



## Risk

*Baylin Crow*

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**Risk** Baylin Crow

***We never should've been anything more than roommates.***

DREW: *Life dealing me a hard blow is nothing new. What's one more sucker punch?*

When my uncle offers me a job working at his MMA training center, I jump at the chance to turn my life around...not upside down and questioning everything I know about myself.

Light Heavyweight Champion Asher Ramsey is the definition of a ladies' man. His stormy gray eyes and inked skin call to the artist in me and make me itch for my pencils and sketch pad so I can capture every detail. If I'm honest, they make me itch to touch every detail too, which confuses me.

After he offers to let me stay in his guest room, I discover there's more to Asher than he allows the world to see.

ASHER: *My life is a lie. A play written and directed by my PR manager.*

With the biggest fight of my career only weeks away, my focus is on securing my title. Losing my belt to some new up-and-comer isn't an option, and I can't afford any distractions. Or an unwanted attraction.

When Drew begins working at the gym where I train, my priorities waver. To make things worse, I offer to let him stay with me until he finds a place of his own. It'll be fine. Sure, I'm attracted to him, but I'm an expert at hiding behind the mask of a straight man. Besides, he's completely off-limits. Not that it matters--we don't even play for the same team.

What's the worst that can happen?

## Risk Details

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## From Reader Review Risk for online ebook

### Cadiva says

#### Good, solid sports romance with low angst

I liked this, my first from this author, and I liked the setting with a sport that doesn't get as much coverage as the other big four.

Both Asher and Drew were decently developed characters with unique voices and, while Drew was younger, I never felt like he was too young to know his own mind.

The "out for you"/bisexual awakening was handled well and more along the lines of Drew slowly realising he was attracted to Asher the more time he spent with the MMA fighter than any kind of closeted behaviour.

It's relatively low angst and medium steam, with most of the physical relationship not kicking in until the final quarter of the book.

I'd definitely read more from this author.

#ARC kindly provided by the author in return for an honest and unbiased review.

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### JustJen "Miss Conduct" says

Review by The Blogger Girls.

Not sure what took me so long to get to this one, but I'm glad I finally did! I loved Asher. He was a badass dedicated MMA fighter working on defending his title. He is closeted and focused on his career, suffering through the many dates his agent sets up to uphold his image, being told time and again that to come out would ruin his career. That's been the status quo until Drew comes into the picture.

Drew has not had it very easy. His father died when he was young, his mother hooked up with an unsavory guy who got her hooked on drugs that ended up taking her life. During that time, he was caught with drugs and had to suffer the consequences. When we meet him, he has just lost his current job and is staying with his bff, Claire, before turning to his uncle for help and a job. His uncle gives him a job and tasks Asher with keeping an eye on Drew.

The two end up hitting it off, but while Asher is gay, Drew is not, and it takes some time for him to understand his feelings and accept his bisexuality. When they do take things further, they have great chemistry. There is still the issue of Asher's career situation, so it doesn't look good for them for a while and they hit some bumps before things smooth out. It did seem as though Drew flipped from straight guy to questioning/curious to boyfriend very quickly. Likewise, a relationship vs. the career that has consumed Asher's life seemed to be resolved overnight.

But, all in all, I really enjoyed this and wasn't ready to let these two go. I'm a bit sad this isn't a series,

because I'd really love to see more of them!

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### **Deanna Against Censorship says**

#### **Hot**

Good story with hot men. Enjoyed reading it. Liked Drew and Asher. They were hot ?. Would have liked a little more emotional depth but still a kept my attention. Insulin Crow is a new author for me. Will check more of Crow's books.

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### **Aki | nose buried in books | ❤️? | says**

First time with this author for me.

At the beginning of the book I wasn't really invested in the story, the setting and Drew were unpleasant imo. But then, while I continued the reading, I begun to get drawn by the story and I started to like a lot the characters.

Smokin' hot MMA closeted fighter + gfy cutie... What else? I enjoyed the development between them, the steamy moments and their HEA.

The plot and the setting aren't very original, but that doesn't mean that the book isn't worth a shot.

In the end I liked this one a lot and I recommend it without a doubt ?

