book. The characters, their cutesy fluffy dialogue and ribbing just came off very immature and frathouse worthy. Do folks in Oklahoma use this kind of 'Dude!' slang so much? I always thought it was more a California thing. *shrugs* And I'm sorry but I don't know **any** guy who uses the phrase "As if" even when thinking internally (yes I'm going there and reading every man's mind. Sue me!) Nooope. No.

And I appreciate that Gena is trying to go for a more darker tone in a Contemporary series (hell yes!) but why the hell does every character in here had to have experienced some OTT horrific tragedy and be guilt ridden over it? It's too much. Brook Lynn's father died in a factory explosion, their mother drowned in a river bank (seriously? ?). Brook Lynn and Jessie Kay's uncle used and abandoned them taking their inheritance with him. West lost his sweetheart after she was viciously raped and then crashed her car into a pole (yes that's right, all in the same night).

And the fact that their mother's loss was used to justify messy Jessie Kay's behavior kinda infuriated me more. Jessie Kay blaming herself over their mother's loss doesn't mean she gets a free pass for being a reckless screw up boo boo. Stop coddling her ass. Brook Lynn's doormat enabling of this girl pushed me over the edge.

And what pissed me off the most was the surprise 'twist' the author threw in here in the last quarter of the book. (view spoiler) Yes because a man who is just trying to adapt to life in the real world outside of prison and get over his PTSD issues needs to deal with this surprise on top of it? Seriously? SMH. And the way he handled it irked me more. The dynamic between this insta family was so slapstick and convoluted, the entire situation was extremely irritating. The only one who was asking the right questions (or any for that matter) and showing justified outrage was West in all this. I honestly wanted to strangle some of these guys specifically Jase for accepting it all so passive aggressively and defending his ex's actions. (view spoiler)

So yeah, I had high hopes with this one. The only thing that matches the promise of that blurb is the beautiful cover. I really wanted to love this and I loved the *idea* of Jase Hollister but what I got didn't match up with what I had built up in my head. As for the next book, Beck's story seems very rinse, dry, repeat to this one if that excerpt is anything to go by. Although Harlow as a heroine sounds intriguing, reformed bad girls getting a second chance can be fun if written well. And as much as I wanted to strangle Jessie Kay 90% of the time in here, I actually liked the hostility between her and West. Like FINALLY someone who wasn't buying her act. But I feel like Gena already jumped the shark with him softening up towards her near the end and wanting to apologize. WTF? Noooo! You barely know her, it made no sense. Why must everything be rushed? Ever heard of a slow burn? SMH. This trilogy has A LOT of potential but the writing and pacing isn't doing it justice if it continues on like this. Guess the moral of the story is with any book...

ETA: After reading Book 2 I had to add this here and lower my rating. Meet Jase Hollister...

Rachel says

I don't like books where the hero has slept with a sibling. It is rare I'll read one and in this case when the heroine meets the hero, he is literally zipping up his pants from screwing her sister. :/

Carol [Goodreads Addict] says

RATING: 4.5 STARS

The Closer You Come is book one in The Original Heartbreakers series by Gena Showalter. Thank you to NetGalley, Harlequin and Gena Showalter for providing me with this book in exchange for an honest review.

Gena Showalter is well known for her paranormal romances. Although I have some of them on my reading wish list, I have not read anything by her yet. I am glad, now, though, so that I wasn't tempted to compare. I went into this book with an open mind as to what to expect, and I loved it. I really liked the book for the first half and I can't tell you what happened, something just clicked, and I fell in love with it from there on out.

Jase Hollister was just released from prison six months ago. He served nine years and is now trying to make a life for himself. His two best friends or brothers as he thinks of them, have bought a farm in Strawberry Valley, Oklahoma. It seems like the perfect place for him to start over. He just wants peace and quiet and solitude. The scars he bares from his time in prison don't all show on the outside. He is scarred on the inside as well.

“Feel nothing. Want nothing. Need nothing.”

Brook Lynn Dillon has lived in Strawberry Valley all her life. There was a time when she and her sister were part of a loving family, until they lost their parents when they were younger. Then an uncle stole their inheritance so from there on out, Brook Lynn and her sister, Jessie Kay, have struggled to survive. Even though Brook Lynn is the younger sister, she is often forced to be the parent to her sister who prefers to spend all of her free time partying and in bars, frequently forgetting to show up for work. Brook Lynn is holding down two jobs and trying to cover for her sister but it's just too much to handle and it was only a matter of time before everything fell apart.

It's on one of her searches for her sister at a party at the farmhouse of Strawberry Valley's three newest residents that she first meets the hunkalicious Jase Hollister. But this first meeting did not go well, at all! In fact, he's whose bed she found her sister in! But as time went on and they got to know each other, chemistry began to sizzle and bonds began to form. Jase, though, knows that he is not relationship material. He's too empty, his soul is too dark. Brook Lynn is a good girl and she deserves better, a forever type of guy and he is far from that. So he fights against everything he is feeling. But that doesn't stop him from wanting to help her, and protect her. What would Brook Lynn do if she knew what he had done, that he was an ex-con? He's

sure that she would run away, which is what would probably be best.

