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Foreword Review

Too Rich and Too Thin: A Bomber Hanson Mystery

David Champion
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Champion, author of four other Bomber Hanson books, delivers an old-fashioned murder mystery complete with Las Vegas mobsters, a suspicious butler, and a “knockout” model named Cheryl Darling (a parody in itself). Cheryl has been accused of poisoning Aldo diCarlo, one of the fashion world’s most talented designers and her ex-lover. When she visits the offices of big-shot trial lawyer Bomber Hanson, she meets with Bomber’s son Tod, a self-proclaimed “small cheese investigator” who wittily pleads her case to both the cantankerous Bomber and the reader.

The too-rich Aldo was at the height of his professional career, and he had more male and female lovers that anyone could count. On the night of a particularly successful runway show, Aldo throws a bash at his Montelinda, California mansion, where he later dies of cyanide poisoning. With the butler in his bed fast asleep, two illegal Mexican caterers in the kitchen and Cheryl somewhere in between, the police focus on who the media dub the “supermodel, supermurderess” all too quickly.

Tod realizes he has lost his objectivity, but he is smitten with Cheryl, so he sets off to solve the case and, hopefully, win her heart along the way. First, he interviews sixteen-year-old Wissie Murray, a model who succeeded Cheryl in Aldo’s affections. Tod thinks she has too much poise, but it’s Wissie’s mother, a former model, who attracts more suspicion. Next he’s off to the gambling capital of the USA, a favorite haunt of Aldo’s, in search of an elusive Mafia don who supposedly holds a thirty-five-year grudge against the deceased. Apart from a few quirky characters, this trip yields little for Tod’s case or Champion’s book.

In the process of zeroing in on the killer, Tod reveals the motives of all, though none seem to help his case; Tod’s credo is something akin to Murphy’s Law. His self-esteem isn’t helped by his overbearing father, who splashes onto the scene once they are called to trial.

Champion’s best writing shows through in Bomber’s sassy courtroom dialogue. Bomber promptly foils the prosecution and gets to the bottom of the story with just the right amount of grit, making it evident why readers always return to Bomber Hanson.

REBECCA REGO (November / December 2000)

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