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### **Chris, the Dalek King says**

Asher Ramsey, MMA Champion, has been living in the closet for years. Determined to not wreck his career—and spurred on by his meddling PR manager—Asher has done everything in his power to keep his sex life as strictly hetro as possible. At least while there might be cameras about. He isn't all that pleased with the lying but he doesn't really see a way out that doesn't tank his career. Which makes Drew just about the last thing he needs in his life. Because keeping his hands off Drew is quickly becoming one of the hardest things he has ever done. Eclipsed only by his ever failing attempts at not falling in love with the man.

Drew has his own problems though. Recently off probation and having just lost his—rather lousy, but needed—job, Drew is desperate. He can't live on his best friend's couch forever. So he gives in and asks his uncle for a job at his MMA training center. Where he crosses path with the famous, and undeniably sexy, Asher. That last bit being a bit of a shock to Drew since he has never really looked at guys like that before. Unsure about his sexuality, his future, and his job, Drew tries to fight his attraction to the man, but when Asher offers to let Drew use his spare bedroom, putting the two together far more often than is good for either's peace of mind, things start to fall apart. Or together. The outcome remains to be seen.

I really needed this book, this week. After several stories with rather depressing undertones, I just needed something that was an easy read, with likable characters and an easy flow. *Risk* fit the bill to a T.

While hardly a story to reach far outside the box, this is a very comfortable romance story about to guys finding each other and having to face down the real world issues of being together in a world that really

should have gotten its shit together by now, but somehow still is being a total bitch about equality. Asher is in the closet, Drew is shocked to find a new aspect to his sexuality—it all feels a bit M/M romance from 5 years ago...but in a good way. It might not take many risks, but I think it knows exactly what it wants to be and is comfortable in that. And hey, at least it is smart enough to realize that bisexuality is a thing and not throw the gay-for-you label around.

It is of course helped by the fact that both Asher and Drew came out of this feeling like real people. I was worried for a bit with Asher, in the beginning, but he does start to get better the more time we spend with him. He doesn't get nearly as fleshed out as Drew though, which is a shame. Drew on the other hand is by far my favorite part of this book. I'll admit that the scenes where he is starting to realize his attraction to Asher are by far the best parts of the story. Also that kiss during the storm was incredibly well written. I had zero problem visualizing it, and it was a very pretty picture.

I think the only reason this didn't get a higher rating is the fact that the end was a bit anticlimactic. The fight is brought up again and again over the course of the story...but the actual event wasn't much of anything. Not sure I needed the whole thing recreated on page, but a bit more of the action would have helped hold on to, and release, all the tension that had been building in the story up to that point. As it was, it felt like more of an afterthought, than anything else. Not bad, just not living up to the rest of the story.

All in all, I have no problems recommending this book. I had a lot of fun reading it, and the chemistry between the two characters clearly makes up for any of the missteps near the end.

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*This book was provided free in exchange for a fair and honest review for Love Bytes. Go there to check out other reviews, author interviews, and all those awesome giveaways. Click below.*

### **.Lili. says**

MMA fighter and bisexual discovery- I was all in! BUUUUT sadly, it didn't measure up.

Risk by Baylin Crow is about a closeted MMA fighter, Asher, and down on his luck Drew. Drew recently started working at his uncle's gym where Asher trains. From the get-go, there was an immediate attraction between them- even for Drew who had never been attracted to men before.

#### **Some positives:**

-Asher and Drew were nice characters. There wasn't anything annoying about them.

-Dual POVs.

-Plesant secondary characters.

#### **Niggles:**

-While Asher and Drew were likable, I didn't find them interesting.

-Bisexual discovery. It was awkwardly written and glossed over quickly.

-Insta-love. I didn't buy it. Insta-love is touch and go for me- sometimes I love it, but more often than not it doesn't work for me.

-And the pace was pretty slow, especially the first and last quarter of the book. It dragged, and it was a struggle to finish.

Risk is my second book by this author and the first didn't fare much better. Overall this book has excellent feedback, and I believe this author and I don't mesh. I suggest giving it a go since I'm the minority.

2.5 Stars

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### **\*~\*~Fawkes, Padfoot, and Prongs~\*~\* says**

SO much to say ... wait for it ... give me a few days to put thoughts together ... SO much to say!! Trust me, I won't be keeping quiet on this one; I'll be pimping this book from the rooftops!!! This author did a SPECTACULAR job with this book; simply FANTASTIC!!!! I ADORED everything about it - and there was SO much to adore here <33333 [I'll elaborate very very soon]!!

