



## The Marinara Murders

*Erik Hanberg*

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## **The Marinara Murders** Erik Hanberg

A grown man living in his mother's basement, disgraced detective Arthur Beautyman knows his life has fallen off a cliff. But that doesn't mean he has to be happy about his mother's solution to his woes: volunteering him to solve a case for her favorite bridge partner. The body of a young man who disappeared three years before is discovered drowned in an icy Minnesota late on the day of his father's restaurant grand opening. But he's only been dead for three days. Where has he been all this time? And what is the connection between his death and the new restaurant? To get his mother off his back, Beautyman agrees to take the case. That's when he discovers she wants to be his partner on the case as well ... With a recipe of unique cast of characters and terribly dysfunctional families, The Marinara Murders seamlessly blends comedy and mystery into one very enjoyable read.

## **The Marinara Murders Details**

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Author : Erik Hanberg

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# From Reader Review **The Marinara Murders** for online ebook

## **Vivian says**

Arthur Beautyman is back. Unfortunately he's no longer a police officer. Arthur is living in the basement of his mother's house in Minneapolis. For six months he has felt sorry for himself and done basically nothing. But now he's been forced to accept a case as a private investigator on behalf of one his mother's friends in **The Marinara Murders** by Erik Hanberg.

Fortunately for Arthur this is not a typical case. Mrs. Diamond doesn't want Arthur to find a murderer; she only wants to discover where her grandson has been for the past three years. Why is this so important? Because her grandson was declared dead three years ago but his body only recently discovered revealing he had just died. Arthur doesn't want to disappoint his mother so he accepts the case. What follows is a wild and topsy-turvy but fast-paced ride along with Arthur as he investigates Jakes' disappearance. Little does he know that this investigation will place him in dangerous situation and reveal more intrigue and possible murders from the past.

Arthur is slightly more comical, not as obsessed, and just a tad more likeable in **The Marinara Murders**. Seeing him work with and around his mother is at times funny as well as sad. The cast of characters in **The Marinara Murders** is eclectic to say the least, and includes the Diamond family (can we say dysfunctional), Detective Holst, members of Hmong community and more. **The Marinara Murders** was just released, so don't hesitate to get a copy today . . . you will not be disappointed.

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## **Robert Lowe says**

The Marinara Murders was a fun entertaining read. It had the best qualities of an Agatha Christie novel where the details and complexities of the friendships and family relationships were as of much interest as the actual crime and picking out the ones relevant to the crime vs. just being part of the entertaining backdrop was the reader's challenge.

I liked the Twin Cities setting. When was the last time I recall something being set there? Was the Mary Tyler Moore Show set there?

Anyway, having the 40ish disgraced detective living in his interfering mom's basement was like what? Throwing Harry Bosch into a mixer with the 40-Year-Old Virgin? At any rate, it works in Mr. Hanberg's hands and both the evolution of relationships and discovery of old feuds moves the story forward as much as elements of the crime.

Arthur Beautyman is a great protagonist. Sometimes a laggard. Sometimes stepping over the legal bounds. A son sometimes grateful, often irritated and struggling to escape a mantle of humiliation. A competent cop garbed in late adolescent clothing. Anyhow, I think he's got legs and it will be fun to see how he develops.

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## **Marti says**

This was a somewhat interesting story of a former policeman who is persuaded by his mother to become a private eye--along with her. After all, she knows a lot of people. A corpse from a three year old murder shows up. Naturally, Arthur Prettyman's mother knows the family. Between the two of them, they manage to solve the case. The Thanksgiving dinner is quite memorable.

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## **Geoff says**

I am not a huge fan of mysteries and thrillers, but I had a lot of fun reading this book. The plot was twisty and fun, but what I really enjoyed were the well drawn characters and their realistic relationships. Without spoiling anything, this book is all about families, and I love the way that different family relationships were sketched and explored. Read the book - you won't be disappointed!

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## **TC says**

Over the summer I reviewed the first book in the Arthur Beautyman series, *The Saints Go Dying* and enjoyed it. I was keen to read the second, *The Marinara Murders*. The blurb for the latest book, released on 15th November, goes like this - "A grown man living in his mother's basement, disgraced detective Arthur Beautyman knows his life has fallen off a cliff.

But that doesn't mean he has to be happy about his mother's solution to his woes: volunteering him to solve a case for her favorite bridge partner. Oh, and to make matters worse, she wants to be his partner on the case as well ..."

