



## The Widow's Strike

*Brad Taylor*

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Invented by nature but genetically manipulated by man, a mutation of a deadly virus has fallen into the wrong hands. Angered by sanctions placed against its nuclear program, a rogue state is determined to release it. Their chosen method: one of the Black Widows—female suicide terrorists of Chechen descent with a deadly reputation for slaughter that rivals any other group.

The only thing standing in the Black Widow's way is the Taskforce, an extra-legal counterterrorism unit. Racing against time to prevent a global pandemic, Taskforce operator Pike Logan and his partner Jennifer Cahill follow the trail across Southeast Asia to the United States, only to learn that the enemy they face may not be the enemy they should fear.

The Widow's Strike ties together government-sanctioned terrorist activities, nefarious multinational conglomerates, and frighteningly plausible science. Infused with authenticity from Brad Taylor's decades of service as a Delta Force commander, it's an explosive ride alongside America's counterterrorism operators that will leave readers breathless.

## **The Widow's Strike Details**

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Author : Brad Taylor

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# **From Reader Review The Widow's Strike for online ebook**

## **Amanda Williams says**

Started a bit slow, but ended as a page turner.

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## **Dave says**

Very entertaining action thriller. Although this book was formulaic and predictable, it was fun to read about an off-the-books special forces team going after a terrorist threat involving the release of a deadly virus. This was an easy, light read which offered no challenges or deep thinking, but I would be receptive to reading more by Brad Taylor.

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## **Jon Kurtz says**

Brad Taylor has quickly risen to the top of the thriller genre, along with Lee Child, Brad Thor, and Vince Flynn. In this most recent installment featuring Pike Logan, the action is, once again, non-stop. Interesting backdrops abound as the story of a terror plot involving a deadly virus unfolds throughout Asia, Europe, and the United States. The main characters, Pike Logan and Jennifer Cahill, are now familiar. Their professional relationship has become more personal, providing the sexual tension missing from more one dimensional works in this genre. While I enjoyed the read, it is my opinion this is the weakest of the Pike Logan novels. From a negative perspective, I found the Logan/Cahill relationship clumsy, the action slightly contrived, and the inept antagonists difficult to believe. Though not Taylor's best work, The Widow's Strike is still a good, recommended read. A 3.5 (4 rounded) out of 5 stars.

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## **Mark says**

The Taskforce with Pike Logan & Jennifer Cahill have to confront a serious biological attack on the US...In spite of the "soap opera" personal relationship issues, Taylor has placed himself in the class of Tom Clancy & Vince Flynn with a real page-turner...fun Spring Break read!!!

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## **Hilary says**

[Did Malik really intend on killing about a billion people worldwide, plus having severe long term consequences? With a 70% mortality rate, the virus would burn through people fast, and there probably would have be

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## **Nick Brett says**

A series I have been enjoying but this was easily the weakest to date. Much of the book felt as if it had been regurgitated from previous ones and had far too many similarities. Again we have a dastardly plot against the US from extremists, again we have Pike Logan and the Taskforce going off and doing their thing against orders, again we have issues with the oversight committee. I just felt I had read it before many times and kind of sleepwalked through reading it just as the author appears to have sleepwalked through writing it. Hopefully the series will get back on track as it has great potential.

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## **Mike (the Paladin) says**

Pike Logan! There should be theme music you know? Thrilling, stirring music to set the tone.

Once again the world hangs in the balance. A weapon of mass destruction is about to bring down the United States and reshuffle everything in the Middle East and the world. What shall we do? Who can save us?

Well luckily Pike and his team are still out there and in spite of short sighted politicians, superiors and other teams we can all hold to hope that Pike will succeed!

So what is about to happen? Well without spilling the beans (or petri dish) one of the Black Widows who are pledged to die for the movement (I always wonder [and I'm not really making light of this] what do female martyrs get? I mean are there 72 male virgins waiting or what? ) is set to deliver a killing blow to to The Great Satan (that's the U.S.). The book moves along at a good clip and in spite of my somewhat light opening this is actually a fairly possible scenario.

