



Book Reviews

Date With A Sheesha

Quality Quant

|By Lesley McAllister

➔ **DATE WITH A SHEESHA** by Anthony Bidulka (Insomniac), 262 pages, \$19.95 paper.

Rating: NNNN

There may be 8 million stories in the Naked City, but the pickings are somewhat slimmer in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, home to Anthony Bidulka's gay private investigator, Russell Quant.

In *Date With A Sheesha*, the Prairie PI's new case lands him in Dubai, a welcome break from an especially gruelling winter – and some pressing romantic business.

Quant is hired by the father of a young gay man brutally murdered in a souk while on a carpet-buying mission. The local police are calling it random violence, but the family suspects it's a case of gay-bashing.

This is the seventh book in a series that continues to endear, and Bidulka remains in top form. Quant is as brave, funny and irreverent as ever. He may have traded in his Mazda for a minivan, but he hasn't hung up his stretchy wonderpants.

Racing against a deadline – the opening of the new ancient carpets museum at the University of Saskatoon – Quant poses as a carpet expert in search of an elusive rug that might be nothing more than an urban myth. What follows is an Arabian Nights-style tale that includes a visit to a hookah café (the sheesha of the title) and a surreal camel ride in a desert sandstorm.

Meanwhile, Russell's lover has given him an ultimatum that's making it hard for him to keep his mind on the Bukharas. He'll have to decide if he's man enough for marriage or, deep down, still his Ukrainian mother's little "Sonsyou."

Bidulka knows how to wine and dine his reader. This one is looking forward to her next date with Quant.

*Bidulka launches *Date With A Sheesha* on June 1 at Woody's (see insomniacpress.com).*

*His book *Aloha, Candy Hearts* is shortlisted for the Arthur Ellis Award for best crime novel, handed out May 27.*

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