



# The Frumious Bandersnatch

*Ed McBain*

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## **The Frumious Bandersnatch** Ed McBain

The kidnapping was audacious, and there were plenty of witnesses...

But no one attending the dazzling launch party for up-and-coming pop idol Tamar Valparaiso knew what they were seeing when, halfway through her performance, masked men whisked the sexy young singer off a luxury yacht and into a waiting speedboat. Now, the evening that was supposed to send Tamar's debut album, "Bandersnatch, " skyrocketing with a million-dollar promotional campaign has instead kicked off a terrifying countdown for Steve Carella and the detectives of the 87th Precinct. Time is their enemy in the race to find Tamar's abductors -- before the rising star is extinguished forever.

## **The Frumious Bandersnatch Details**

Date : Published September 28th 2004 by Pocket Star (first published December 23rd 2003)

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Author : Ed McBain

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## From Reader Review The Frumious Bandersnatch for online ebook

### LJ says

THE FRUMIOUS BANDERSNATCH - Ex

Ed McBain – 53th book in 87th precinct series

Bison Records' self-styled impresario Barney Loomis runs into a snag in his effort to catapult his newest performer, Tamar Valparaiso, to stardom. As Tamar is lip-synching the provocative video of her first album aboard a rented yacht, two men in Saddam Hussein and Yasir Arafat masks snatch her before a stunned audience.

\*\*\*Ed McBain is the true master of the police procedural writing tight plots and true-to-life dialogue. He knows how to balance humor with the horror of the crime being committed. I often know “who did it” early, but it never spoils my pleasure in reading his characters and how he transitions effortlessly from one to the next. If you’ve not read him, do. The great pleasure is to go back to the beginning of the series. The writing is so clean and spare; they are fast reads, but truly excellent ones.

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### Beth666ann says

An emerging music star is kidnapped, and after Carella's short-term assignment to an FBI task force working on the case ends badly, the members of the 87 ultimately end up competing with it to get her back. Guess who does better work? This is the second McBain (I keep hearing that guy on the Simpsons in my head, hahaha) book I've read; I listened to the audiobook of this one. It's got an ending I did not expect, and it was like a punch in the gut. The characters are engaging, and the author seems to have done his homework about the music industry. Also, the police work feels very real. I'm going to read more Ed McBain.

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### Bill Keithler says

This is not one of McBain's masterpieces --it was small mystery to determine who was the likely villain here, unusually obvious from the start. The rest of the story is ok, but overall pretty average (below average for McBain). There was a small side story with a recurring character in other 87th Precinct novels that didn't really add anything to the main plot or go anywhere on its own--seemed to be filler.

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### Skip says

Disappointing. Tamar Valparaiso is the next hot pop sensation, and is kidnapped from a yacht chartered for a kick-off party for her newest album. Steve Carella catches the squeal, and is asked to stay involved by the promoter following a turf war with the FBI. Things go badly wrong, with the FBI's approach but solid police work uncovers the criminal conspiracy. In a pointless side-story, McBain is still trying to make Fat Ollie Weeks more palatable via his relationship with a policewoman. This one felt like an hour long TV episode, and we see less and less of the 87th Precinct detectives.

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## **Karl says**

This copy is signed by Ed McBain.

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## **Randy says**

I'm no connoisseur of the 87th Precinct novels, but I picked this one up at book sale recently, chugged it last night and have to say that it delivered the goods. I was up till about 1:30 AM finishing it, couldn't see the ending beforehand, and had to spend a while afterwards calming down before I could get to sleep. Yes, it's a procedural, so there's a lot of exposition, of both police work as well as the music business. And the recurrent characters are involved in their own affairs, which have little or nothing to do with the plot. But it's like the 55th novel in the series. That the author had anything left in him at all at that point is pretty amazing. This seems in fact more like Elmore Leonard's territory than McBain's. Solid and satisfying.

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## **Debbie Rubio says**

Great police procedure details - what I like best about McBain novels. This one also has a surprise twist at the end.

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## **L says**

Wow! McBain hits on so many notes here it isn't funny. He particularly addresses racism--in popular culture, as a piece of every-day life and, most relevant today, as a taken-for-granted element of life and work for a number of police officers. He addresses this last in many of his books, but it is stronger here and I read this at a time when the consequences of this are so much in the news.

On a lighter note, how can one not love a book that centers on a piece of music and accompanying video based on Lewis Carroll's work?

The mover behind the relevant crime is, if not obvious from the writing, inevitable. The mystery, at least for me, was in how it all played out and was uncovered. I would mention the ending, but cannot without spoiling it for others.

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## **David Highton says**

The prepenultimate book of the 87th Precinct series describes a kidnapping of a newly launched singer. As usual McBain is able to thread a number of themes through the narrative, about the nature of promotion and publicity, about modern journalism and about modern attitudes, including racism. The FBI and the 87th team get thrust into competition to try and save the singer in an exciting end stage - really enjoyed this book by a master of his art.

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## James Thane says

*The Frumious Bandersnatch* has to be the strangest title of any of the fifty-four novels in Ed McBain's 87th Precinct series. For that matter, it has to be one of the strangest titles in all of crime fiction. It comes from a poem by Lewis Carroll and refers to a monster of some sort that is never clearly defined. The book was published in 2004, and McBain may have also been influenced by a psychedelic rock band from the 1960s of the same name.