In the meantime, amazing, amazing, amazing, AMAZING book <33333333!! Highly highly highly highly HIGHLY recommended!!! **ALL THE STARS!!!!**

More words to come ...

Also, I have a crap ton of updates if you want to look through those in the meanwhile :-))!!

This book just became one of my absolute M/M favorites <33333!! You can bet I'll be keeping an eye out for this author's books!!!

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### **haletostilinski says**

I really really enjoyed this one! It had me sucked in from the beginning and Drew and Asher had amazing chemistry.

They meet when Drew is desperate for a job and asks his Uncle Pete for a job at his MMA training facility and he meets Asher, an MMA fighter there who is in the closet and going on PR dates with women to squash rumors about his sexuality.

Seeing them go from strangers to friends to lovers was really fun, and it was believable too. I liked how the author took their time with these two, getting Drew to a place where he was reading to be with Asher, as Drew hadn't been attracted to any men before Asher, so it was new for him.

The drama near the end was a tad predictable but I didn't mind because it thankfully wasn't dragged out too long.

These two were great together, and they were hot together. I loved the supporting characters too, and this just ended up being a great, entertaining read. Definitely recommend!

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### **~Mindy Lynn~ says**

4 Stars!

I've said it before and I am going to say it again; we need more MMA fighter books written in the MM genre. I love when I find one and love it even more when the story is as enjoyable as this one. I found out about this book on FB. It's a NTMA and one I will be on the look out for. I literally joined FB so I could follow all my favorite authors or authors of books I have enjoyed because they always have great recommendations and great deals I learn about faster there than I do in their newsletters. This book is a perfect example of that.

Not only am I a sucker for an MMA book, but I am also a sucker for a GFY book. Lucky me this one had both.

Asher Ramsey loves his job. What he doesn't love is hiding behind the many females his PR manager keeps setting him up with to try and distance Asher from the rumors that he's gay. His photo was taken exiting a gay bar and since then rumors have made the rounds but with his long line of female company it's left people guessing. But Asher is tired of being alone and just wants to fight and stop with all the fake dates.

Drew has a rough time of it since his father passed away. His mother fell into a depression and drugs leaving Drew to handle a lot on his own. But more lately life has thrown him more blows than he can take. He recently lost his job and his place of living. Thank god for his bestie, Claire. She offers him her couch while he looks for a new job. Finding no luck he gives in and calls the last person he wants to, his uncle. The last time he spoke or saw his uncle was when he was bailing Drew out of jail. But his uncle is willing to help and sets him up with a job at his gym and a place to live in his guest house.

His Uncle Pete just happens to be Asher's trainer and this is where these two meet. Asher has a hard time keeping his eyes off of Drew and Drew seems to be having the same issues. Only for Drew it's quite confusing and it unsettles him that he's finding himself attracted to Asher. He's never been attracted to a man before. But the pull to Asher is becoming to much to handle, especially when he becomes Asher's new roommate. Sparks fly, butt cherry's get popped, and love blossoms.

In the end it was great read and look forward to reading this authors future books.

Happy reading dolls! xx

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### **Eugenia says**

\*\*A free copy of this book was provided by the author in exchange for an honest review\*\*

There was much I liked about this GFY, MMA book. But I was left wanting after finishing the story. Here we have a down and out Drew, seeking help from his uncle and getting a job at an MMA gym. Our other MC

is Asher, a MMA champion and celebrity who is gay, but uses beards per the urging of his management.

Let's start with the positive:

\*I LOVE sports themed romanced and GFY/OFY trope. So this was up my alley.

\*I enjoyed the slow burn of the first 1/2 of the book.

\*The sex scenes were rather well-written.

\*Drew had some depth to him.

\*I kept reading the book.

Now on to things which niggled:

\*There was next to no MMA in this book. Substituting any other sport would have likely kept the story the same. If you have an MMA fighter, show me some fights!

\*I know very little about Asher. He's rich and famous. He went to college. He has a tattoo. He drives a pickup truck. He lives in a large apartment with valet service. He's gay.

\*Drew sometimes seemed to have no issues with his newfound love of all things Asher; and sometimes he did. He never talked it out with anyone. He went from wanting to keep their relationship hidden to "not wanting to be someone's dirty little secret." That's a big 180 in the space of a couple of weeks for a once straight man.

