



Amuse Bouche

Anthony Bidulka

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A gay wedding gone bad. A missing groom. An unsullied reputation at risk. Enter Russell Quant?cute, gay, and a rookie private detective. With a nose for good wine and bad lies, Quant is off to France on his first big case. From the smudgy streets of Paris, he cajoles and sleuths his way to the pastel-colored promenade of Sanary-sur-Mer.

Amuse Bouche Details

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Author : Anthony Bidulka

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From Reader Review Amuse Bouche for online ebook

Ronald Wilcox says

Debut book by this author. Russell Quant is a gay man and a private detective who lives in Saskatoon, Canada. He has been in practice for one year with only small cases when he gets a new client who hires him to find his missing fiancée. The fiancée apparently skipped out on their wedding day and went on their planned honeymoon to France. Quant is hired to find the fleeing groom and find out why he skipped out on the wedding. He flies to France and follows the groom around the country without actually physically catching up to him, just interacting through a series of notes left for him. The case is then called off by the client but Quant decides to continue the investigation on his own when a body is suddenly found back in Saskatoon Good, solid writing with a likable protagonist. Glad there are several further books in the series to read.

Richard Derus says

Rating: 3.5* of five

The Book Report: Harold Chevell, an A-list Saskatoonian gay man, has decided to marry his lover Tom in a private ceremony at their beautiful McMansion near the South Saskatchewan River. Trouble is, Tom's disappeared, and no one who knows the couple can resist speculating as to why. Enter gay ex-Saskatoon cop Russell Quant, whose late uncle left him a legacy that has enabled him to start his own PI business.

Harold's instructions to Russell are specific and vague: Find Tom. Find out what happened. Go wherever you need to go. Money doesn't matter, Tom does. And Russell, being no one's fool, takes the job, the money, and the next flight out of small-prairie-city Saskatoon to the fleshpots of Paris!

Russell chases lead after lead, goes to the many and various places that Harold and Tom were to have gone on their honeymoon, and in the end, solves the mystery, though no one can claim to be happy about that.

My Review: Well well well! What have we here? A sexy-but-doesn't-know-it PI who is a) gay and 2) financially stable plus c) a dog-lover?! Sign me up! I'll be getting married just as soon as I can figure out how to liberate him from being fictional.

This is a first novel, and there are things that show that fact up. I don't think any of them, like small plot points that don't add up, or characters developed but not used much, are fatal to the pleasure of reading the book. The small Canadian prairie city of Saskatoon was, until this book hit my eyes, merely a snicker-inducing name on a map. Thanks to Bidulka's very amusing Irish-Ukrainian Russell, I now want to book a trip there (in the fall, winter sounds too cold and I hate summer no matter where I am) to view the fleshpots of Saskatchewan's second city. (There's a sentence I'd've bet you money I'd never have cause to write.)

What's next? A series of mysteries set in Skookumchuk, British Columbia? I hope not...I need *some* hilarious names to giggle at, and that's one of my all-time favorites.

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License.

Philip says

I really enjoyed reading this book and I'm looking forward to the rest in the series! What an amazing and interesting bunch of characters Anthony Bidulka has created to surround Russell Quant who is himself quite a character. I like books like this to lighten up with after some serious suspense/thriller and maybe noir stuff! There were many times when I let out belly laughs and nearly fell out of my Lazy Boy!!

Sure I knew who the killer was well before the end, and the motive as well, but the opportunity and method sure made for some surprises and the ending, for a change, was mainly satisfactory even with a bit of a lucky coincident.

Another favourite Canadian Author to add to my growing list!

Ami says

Mr. Bidulka creates a very engaging character in Russel Quant, the private detective living in a small Canadian prairie city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. This first book takes Russel to France tracking a missing groom. I find the cute gay detective to be funny and lovable. The mystery is wrapped out nicely. I wish to see more action in Russel's personal life but there are more books to this series :p

Carol Balawyder says

Reading Amuse Bouche left me with a taste for more Russell Quant mysteries. Anthony Bidulka's writing style is fast paced, humorous and entertaining. All what I look for in a mystery. Quant is, In Anthony Bidulka's own words, "world-travelling, wise-cracking, wine-guzzling, gay, prairie private eye." Set in Saskatoon and Paris, Bidulka does setting very well - whether in the streets of Saskatoon and its countryside lakes or in a small cramped room in a Paris hotel to a luxurious Chateaux in a wooded farmland going from the Loire valley to the Rhone.

