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Dos Equis

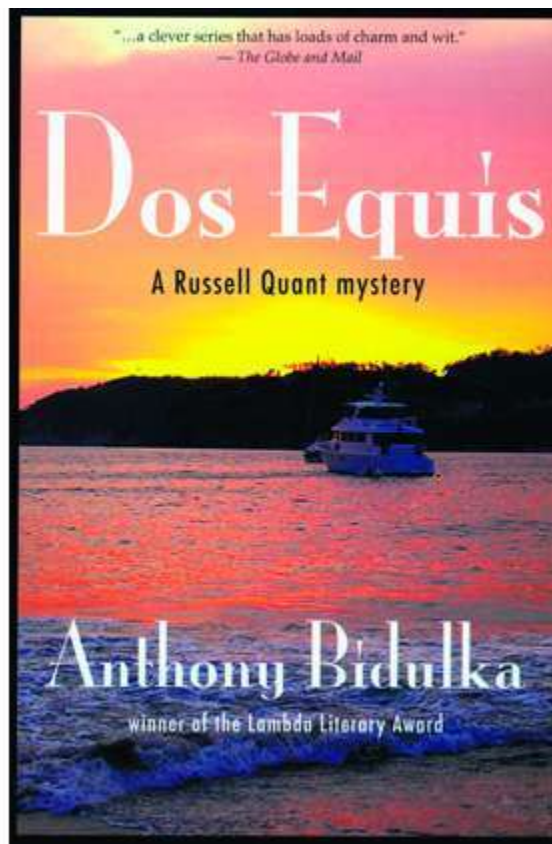
Puppy love

By Lesley McAllister

➔ **DOS EQUIS** by Anthony Bidulka (Insomniac), 229 pages, \$19.95 paper.

NOW RATING:

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In Anthony Bidulka's new mys—tery, Dos Equis, my favourite gay Saskatoon private investigator, Russell Quant, is back for another fun romp. Not to imply that murder is fun. In fact, this case turns out be one of Quant's most disturbing yet.

As the title suggests, the action takes place in Mexico, on the sun-drenched Costa Grande, where a burnt-out Quant is enjoying the end of a year-long, self-imposed sabbatical at a friend's beach

house. A frantic call for help from an old nemesis and fellow P.I., and the reality of having just turned 40, send Quant back to snowy Saskatchewan with new resolve.

The plot line is fast-moving and seductive, but it's the endearing protagonist who gets you hooked. Quant is a real sweetheart, funny and loyal, a big puppy dog with shaggy blond good looks; his close friends actually call him "Puppy."

Like all puppies, Quant eventually has to grow up, and in this addition to the series he's more focused in both his professional and romantic lives. Those come together when boyish wannabe investigator JP enters the picture. Quant and JP tangle at their first encounter, but it doesn't take them long to make up. Their joint investigation has Quant – along with JP, his four best friends and his staunch Ukrainian mother – heading back to Mexico with an outrageous and risky plan that involves using his mother as bait to reel in a killer.

Bidulka writes with a confidence that suggests he shares more than a passing resemblance to Quant, and there's lots of witty verbal foreplay. Any book in this series is the perfect companion to a cold bottle of Dos Equis and a beach.

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