



Second Shot

Zoë Sharp

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"Take it from me, getting yourself shot hurts like hell."

When the latest assignment for ex--Special Forces soldier turned bodyguard Charlie Fox, ends in a bloody shootout in a frozen forest of New Hampshire, she's left fighting for her life, with her client dead.

Simone Kerse had just become a lottery millionaire but never lived long enough to enjoy her riches. Charlie was supposed to keep Simone's troublesome ex-boyfriend at bay and accompany her on a trip to track down the father Simone had never really known---a relatively low-risk job.

But Simone's father has secrets in his past that are about to come back and haunt him, and the arrival of his long-lost daughter may be the catalyst that blows his whole world apart. But the closer Charlie gets to the truth, the bigger threat she becomes. Only this time she's in no fit state to protect anyone, least of all herself....

Second Shot Details

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Any Length says

brilliant. I couldn't stop reading. From the first sentence - which should be a classic gripping opening sentence- I was hooked and couldn't put the book down. Didn't even see coming what happened at the end.

Karen Ford says

This is the second Charlie Fox novel I have read and it's quickly shot it's way near to the top of my favorite series. This one takes place shortly after the first book I dive into, First Drop.

Charlie's boss (and on again off again lover) Sean's protection firm is engaged by the solicitors (to use the British term) of a lottery winner, Simone. Charlie's task is to be bodyguard for Simone and Ella, her four year old daughter. The main threat seems to come from Simone's estranged husband, Matt, who is trying to get back into the lives of the suddenly rich women by any means necessary.

Simone is also engaged in an active search for her long lost father, a quest that sends Charlie with the women to Boston and eventually northern New Hampshire where the threats to Simone and Ella double and triple. It's no spoiler to reveal that Charlie takes a bullet (in fact a pair) as it happens in the very first chapter and the next third of the book details Charlie's journey until that point.

The book moves along quickly, even though Charlie is hobbled by the shooting and comes to a climatic showdown. I like the character of Charlie, who has doubts about herself but can still dig deep for that inner reserve of steel when the chips are down. Highly recommended for both fans of mysteries and action novels. I can't wait to dig into the next book!

One note: having grown up in New Hampshire, I am familiar with the setting of the second half of the book and the author does a great job of describing the North Conway area and using its setting perfectly.

Janine says

This is the first Zoe Sharp book I have read and it didn't matter that it was book 6 in the series as it was a great story.

RachelW (BamaGal) says

3.5 Stars. Satisfying enough read, but my least favorite of the series so far. The ending was all over the place and overly melodramatic.

The Frances Neagley crossover was kind of cool...

Christine Cock says

Better and Better

Zoe Sharpe continues to develop her Charlie Fox character and create complex, thrilling stories. The relationships take on a deeper meaning also. Great fun!

D says

Another page turner with the complex, heroic Charlie Fox.

Another page turner with the complex, heroic Charlie Fox. This time she saves a child. Oh, and against unbelievable odds, too! She never gives up.

Sue Millard says

I find all Zoe's work hard to put down and this didn't break the mould. Second Shot is the first of the Charlie Fox series to introduce a child character into the mix. It shows us a softer side of Charlie's make-up. She obviously can't be a parent as well as doing the work she is naturally fitted for, but guarding a mother with a four-year-old brings her maternal instincts to the fore. That they're distinctly tigerish should be no surprise to readers of this series.

The "second shot" of the title hits Charlie when she hesitates to shoot for fear of hitting, or traumatizing, the child who is being abducted. This is also a narrative in which Charlie's brain has to be more important than her physical skill and military training, since the second half of the book has her opting to continue her work while recuperating from two major gunshot wounds - and no, she doesn't grapple with nightclub bouncers or sprint after wrongdoers in impossibly high heels. That's what I like about Ms Fox - she achieves her results in a realistic manner and with believable emotions, convictions and doubts beneath what she does so well.

Bravo Zoe... now I must go and read the next one.

Best Crime Books & More says

It's been a while since I read a book in the Charlie Fox series and then once I get back into them I seem to want to stay there. I started with book 5, and then went straight onto this one. I must say this book for me stood out from the first few pages. Charlie and Sean meet up with their new client Simone and her daughter Ella. It seems that the attention her ex-boyfriend is paying her is verging on dangerous. From the first few chapters we get to see a new side to Charlie. In previous books she hasn't really had much interaction with children, yet in this one we get to see a different side to her.

As the story progresses we get to around that halfway point and re-join the book from the opening few pages (if you see what I mean). Charlie wakes in a hospital bed recovering from some serious injuries following a shoot out. This was also an element of the story I liked, seeing Charlie not at her best and in particular very vulnerable. As usual Sean Meyer her boss is around to watch her back, and their ongoing relationship is one that keeps my interest too. There are plenty of 'heart stopping' moments in this book and I loved the extra layers of mystery surrounding the main crux of the story. This particular book in the Fox series kept me so captivated I finished it in a day.

The ending seemed like a new beginning too for Charlie and as I finished the Epilogue, I found myself checking what book I needed next!!! I think with Charlie and Sean relocated and now living over the water, there are endless possibilities as to where things could go. This is by far my favourite Zoe Sharp book of the series to date and it had everything you want to see in a series that is in my opinion, getting stronger with each book that's written. I think Zoe Sharp fans will love this addition, I know I did.

Michael Sova says

Helpless, vulnerable, insecure, fragile--these are not words we'd generally use to describe a literary hero. Too often, our heroes are larger than life. They never fail. They never falter. They never take a punch. We love them for their strength, and willingly overlook their total lack of any weakness. Such heroes are inspiring if not always entirely convincing.