This is a whodunit that kept me wondering up till the end who the perpetrator was. An interesting thing which Bidilka does is he has Quant ask many questions which serve as clues and red herrings which he nicely and neatly ties together at the end.

Amuse Bouche is the first novel I read by Anthony Bidulka. It won't be my last.

For more on Bidulka you can visit my blog at:
<http://carolbalawyder.com/2015/01/09/...>

Alexander Inglis says

Anthony Bidulka has created a funny, engaging mystery series featuring Russell Quant, a gay private eye based in Saskatoon but whose work takes him globe trotting. In this opening title, Quant is hired to track down a missing bridegroom who missed his own wedding. The other bridegroom, a local Saskatoon philanthropist, sends Quant to Europe where he believes the missing lover has gone ... on the honeymoon,

sans husband. But it's not long before the tale returns to home base and corporate intrigue comes to the fore. It's a great start to the series which is heading into it's eighth title this year.

The seventh in the series, *Date with a Sheesha*, takes place in Saskatoon and the Middle East. Published by Insomniac Press, hopefully the whole series can come to Kobo. You can listen to a delightful interview with Bidulka on CBC at this link starting at about 30 minutes: <http://www.cbc.ca/thenextchapter/2010...>

Kim says

My first Anthony Bidulka book - and it just happened to be the first book he wrote, too. Provocative, amusing and it was a hoot to read about real - and fictitious - places in Saskatoon. The last chapter about private investigator Russell Quant getting it off with a new man in his life was a little over the top, but what I shouldn't have expected any less.... Will definitely read more of his books. Great vacation fare!

Chris says

2.5 stars. Ok gay mystery about a PI who's hired by a jilted groom to find his missing boyfriend. Pretty sure this is the only book I've read that was set in Saskatoon.

Grace says

I have always loved a good mystery story and this definitely fits the bill. I liked ex cop turned PI Russell Quant. He does mainly small cases like finding a stolen casserole dish then he is called and asked to take on a case, find a groom who didn't turn up for his wedding. Russell heads off to France to try and find him.

The mystery is well written and keeps you thinking. I liked the writing style and there is a good cast of supporting characters. There is no romance in this one other Russell's lust for a priest. I am intrigued by this and I enjoyed the story enough to read on with the series.

Tracy says

This is a great series for light reading. It is a mystery series written by an author from Saskatoon and set in Saskatoon. Amuse Bouche is the first in the series. There are now 5 of them, and I have read them all. It is fun to follow the antics of this gay detective, with many local references, and when you're in Saskatoon, you don't often get to see that!

Diana Sandberg says

Fun, in a fairly predictable way. The tec is a gay ex-cop in Saskatoon and I did like the way his sexuality is a largish part of who he is and how he sees things, but still is not any kind of Political Statement in the context

of the book. It's just him. I imagine gay readers would be additionally charmed that the noir-ish style includes sexy bits. On the down side, there were quite a few of the kind of errors that a proofreader ought to have caught, sigh: "stationery bike", "under his own terms", "sneak a peak", "expresso", "the gig was up", "...[an event happened] before I wanted it too". Sigh again. Anyhow, the tec has a suitably wry style (and I liked his dog), the Saskatoon setting is different and kind of fun, the story fairly mysterious. Not bad, not outstanding.

Neet says

Wow! It took me long enough to read this series. I had the first book in this series in both paperback and kindle and couldn't get past the first chapter. It wasn't because it was badly written either. It was because I wasn't ready to read this mystery. Now I'm ready, and boy am I glad. We meet the MC, Russell Quant who is a PI in the city of Saskatoon which is in the province of Saskatchewan (believe me I won't be writing that again). Russell is 31 years old and a former constable in Saskatoon. Thanks to an uncle, who saw a lot of himself in a young Russell he was able to quit his job, purchase a house and become a PI. His uncle who died too young left young Russell money in his will. Russell finds himself doing run in the mill cases until he gets a call from a man who wants him to find his fiancée. The man actually explains that the man of his dreams stood him up at the wedding they planned and invited family and friends to. The client, who is both rich and closeted, wants closure if anything, he wants to know why the man he loved left him. He thinks that his wayward ex is still going through the plans for their honeymoon. Russell finds himself hopping on a plane to France, traveling to small villages, in search for a man that doesn't seem to want to be found. Oh, there is more, much more. Things aren't what they seem. Sit back and enjoy the mystery. This is certainly a good read!