Having left LA in disgrace Arthur has moved to Minnesota to live with his mum. Determined to get him working again she as good as forces him to investigate the recent death of her friend's grandson, the same grandson who was believed to have committed suicide 3 years earlier. Where has Jake been and who was hiding him?

Arthur meets and questions the dysfunctional Diamond family, and finds his hacking skills come in handy again. Not as handy as his mother's instincts though! Their differences in approach make it hard for them to work together, so while the reader sees Arthur's progress we don't see what mum Ruth is achieving without him. The story climaxes in a Thanksgiving dinner that will make the average family get together seem far more tolerable.

Again Erik Hanberg has produced the sort of book it is easy to get into and fly through. I read it in about half a day. The tone is a bit lighter than the first book and I found myself laughing at points. The relationship with his mum shows a different side to the man in the first book and I sympathised with him and the difficulties he faced having to move back in with an over-anxious parent. The unlikely hero even manages to find a potential love interest again.

The outcome of the investigation reveals a slightly complex series of events, and I appreciated the recap Arthur provided to new friend (and client) the dazed and confused Matt, although I had to re-read it a couple of times to try and get my head round exactly what had happened and why. I was pleased that the formatting and typos I noted in the first book were absent this time & I liked the note at the end explaining the inspiration for the story.

Another really good outing for Mr Beautyman!

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## **Kay says**

### **The marinara murders**

The Marianna Murders by Erik Hanberg was a fun, savory mystery with a string of suspects, creating a private detective business for a mother and son.

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## **Eileen Patterson says**

Holy CRAP this guy needs to write more books. Like, now. Like I'm seriously waiting. \*taps foot\*

This book was a total shock for me. I figured it would be a bad attempt at mystery fiction or something, so I started the first few pages with trepidation, worrying that the book would make fun of the dottering elderly mother or the middle-aged son who had been disgraced at his detective career and was forced to retire and live in her basement, but the book doesn't deal in caricatures. Both of these characters have flaws but they both have strengths too, and while at first the idea of them working together as private investigators seems silly to the son, the mother proves that she's actually pretty good at sleuthing work (though she does need her son's experience to help her put the pieces together without jumping to dangerous conclusions). I can see them solving lots of mysteries together. the book has twists and turns aplenty and it's such a fun read. you should all go read it now.

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## **Steve says**

Arthur Beautyman is 41, 5' 6", a computer nerd, recently retired under duress from the Los Angeles Police Department, and living in his mother's basement in the Twin Cities. When his mother asks for him to help her best friend with some investigation, Arthur none-too-enthusiastically agrees. The friend's grandson Jake disappeared three years ago and was presumed drowned. But his corpse shows up, having been dead fewer than a handful of days. Jake's family, the Diamonds, are in the restaurant business. They've recently opened a new spot. The Diamond family is, uh, complex. Three generations become involved, along with a city councilman of questionable ethics, a pair of rival restaurateurs, police, and friends of Arthur's mother Ruth. Not to mention the Diamonds' attorney, a computer nerd crony of Arthur's, the Hmong community, and other colorful folks. That list aside, the characters are easy to keep track of as Arthur and the partner he takes on (his mother!) find that getting to the bottom of Jake's story involves many others and more than one shady dealing or the appearance of it. This is a mystery to be read with enjoyment in mind. It's a light read, good fun characters behaving believably. It earns its stars for doing those things well. I will plan on reading its prequel and look for other Beautyman mysteries.

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## **Kim says**

I enjoyed the story, and some of the characters. I think some of the characters could be more fully developed.

The transition from one scene to another was often choppy. The big scene where all the answers are presented was rather confusing, especially in telling all the answers to the mystery. The writing needed to be better, and ideas more clearly expressed. Room to expand the characters and the story.

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### **John says**

I liked the ex cop turned private eye, living in the basement of his mother. It is a good mystery novel with many twists and turns. The mother turns out to have some tricks of her own and the final outcome is a bit far fetched, but still a surprise.

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### **Sandra says**

I love stories about second chances so the fact that the main character has returned to his mother's home to live in her basement sounded right up that alley. It was a surprise that the city was Minneapolis, a previous home, so I was delighted by both the story and the author's accurate descriptions of the setting. A fun read.

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### **Stephanie says**

The premise of an unemployed police detective living in his mom's basement and going into the PI business with his mom has a lot of potential, comic and otherwise, but that potential is untapped here. For an ex-L.A. Cop, Beautyman is pretty lacking in personality, and his mom comes off as naive and simplistic. The setting in the Twin Cities is likewise barely explored, as is a minimally developed subplot that involves the immigrant Hmong community. Nothing here that would make me seek out another in the series.