In the opening pages of *Second Shot* by Zoe Sharp, it's almost painfully clear that British body guard Charlie Fox is no such hero. She has weaknesses and she does make mistakes. The woman she's hired to protect is already dead, and Charlie herself has been shot twice. She clings to life, and doesn't know if she has the will or the courage to press on.

Second Shot is the sixth book in the Charlie Fox series. Like in *First Drop*, Charlie has been sent to the States to look after a child. And once again, the situation gets more complicated than expected. She is still battling with previous failures, and wonders if self doubt is preventing her from doing her job properly. Meanwhile, enemies with no such qualms are quickly closing in. While struggling with her own demons, dealing with weaknesses both physical and mental, a child's welfare is still at stake and Charlie realizes she's still the only one who can truly make things right.

The world of fiction has produced a lot of Charlie Fox type heroes. Most of them are men. Oh sure; we've seen plenty of female detectives, from Kinsey Milhone to V. I. Warshawski to Precious Ramotswe. Charlie does her share of detecting as well, but she's primarily a bodyguard, a stereotypically male occupation, not just in literature but in life. She's also British but working in America. That too gives her, and by extension the reader, a slightly different perspective on things. I applaud Zoe Sharp for giving all of us something new, different and a little daring. She also crafts some great stories. If you're not familiar with Sharp yet, I suggest you give her and Charlie Fox a try.

Julia says

Probably my least favorite of the series to date. Charlie is guilt ridden and Simone is a train wreck. Much of

Charlie's actions are supposed to be explained and/ or redeemed by her feelings for Ella, but I never "believed" that attachment. Of course, I also didn't think she needed redemption, either...

Charles Levenstein says

Charlie Fox Rides again!

Another shoot-em-up page turner. A good read although Charlie's whining gets to be a little much at times. Worth the price.

Catsalve says

Not as good a story as the earlier books. It was a bit long-winded & didn't hold my interest as well as the others. Marked down because I'm tired of the soul-searching: the antagonists would have killed Charlie without a quiver of conscience, so she can be good or she can be dead. I wish Sharp would just let her get on with it. Let the father do his bit, but stop Charlie helping him undermine her. I'm going to have a break from these for a while because one more time - did I have a choice? or did I choose to kill? am I the psychopath my father thinks me? - & I may give up on them altogether. This would be a shame as they're pretty well-written, entertaining thrillers, on the whole.

Sarah says

Poor Charlie just keeps getting shot! She still hadn't fully recovered from her last trip to America (in the previous book) and now she's back to working as security for a mother and child. Supposed to be an easy protection gig--how hard is it to keep away the press and an ex-boyfriend? But Charlie ends up shot and severely wounded, and her security team is threatened. The mystery is big--people aren't telling the truth, and, of course, Charlie ends up saving the day. While being a complete badass.

Mad Leon says

Charlie Fox has got to be the dumbest and most lax body guard out there. Anyone this careless in reality wouldn't last a month. Evidently her 'principals' don't make it very long on her watch either. Plus evidently when she is involved in a crime or death there is no inquest and the police are bumblers also. Just too ridiculous for me.

Maddy says

PROTAGONIST: Charlie Fox, bodyguard
SETTING: Boston

SERIES: #2 of 6

RATING: 4.0

Charlie Fox is a former British Army soldier who's taking advantage of the skills that she developed during that career to become a close protection agent (bodyguard). Involved in a personal and professional relationship with her boss, Sean Meyer, she agrees to protect a recent lottery winner, Simone Kerse, and her 4-year old daughter, Emma, from her obsessed ex-boyfriend. Simone decides to use some of her newfound wealth to mount a search for her father, with whom she lost contact during her childhood. The trail leads to Boston, and Simone, Ella and Charlie travel to the United States so that Simone can realize her goal. Charlie is naturally skeptical of the man who claims to be Simone's father; however, Simone is determined that Greg Lucas is indeed her father and will not allow herself to be persuaded otherwise. Greg and his current wife, relate fairly well to Emma. But Lucas definitely doesn't show any of the military skills that he should have after a career in the SAS.

Simone stubbornly refuses to acknowledge that she and Ella may be in danger, even after a kidnapping attempt that goes awry. Charlie is put in the position of either agreeing to Simone's terms or walking away. Since Ella has won her heart, she doesn't find the latter to be a viable option. Her worst fears come true; and ultimately, Charlie is shot twice and left for dead in a snow-covered ditch. Even as she struggles to recover, she is on the trail of those who have been targeting the group.

Charlie is tough on the outside and a bit soft on the inside, which may make her career choice problematic. There are times when Sean questions her choices and motives. If she's going to be a bodyguard, she has to follow a rather rigid line and not allow her emotions to come into play—that vulnerability could get her or her principals killed. The two men in Charlie's life, Sean and her father, are both demanding and hard to get along with. There's not enough development of either one of them to get a real handle on the dynamics of the relationships. Sean does care about Charlie. Her father probably does as well, but he masks it in sarcasm and arrogance.

Paradoxically, some of the things that I liked best about the book also were the elements that didn't work quite as well as they should have. Sharp has arguably written the best description of what it feels like to be shot that I have ever read. However, that scene was part of the prologue and involved the death of one of the book's main characters. Knowing of that death decreased the dramatic tension of the narrative, in that I knew that this character was going to be killed and never expected otherwise. If the book had been written in a linear time progression, that event would have been a real shock. Along the same lines, Sharp also portrays the effect of Charlie's grievous injuries in a very realistic way. However, the fact that she is not operating in top form leads to several situations where she is not able to resolve them as satisfactorily as she would have had she been healthy. It's not exactly easy to be a kick-ass heroine when you're using a crutch!

Although there are several books in this series available in the UK, it is only now being released in the US. With excellent plotting and some skillfully executed red herrings, a tough female protagonist and a knack for suspense, the Charlie Fox series should be a big hit with thriller fans.