Kathy says

I first heard of Anthony Bidulka's Russell Quant series on one of the author groups where I hang out. When I did a little investigating and discovered that Mr Bidulka is a Canadian author whose character, Russell Quant, lives in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan I went on the hunt. When I was looking for Amuse Bouche, Mr Bidulka's first book, it was a bit of a treasure hunt. And I use that deliberately because a treasure is indeed what I found.

I'm a mystery fan from way back and I've read mysteries since what seems forever. I was intrigued to discover a mystery series that's set in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, a beautiful and very charming mid-size prairie city with which I've become passing familiar since my marriage. The fact that I live in another of the prairie provinces further piqued my interest.

Not only are we, the readers, treated to the sights of the city as Russell goes through his days, but we are tantalised as well as viscerally and mentally engaged in the mystery from the beginning. The story is told in Russell's point-of-view and while I know that many people are not overly fond of first person, it's one that I enjoy, especially when done as well as Bidulka has done it. There's no dearth of information on what Russell sees, learns and experiences—in many ways the texture of the story seems to be even richer than one would expect. Russell's observations of those with whom he comes in contact plays a big part in that experience.

As Amuse Bouche unfolded I found myself ever more captivated; the case of the missing groom covers the gamut from intrigue and adventure to uncertainty and all sorts of emotional reactions. By the end of the book I was emotionally invested in the outcome. I'm not going to say anything more than that because, while I can, and do, enjoy knowing the outcome of a story, most people do not feel the same.

Suffice it to say that Russell's first case appealed to me so much that I shortly thereafter headed to the nearest big box book store and ordered the rest of the books in Anthony Bidulka's Russell Quant Mystery series.

Kay Sachse says

Russell Quant, a private investigator, gets his first bigger assignment: tracking down the lover of a wealthy man who failed to show up to their wedding ceremony. Apparently the man fled to France, so off Russell goes. But instead of describing the search the readers gets a lot of chitchat about food, clichés about France, off-the-topic description. No wonder, that Russell loses track of Tom Osborn, the reader loses track of the story too, and that doesn't change after his return home. There are still too much sideline descriptions and nearly fascinating discounters. In the end you are just glad to get it over with so that I couldn't care who the killer was (logical but still far-fetched plot). And why does Russell have to be attracted to other men who are unreachable?? I got the impression as if Bidulka didn't dare to dive into a real story. What a shame!!

Emanuela ~plastic duck~ says

4.5 stars.

I love mysteries. Russell Quant is a private investigator and he quit his job as a policeman to pursue his dream as PI, thanks to the inheritance from a wealthy uncle.

He's pretty new in the business and the cases he's working on are not very thrilling until he is hired by a rich man, Harold Chavell, whose groom, Tom Osborn, seems to have got cold feet the day of their wedding, standing him up at the altar and going to France with the tickets of his honeymoon. Harold sends Russell to France to find Tom and to understand why he abandoned him. Tom seems to be always a step ahead of Russell and lets him know through a messenger that he doesn't want to go back to Harold anymore. Back to Canada, Russell is not able to forget the case and he snoops around on his own, until something unexpected happens.

I loved Russell's voice, his light humor and his internal banter. He doesn't hide much from the reader and he is very grounded, he doesn't put himself in unnecessary dangers. The people around him are very nice and funny. He is an attractive man, but his love life seems pretty non-existent and he develops this hopeless attraction to Tom Osborn's brother, who is a Catholic priest.

There is almost no romance in this book and I kept waiting for the Right Man to appear in Russell's life, but I was also happy that it didn't happen because Russell doesn't seem the kind of guy that is easily carried away or maybe that's what he successfully keeps hidden from the reader. And this also gives me the incentive to read all the other books in the series to see if he finds someone for him.

This didn't really blow me away like some first books of a series did, but it did keep me awake until 1 a.m. to

read the last 50 pages. The writing is very good, my eyes flew on the page and there wasn't anything particularly dark and nasty. It's a light genre of mystery but it's really good. It's a perfect book to keep you company when you're trying to relax.
