

Deadly Savage

Dave Edlund

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From start to finish, this is fresh and exciting work—highly recommended to fans of thrillers, specifically of action-packed stories concerning political intrigue.

Dave Edlund's *Deadly Savage* is an enthralling story from its thoughtful beginning through to its multiple climactic moments and gripping plot twists.

The novel opens on an unassuming Kazakhstani scientist, both brilliant and resilient, whose humble beginnings belie his dark work—he is working on a doomsday biological weapon. Such zigzagging sets a mark for excitement in the rest of the story—one that is continually met. Edlund's detailed writing serves up clues early on that set the hook for an exciting journey.

The protagonist, Peter Savage, is introduced next and is written as a thoughtful family man. While the heroes of thrillers often lack connections, Peter is the opposite. His life centers on his two children and his father, and the importance of these relationships is clarified by the text's next emotional dagger: Peter's wife is recently deceased. The plot ramps up as the Savages travel to Minsk. While they are there, a pro-Russian group of troops invade the city, an action that serves as the driving force of the novel.

Edlund constructs this story using alternating viewpoints in each chapter, occasionally with contiguous chapters presenting the same scene from different points of view. The story stays rolling and is highly captivating. While one character may be aggressive and arrogant, presenting the same scene from a more strategic and introverted perspective creates a great depth of storytelling.

Deadly Savage is steeped in inspiration both from current and historical events, suggesting that the author is knowledgeable about history and military tactical analysis. Such realism makes the novel's turns all the more rich. This intense thriller is also distinguishable for its small character beats and breathable moments, resulting in a combination of heart and momentum.

From start to finish, *Deadly Savage* is fresh and exciting work, and is highly recommended to fans of thrillers, specifically of action-packed stories concerning political intrigue.

RON WATSON (Summer 2016)

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