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### **Savvas Katseas says**

Ενδιαφέρον. Ε?χα πολ? καιρ? να διαβ?σω αστυνομικ? και δεν μου φ?νηκε καθ?λου ?σημο. Ωρα?α, χαλαρ? κυρ?ως πλοκ?, καλοφτιαγμ?νοι χαρακτ?ρες, απολαυστικ? κεντρικ? ιδ?α. Χ?νει λ?γους π?ντους λ?γω της ?χι-και-τ?σο-ρεαλιστικ?ς απεικ?νισης της υπολογιστικ?ς κουλτο?ρας - what with all the lulz- αλλ? διαβ?ζεται μονορο?φι, και αυτ? ε?ναι που μετρ?ει.

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### **Ally says**

(Review by Jon Oliver for Word Vagabond: Supporting Independent and Small Press Authors)

Arthur Beautyman is living in his mother's basement in Minneapolis, with a single bed and a computer that is seriously password protected. He moved in with his mother after he was fired from his job as a detective with the Los Angeles County Sherriff's Department, where his computer hacking got him in trouble while trying to solve a series of grisly murders. He has been holed up in his Mother's basement for months when she asks him to help a member of her bridge club discover where her son was for the three years between his

faked suicide and his recent murder.

Although he doesn't have a valid PI license for the State of Minnesota, he agrees to look into it. His Mother decides to help, and proposes Beautyman and Beautyman Investigations when she applies for a PI license along with Arthur. During the course of the investigation things get tense between Arthur and his mother and they follow their own paths to the solution. The Columbo/Mentalist moment comes when Mrs Beautyman invites everyone involved in the case to Thanksgiving dinner, where she says she will announce the name of the murderer.

I was a little concerned at the beginning of the book when the author began with dialogue. It generally isn't a good idea to begin a story with dialogue (we don't know the characters yet) or weather ("It was a dark and stormy night."). And it took a while to discover why Arthur was unemployed and in Minneapolis in his mother's basement.

It didn't take long, however, for me to feel comfortable with Arthur and his mother. And although some of the character development is on the light side, there are twists to the story and characters that are reminiscent of the late Stephen J. Cannell's work. There was a very minor problem with continuity when Arthur is served a plate of meat sauce (bolognese) with a meatball at one of the two Italian restaurants central to the story, but reports it later as a marinara sauce. I wondered, very briefly, if the book was mistitled.

Notwithstanding the improbability that two unlicensed investigators would, in reality, be allowed to proceed as Arthur and his mother do, it does make for a good story and the climax over Thanksgiving dinner was fun. If you're looking for a mystery in the style of Elizabeth George or Kate Atkinson, you might be disappointed in the Marinara Murders, but if you're looking for a good read with humor and interesting twists, I recommend The Marinara Murders by Erik Hanburg. I enjoyed it enough to search out the first Arthur Beautyman mystery, The Saints Go Dying, by the same author.

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## **Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says**

The Marinara Murders is the second mystery featuring Arthur Beautyman, the first, The Saints Go Dying, introduces the LA detective in the midst of a serial killer case.

In The Marinara Murders, Arthur Beautyman is a forty-something, retired detective with impressive hacker skills. Having left the LAPD with a cloud hanging over his head (I'm not clear about the circumstances not having read the first book) he has been holed up in his mother's basement in Minnesota, a virtual recluse, for months. Tired of her son's inertia, his mother deftly manipulates Arthur into agreeing to help Julia by discovering where her grandson, Jake, had been for the three years it was assumed he was dead. As Arthur investigates, he discovers a link between the Diamond family's restaurant, Carat and an Italian diner, owned by Luca Alcamo, Dromio's and when he is attacked he knows he has hit a nerve somewhere.

The plot of The Marinara Murders is cleverly layered, and makes good use of Beautyman's slightly rusty detective skills and his computer hacking ability. Over the course of the novel, Arthur finds himself caught up in complex web of family dysfunction, identity theft and corruption. It isn't Beautyman though that solves this case, surprisingly it is his mother who pieces together the majority of the clues and, in a slightly absurd scene, invites all the suspects, the investigating police detective and the Beautyman's new 'business consultant', for Thanksgiving dinner to reveal the secret of both Jake's whereabouts and identify his murderer.

There is a note from the author at the end of the book that explains Hanberg's inspiration for the plot of this novel which I found very interesting and overall, *The Marinara Murders* is a solidly enjoyable mystery novel with likeable protagonists.

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