Tightly plotted with acceptable characterization I like these.

Recommended. Enjoy.

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## **Joe says**

After really liking book 1 in the series, I had been disappointed reading the 2nd and 3rd books. Widow's Strike reminded me of why I wanted to read on with this series to begin with: great action, well written, and a good dose of suspense.

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## **Brad Davide says**

The Widow's Strike (a title which I feared was a spoiler to the ending of Pike #3, but isn't) is a great addition to the series. I enjoyed the new angle of bio/chem warfare instead of another straight terrorist with a bomb threat. I felt the story had just the right amount of "sciency" stuff to both explain the plot help us as the reader understand the threat.

A corrupt pharmaceutical company (who's CEO sits on the Task Force oversight committee) see's

opportunity for profit in a vicious new strain of bird flu. The idea was to genetically modify the virus so humans could contract it but in a controlled and highly secured lab, then create an antigen so when the inevitable bird flu pandemic hits, they'll have the "cure" and sell it at ridiculous margins. Without spoilers we can say an old enemy of the Task Force comes back into play, learns of the bird flu and hopes to both steal and weaponize it.

The ensuing story is a multi-country chase lead by Pike's team to uncover the plot and isolate patient zero to stop a devastating fatal flu outbreak. As always, Brad Taylor gives us no shortage of close quarters combat and well detailed shootouts! I suppose one could argue the outcome was a tad predictable. It's tough to establish such a horrible global threat in a plot and lead us as readers to believe it's really going to happen, especially since I know for certain there is Pike #5 waiting for me right after this one. That being said, the ending did not disappoint and was not as easily predicted as you might initially think.

I continue to enjoy the building tension between Pike and Jennifer but am starting to boarder on "enough already." Not that I want them to elope to Las Vegas, but considering we're 4 stories into the series and still dangling on "we still haven't had that talk" I think it's time to S or get of the P if you follow. Especially with the ending of #3, I think that lead us to believe things were going to happen now, but without spoiling this edition I can tell you no it does not haha. A good read by all means and I will most definitely start #5 asap.

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## **Jeffrey says**

The anti-terrorist thriller genre lost a leading light with the untimely passing of Vince Flynn this year. Luckily for fans of this genre, there are still other action thriller authors who can pick up the mantle, but never replace, the great Vince Flynn.

Brad Taylor's fourth Pike Logan thriller is another fast exciting read filled with action, secret missions, guns and violence. Taylor sets up the action convincingly with a plot involving a bold terrorist general who is intent on unleashing a plague on the world. We get a bird's eye view of the presumed motivations of the general and of the recruited Chechen widow, who will be the actual instrument of attack. Taylor knows weapons and tactics and is particularly adept at describing the efforts that the team must go through to thwart a terrorist attack. The least convincing part of this book is Logan's perspective of the Widow's reasons for being a suicide bomber unleashing a plague against innocents that are not involved in the Chechen area, but he does spend a lot of time trying to provide a window into the face of evil. It's up to the reader to determine if he succeeds.

The general is operating out of Thailand, when he stumbles onto the fact that a biological factory has developed a murderous strain of the Asian flu. Motivated by his hatred for the West, the general kidnaps a scientist's kid at the mall and then threatens to kill the kid unless the scientist will provide the vials containing the disease.

Pike Logan and his partner Jennifer Cahill are members of the Taskforce, a typical secret government agency tasked with stopping terrorist attacks on America. Knuckles, one of the other members of Logan's team is captured by Thai police while on a mission trailing the general. It's up to Logan and Jennifer to find a way to free Knuckles.

Once free, the team tracks the general and during a firefight captures one of the general's team of terrorists, who reveals the general's deadly plot. Can Logan and Jennifer stop the general before he gets the virus or at any point during his deadly plan to unleash the virus on the World. Will all of America's Taskforce members

standup and be counted?

This is an exciting page turner as Logan, Jennifer and his team race against time to prevent a deadly plague from being unleashed. It's a wham bang action packed thrill ride.