In this case, "Bandersnatch" is the title of the debut record by an up-and-coming Hispanic diva named Tamar Valpariso. A man named Barney Loomis owns the company that is releasing the record, and he has very high hopes for it. To that end, he's made a very dark and sexy music video in which Valpariso sings the title song while being assaulted by an evil monster--the Bandersnatch. At the end of the video, Valpariso manages to triumph over the monster and everyone seems to have his or her own opinion about the message that the video actually conveys, but there's no doubt about the fact that it's an attention-getter.

To celebrate the launch of the record, Loomis has rented a luxury yacht and invited a lot of news people and other guests to a huge party cruising along the River Dix. The highlight of the party comes when Tamar Valpariso and a male dancer dressed as the Bandersnatch recreate the sensuous video. Things are going swimmingly until two masked men descend down the stairs to the dance floor. Armed with automatic weapons, they kidnap the young singer and carry her away in a waiting launch.

As fate would have it, the kidnapping occurs in waters that are the province of the 87th Precinct and the case falls to Steve Carella and Cotton Hawes. Inevitably, the party guests are in various stages of inebriation and tell conflicting stories. The kidnappers seem to be very professional and leave no fingerprints or other evidence that will be of immediate assistance.

Ultimately, there will be a ransom demand; the F.B.I. will come barging in and a huge circus will result. In the meantime, Fat Ollie Weeks of the neighboring 88th Precinct is pursuing a new romance and is still attempting to recover the only copy of his novel, which was stolen in the previous book in the series. All in all, it's a very entertaining story with lots of action and humorous insights into the record business. It's sure to appeal to fans of the series and to a large audience of crime fiction fans.

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## K says

Ed McBain's 87th precinct series contain some of the best dialogue in the genre of police procedurals that you can find. *The Frumious Bandersnatch* delivers on that count, but falls a bit short of some of the other entrants in the series (e. g., those involving the Deaf Man).

At any rate, I found the first half of the story somewhat disjointed and drawn out unnecessarily. This is perhaps due to the inclusion of a seemingly unrelated and completely minor sub plot involving a budding romance between "Fat" Ollie Weeks and an Hispanic patrol woman in another precinct. Although I enjoy Fat Ollie as a character, his presence here seems completely tangential and sort of distracting.

Nevertheless, McBain pulls it together in the latter third of the book and throws in some nice twists and turns.

Fans of the series should read it if, for no other reason, than to reference the poem from Lewis Carroll-- "Beware the Jabberwock, my son...

The frumious Bandersnatch."

Enjoy.

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### **Tony Gleeson says**

This 53rd entry in the 55-book 87th Precinct series starts off quite tongue-in-cheek as McBain takes on the music industry, poking fun at the shallow, the venal and the clueless. Three bungling kidnapers board a yacht that carries a promo party, and kidnap a young diva in mid-performance. Disturbingly, the book descends from its almost frothy parody of the music biz (using Lewis Carroll Jabberwocky metaphors) into something very dark and violent. Suddenly all those lovably silly folks become seamy and tragic. One never knows where the path leads in McBain land.

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### **Sheila Beaumont says**

This is my favorite so far of the few 87th Precinct mysteries I've read. As a fan of Lewis Carroll's writings, of course I couldn't resist the title. I do like the way Ed McBain could write a solid, often shocking, crime story while brilliantly leavening things with humor, in this case satirizing the music industry, celebrity culture, cable TV, the FBI, et al. And, of course, there's the homage to "Jabberwocky," and it was good to see Fat Ollie (who is still looking for the missing only copy of the novel he has written) carrying on his new romance. Like most readers probably, I did suspect early on that a certain character was complicit in the kidnapping of the talented young diva.

I do want to read more of McBain's novels. Fortunately, my local library has quite a number of them.

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### **Kirstin DeGeer says**

This book was a terrible piece of schlock, made more terrible by the halting, overdramatic reading of the story for the audiobook. No reading, however, could have saved it. Many sections of the book contained conversations that were ludicrous, repetitive, and completely unrealistic. The plot was full of itself and utterly predictable.

The only things that made me actually give this book two stars were the sometimes cunning (usually not) use of the Jabberwocky and the actual police procedural sections of the novel (which, though interesting, were a small portion). I only made it to the end of this book because I was listening in the car.

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### **Josh says**

Tamar Valparaiso is a budding pop star set to become a household name. Unfortunately for her, and her record label, her star is rising for all the wrong reasons. Two masked men storm a boat hosting Tamar's record launch and kidnap the pop singer, beating her dancer and injuring her in the process. Their ransom demand? A relatively low 250k, a fact the kidnapers soon realize. Upping the ante to 1mil, Tamar's once bright future now looks bleak with the record exec balking at the price and police wanting to have a presence at the drop in an attempt to catch the kidnapers.

Sounds pretty formulaic and reads as much for the better part of the novel until Ed McBain infuses his noir-like darkness on the stereotypical police procedural in the later stages. A gritty and gory twist ensures the oddly titled The Frumious Bandersnatch sheds any notion of normalcy as it races towards a violent and shocking end.

While The Frumious Bandersnatch is deep into the 87th prescient series, it reads perfectly well as a standalone.

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