

The Beaver Theory

Antti Tuomainen

David Hackston, Translator

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An actuary-turned-business-owner races the clock to find a killer in Antti Tuomainen's thriller *The Beaver Theory*.

Henri's life has become quite exciting of late: he moved in with his girlfriend, Laura, and her daughter; a sketchy new adventure park threatens to put his park out of business; and he is suspected of stabbing his rival to death with a steel ice cream cone. With time running out to save his business and prevent his headstrong employees from starting an interpark war, Henri takes the greatest chances of his life to stop a violent killer.

Henri's dry observations and precise way of viewing the world make him an engaging, sympathetic hero. The others in his life are just as memorable: the rough-around-the-edges employees who show heartwarming loyalty, the police officers whose boyish demeanors cannot hide their desperation for long, and the optimistic fathers at Laura's daughter's school who draft Henri into ping-pong tournaments and bake sales.

Henri uses mathematics to confront familiar difficulties, such as discovering the impetus behind threats from competitors and cleaning up the mess that his ne'er-do-well, formerly dead brother left behind him. He faces new challenges too, like learning how to find a work-life balance and grappling with an unexpected twist in his relationship with the detective inspector who so often brings him trouble. Though math has always been his solace and salvation, Henri comes to realize that, in families, as in murder investigations, some spontaneity is essential. An explosive climax gives Henri the chance to test the power of "going with the flow"—and to confirm that he has ended up exactly where he needs to be.

The last book in a trilogy, *The Beaver Theory* is a fun and clever thriller in which a hero finds the right balance in all pursuits.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (January / February 2024)

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