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### **Douglas Barrow says**

I don't know how thriller authors come up with their story ideas but Mr. Taylor came up with a doozy for this one. I almost felt like I was there with the way he writes the details of the given circumstances. This one had terrorist going to from Singapore to Hong Kong to Macau to New York and finally off the coast of Florida on a cruise ship. The Taskforce has a huge shake up and members are forced to show their true loyalty. Even the President has to deal with all the actions swirling around him while dealing with the a bad case of the flu. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, more than I have any other in a long time. Fantastic story, great suspense and just plain hard to put down. Keep it up Brad!

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### **Tommy says**

I had the privilege of receiving an Advanced Reader's Copy of The Widow's Strike. Has a slightly different flair than the first three, but an extremely, highly entertaining story-line. Characters are developed out more in this edition than its predecessors. And Mr. Taylor throws in some definite plot changes that you will not see coming. I will be reading this one again and if you are looking for a great read, this will not leave you disappointed! Great job again Brad!

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### **Tim says**

This excellent novel moves well throughout its plots and provides readers and listeners with thoughtful and exciting operations for the teams involved. Well done. 9 of 10 stars

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### **L.A. Starks says**

Taylor may have been earlier on the "widow" theme (see also Daniel Silva's latest), but it and sex boulevard Sukhumvit Road in Thailand (which also shows up in Nexus) were interesting "shares" between these three books.

The Widow's Strike is another great action-filled thriller from Brad Taylor in his book about how a rogue Iranian could weaponize a virus. Catnip for those of us who read Vince Flynn, Daniel Silva, Marc Cameron, Taylor Stevens, Ben Coes, Alex Berenson, Gayle Lynds, Harry Hunsicker, Sara Paretsky, etc.

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## Samuel says

A New Book,  
A New Day  
A New Threat.

But don't worry, Pike Logan and Jennifer Cahill have returned to kill off a terrorist scheme that threatens not just the USA but the world in Brad Taylor's "The Widow's Strike"

Ahh, the dreaded Sophomore slump. This is when an author, after starting strong begins to get a bit "wobbly" so to speak. Vince Flynn hit it in "The Third Option", Ian Fleming hit it in "Diamonds are Forever" and after the third brilliant Pike Logan book "Enemy Of Mine", Brad Taylor seems to have caught a minor case of it as well. That does not mean "The Widow's Strike" is a bad book, on the contrary, it's well researched, has the best setting and some fun action scenes but it is let down by a lack of gripping plot twists and character development, two things which have been the trademarks of the Pike Logan Saga and hence make it currently the weakest book in the series. Now to the review. What happens when someone messes around with the deadliest virus on earth?

The story kicks off with a workplace accident in Singapore. A scientist working for a pharmaceutical firm is infected with a mutated strain of bird flu. The incident is contained but catches the eye of the Iranian Qhuds force commander. He heads to Thailand, looking for leverage to use against one of the research team members. Back in America, Pike Logan and Jennifer Cahill our protagonists are trying to recover from the shocking events of book 3. Unfortunately, one of the members of their team who was in Thailand trying to do a black bag job is arrested and incarcerated in a Thai jail. They fly down to Asia and assist with the prison break which goes off successfully. With the team regrouped, they're informed that the Iranian is in the area and are suddenly drawn into what starts as a reconnaissance job but turns into a race to prevent a plan to silence all of Iran's critics, domestic and foreign, permanently.