“He was as far from perfect as she was close to it; his scars might appall her...or lead to questions he wasn’t prepared to answer.”

Jase keeps his walls up but his actions contradict his words. He says no but his actions show that he cares, that he's a good man.

“Actions mean more than words...but she would be lying if she claimed she wasn’t looking forward to their next interaction.”

These two were so much fun to get to know. I think part of my own slow build with my feelings towards this book was I just had to get used to the author's writing style. She has a snarky sense of humor and it definitely showed with the exchanges between Jase and Brook Lynn. They had me laughing out loud with their texts and Jase's "to do" lists for Brook Lynn. The slow build of their relationship and the sexual tension was killing me and I was relieved when they finally gave in to each other. And it was definitely worth the wait.

I really did love this book. It was fun, sweet, sexy, and also a bit suspenseful. I plan to go back and read the prequel, #0.5, The One You Want, and then the soon to be released book #2, The Hotter You Burn, which will be Beck's story.

“You are pleasure to my pain, hope to my fear. You are everything I’ve ever needed but didn’t think I’d be lucky enough to have.”

Erika says

hero literally is zipping up his pants after having sex with heroine's sister when heroine meets him. Not for me.

Spoiler Whore-Momoa rounds down on her reviews so fuck off says

4.5 stars

My first Gena Showalter experience was thru her paranormal romance series Lords of the Underworld(which I HIGHLY recommend). In the first installment to her new contemporary romance series, The Original Heartbreakers(which I HIGHLY recommend also), we are introduced to the enigmatic newcomer Jase Hollister and hometown no bullshitter Brook Lynn Dillon. Their connection wasn't immediate due to how they met(under a circumstance that was awkward) but as the days go by and opportunities come up where

they are constantly together, it's inevitable that feelings arise and they succumb to their attraction. But it isn't easy. Secrets are yet to be told and while they're both afraid of what the outcome will be once they're revealed, Jase and Brook Lynn will give the their friends, family and the town of Strawberry Valley something to talk about.

The writing is spot on. The wit and bantering throughout the story is hilarious. The relationships(family and friends) are relatable and realistic. While the story focuses on the relationship of Jase and Brook Lynn, other characters(there are two more heartbreakers, Beck and Lincoln) are introduced and you get the feel of what they'll bring to the rest of the series.

All in all, read the book.

ARC provided by publisher

Claire Robinson says

1 - "Let's do this again never." Star.

DNF

If having a selfish asshole for a sister wasn't bad enough, then getting involved with a guy that bounced said sister on and off his cock in the space of an hour at the start of the book, pretty much nailed the coffin shut on this story for me.

I still like the series in general, so hope the next book(s) don't follow in the same vein.

The over use of the phrases *man meat* & *lady meat* got pretty annoying too.

Tanja ~ KT Book Reviews says

I think I prefer Showalters PNR work and need to stick to that. This just didn't do it for me :(

**ARC provided by the publisher*

Geri Reads says

This was okay. I actually liked it more than I thought I would based on the reviews.

ZARIA (Sheldon Cooper lover) says

DNF

“Hello. I am armed.” She waved the sanitizer in his face. “The world is going to spiral into a zombie apocalypse one day...unless we get proactive and do something. It’s called germ warfare. Look it up. I’m doing my part.”

“That’s not what germ— Never mind. You fear zombies?”

“Fear? No. That’s Kenna. I’m actually looking forward to battling the undead. I plan to collect their heads like trophies.”

Why was that so damn sexy?

Hint: everything about her was sexy. Even the fact that she was clearly a hot mess. He’d never actually met someone who believed zombies were a real possibility.

Hint:

(view spoiler)

Alp says

I really loved 'The One You Want', a prequel novella to this series so I had high expectations for this book. The story started off brilliantly with an interesting premise (Except for the awkward moment when Jase and Brook Lynn first met.), but why, oh why! Who would have thought it would end up being a disaster?! It left me unimpressed and disappointed!

The story dragged a bit, particularly in the middle. I was so frustrated with Jase that he couldn't make up his mind whether to welcome Brook Lynn into his life or let her go. I was so tired of the hot and cold treatment he was giving her.

‘I want her but I can’t have her.’

‘I can’t be with her but I can’t live without her.’

Grrrr!!!

They were going around in circles in their relationship and it sure wouldn't go anywhere!

Things that happened in the last quarter of the book were such a mess! Just when I thought I was reading a contemporary romance story, suddenly the author threw suspense into it. When Jase told Brook Lynn his secret, instead of giving him understanding, she ran away! She told him that she needed time to think because she was afraid of him! And then (view spoiler) All these things happened in a short period of time and the ending seemed too rushed.

I was somewhat upset after finishing this one. My expectations might be too high and I think I’m in a minority here. I don’t know if I’ll continue the series.