Overall I liked it, but didn't love it. I would have liked greater depth from both characters AND MMA included in the book. It does end with an HEA. It does have some burning kissing scenes, one during a storm which I particularly liked. This is the first MM book the author wrote. I'm not sure if she's written in the MF genre, but I would have also liked a bit more complexity in her writing.

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### **Elsa Bravante says**

Muy flojo el plot, muy superficial el análisis de los personajes. Un libro muy amateur en mi opinión. Me gustó mucho más Scars.

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### **Bev says**

Struggled to get into this one, and had no problems putting it down. I found the first half to be on the slow side with not much happening, but once they actually got together and things kicked up a notch I started to like it. I liked both Asher and Drew, they were so good for each other.

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### **Eve Recinella (Between The Bookends) says**

This is the second book by this author that I have had the pleasure of reading. And, the second book that I have enjoyed immensely. I don't often get to read many M/M books (even though I love them), so this made for a nice change of pace for me. The writing was stellar. It was well paced. The plot was engaging and kept me turning the pages. It was told in a dual POV format. It features the *gay for you* trope. Last, it was all wrapped up in a very sweet *happy for now* ending.

### **~HEROES~**

I adored both Asher and Drew. They were both sweet guys. Drew had a difficult past, and he was working hard to get his life back on track. Asher seemed to have it all, except to have everything he wanted he had to hide who he really was. I was surprised and impressed by how Drew just accepted his being attracted to Asher when he was never attracted to a man before. Oh sure he was confused, but he didn't push Asher away or play games. Asher had his own issues, and I wanted to smack him upside his head at one point, but I couldn't help to fall in love with him.

### **~SECONDARY CHARACTERS~**

There were a few interesting side characters in this one. I really liked Claire, Drew's BFF. I also really liked Drew's Aunt Maggie and Uncle Pete (although I wanted to smack Pete for not believing Drew). We also get to briefly meet Asher's BFF, Blake, and one of the other fighters that train with Asher (Brock). None of them really play HUGE parts in the book, but they all added some good depth to the overall plot.

### **~HEAT LEVEL~**

Low to Medium. This was a pretty slow burn in my opinion, which I usually don't love, but in this instance, it worked very well. The sex scenes we do get were suitably hot, and this couple had very good on page chemistry.

### **~ANGST LEVEL - SEXUAL HISTORIES~**

Lowish...I didn't find this one particularly angsty per se. This couple had a lot of obstacles to deal with so that caused some issues. Asher's need to keep things secret added to it as well. Neither were virgins, although Drew never had sex with a man prior to Asher. That said, he did get around with the ladies a lot (lol). Asher didn't appear to be a manwhore but did have the occasion hook up with OM. There wasn't really any OW or OM drama. Asher goes out on dates with women to keep his player image intact, but he doesn't like doing it and never does anything with them.

### **~IN THE END~**

I enjoyed this a lot. It was well written and well paced. The plot was engaging. It was sweet. It was sexy. It had feels. It had a nice cast of secondary characters, and both main characters were very likable. Therefore yours truly is going to give this one two solid thumbs up.

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### **Makhda says**

Bravo! Perfect! I really loved this one! I know it's insta love but it's actually slow burn at the same time. They didn't go all the way until it was 90% if I'm not mistaken. So there's a relationship development. I appreciate that a lot. And although the bisexuality being glossed over, I don't mind. I have a soft spot for GFY. It's one of my fantasy. Whatever floats my boat. It was such a guilty pleasure reading this book. I'm going to stalk you from now, Author. ;)

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### **~◊~Doxni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~◊~ says**

#### **~3.5~**

I liked this one much better than Crow's first book. For one, the MCs have real names: Drew and Asher.

Other things that worked for me:

? Slow burn; decent amount of steam and exploration

? Enough background info on the guys that their actions felt believable

? Dual POV

? Fairly well rounded secondary characters; no villains or douchecanoes

? Strong HEA

Things that bugged:

? Relationship development happened in a vacuum in Asher's flat; love arrived like a freight train with no warning.

? Drew's bisexual awakening wasn't believable. He went on and on about how hot women were, and all of a sudden he has a boyfriend. I needed more there.

?Asher is a MMA fighter but could have been a wrestler or boxer. Nothing about the sport came alive. It's fiction, so I don't need a play by play, but I like it when the sport comes alive for me.

Bottom line: I had fun with this story and do recommend for an easy read.

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