Plot wise, "The Widow's Strike" is good. Taylor drags Pike and Jennifer on a fun hunt across Asia for the most intelligent foe they've faced yet someone who's far more intelligent then their previous foes. At the same time, they're still trying to sort out their relationship which through all the hell they've been through has evolved from bodyguard and damsel in distress in book 1, teacher and mentor in book 2, good friends in book 3 and in book 4 has now graduated to a romance! The action has been ramped up considerably from the previous book. From a destructive boat chase in Bangkok to a cool infiltration of a Singapore hotel room and a high-wire climax on a cruise ship off the east coast, "The Widow's Strike" has the best setting of the series and Taylor used his research trip they're very well. The technology the author broke out for this book is very impressive. From the special harness rig the team uses to drop Jennifer into the top floor hotel rooms of the Marina Bay Sands hotel in Singapore without killing her to the cool method Pike uses to commit identity theft and break Knuckles out of jail. At the same time, the author weaves a solid cautionary tale about the medical industry, how large companies offshore their research in order to keep it away from meddling oversight, safeguards and by doing so leave them vulnerable for "interested parties" to take that research. The main threat of the novel, the mutation of HN51 into a lethal strain is inspired by real life events. There was a research team in Holland which successfully mutated bird flu and were on the verge of publishing their papers until the WHO begged them to keep them under lock and key, fearing rouge states would replicate the research themselves. Then there's the recent outbreak of HN51 in China which spread as far as Taiwan before getting under control. It was later discovered that in a under-equipped laboratory in China was a heavily mutated HN51 sample that had been experimented on. Research on viruses can be used for both good and evil and without proper oversight of the medical industry, the shadowy "interested parties" like North Korea or Al Quaeda may try to take advantage and wage biowarfare which is a lot more painful in the

long run and easier to do than set off a nuke. The author makes this point by having the Qhuds force Colonel who's utterly demented trying to do so obtain a mutated HN51 sample and spread it, knowing there's no virus. It's fiction but if it were real, we'd be wiped out.

Next comes the characters. Apart from Pike and Jennifer's relationship being upgraded to a romance, there's less emphasis on the character development in this book. Pike's unit has settled in nicely and is now working like a well-oiled machine much to the disappointment of the Qhuds force soldiers who get severely trounced from Bangkok to Hong Kong. We get to meet more of the Oversight Council, the leaders of the Taskforce and due to the fatal flaws of one of their members who screwed up in a big way, panic and promptly go mad for one chapter and get sent on a wild goose chase. At the end of the book, you'd be thinking they needed some rest and relaxation...on a cruise ship. But that character that caught my eye the most and stole the show from the protagonists and Jennifer was the main villain, General Malak, commander of Iran's Qhuds Force, a cynic who doesn't give two shits worth about being an Islamist unlike other villains in the genre and by far is the best opponent to face off against the Taskforce....and he damn near wins. Even though he hasn't got the awesome surveillance and weaponry the Taskforce has, he gets the better of them throughout most of the book and if it wasn't for the sheer bloody incompetence of his operatives he would have won the day. He's also got a excellent sense of humour, using a stack of illegally pirated ARGO DVD's in a creative trap to delay the Taskforce and at one point, gets to have a gleefully fun conversation with Pike and live to tell the tale.

Finally, to the constructive criticism. The portrayal of the Qhuds Force is rather...lopsided. Yes, recently from Thailand to Bulgaria they've been utterly incapable of blowing something up except their own limbs and failed to kill multiple Israeli diplomats this year. However, with only General Malak being a serious opposition to Pike and company, the Taskforce had a rather too easy time killing off the opposition like Vince Flynn's Mitch Rapp. To put it bluntly, they were a joke. The series has had a great number of villains who can give the protagonists a serious run for their money and in "The Polaris Protocol" to be released in 2014, I hope Mr Taylor readdresses the balance. Lastly, there were very few plot twists. I may be nitpicking here but what made "Enemy Of Mine" so brilliant were the brave and shocking places the author threw his character into in order to show the reader what they were made off. "The Widow's Strike" in contrast seemed to be another day in the park for Pike and Jennifer rather than a challenge.

Nonetheless, with most good authors, the Sophomore slump is temporary and I'm sure the same thing will happen here with a full recovery in the next book. Overall, Brad Taylor has written an excellent and educational cautionary tale for the current decade. With it's compelling action set pieces and always meticulously accurate research, "The Widow's Strike" may not be as good as its predecessor novel but is still better written than many competing thrillers out there.

**QUITE RECOMMENDED**

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