

HERE BE MONSTERS



A TYLER CUNNINGHAM
ADIRONDACK MYSTERY

JAMIE
SHEFFIELD

Here Be Monsters

Jamie Sheffield

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Fans of Carl Hiaasen, Lawrence Block, and John Sandford will enjoy Tyler Cunningham's adventure for the tight writing, clever (MacGyver-esque) approach to problem-solving, and the chance to explore the Adirondacks with this quirky and unique protagonist. "Here Be Monsters" is Jamie Sheffield's first novel.

Tyler Cunningham is a detective like no other. He can mimic humanity, but in most cases fails utterly to understand people, why they do the things they do, or act in the ways that they do. His saving grace is an insatiable hunger for knowledge that combines with an ability to make connections from a series of seemingly unrelated data-points that other people miss; this continually pulls him into other peoples' problems, where his focus and unique perceptual abilities allow him to solve puzzles that others cannot see in ways that nobody else could conceive.

In the heart of the Adirondack Park, the Northeast's last great wilderness, Tyler Cunningham, a detective who struggles to understand the human condition, finds himself trapped and powerless in the face of shocking cruelty and violence when the closest thing Tyler has to a friend vanishes as a result of his actions. His unique talents strap readers in for an astonishing thrill-ride, keeping them balanced on a knife's edge of suspense, while Tyler struggles frantically to unlock the secrets to a violent conspiracy that he finds himself swept up in, as the book rushes headlong towards a shocking conclusion deep in the primitive wilderness.

Here Be Monsters Details

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From Reader Review Here Be Monsters for online ebook

Tammy says

Wonderful book, pertaining to the setting of this story. I especially liked the main character in this story and made me think of some very unique people I have known. Very good story that clearly held my interest.

Jennifer Zartman says

I almost put down this book several times. The chunky writing style, the frequent italicized comments in parenthesis, and being stuck in someone's head that I couldn't relate to all combined to make it difficult to get into the book. I pushed through my confusion because I am a rather new author myself, so I wanted to give the book a fair shot. I'm glad I kept going. Tyler Cunningham certainly makes the most unique "detective" in my reading history. I disagree with his moral choices, but as I came to understand his character I found it increasingly difficult to put the book down. The layout of the story follows its own course, like the thought life of the main character, with the mystery solved early in the book, and the height of tension coming just before the halfway point. It pulls you on, nevertheless, and takes you on a journey with a different look at life. I hope to see more of this author's work.

Tisha says

A strong 4.5!

HBM is the story of a socially awkward, neuro-different young man, Tyler, who has a flair for solving mysteries, if not for figuring out what is most obvious to the rest of us about human nature. The plot was strong, and if traditional, and the characters (especially the rescue animals!) were likable. The amount of time dedicated to the minutiae of Tyler's thoughts felt a bit over done, but overall a good book and looking forward to the next one in the series!

Ray Palen says

If you were to ask most people what they think of when they hear the word – New York – what they will immediately call to mind is NYC and its' many landmarks. Regrettably, these people are doing themselves a disservice by not recognizing the beauty and mystery of New York State outside of Manhattan.

One of the most beautiful, historical and mysterious parts of New York State is the Adirondack Mountains region that has been made most famous by the 1932 and 1980 Winter Olympics held in Lake Placid. Who will ever forget the Gold Medal won by the U.S. Olympic Hockey squad over arch-rival Russia!?

This area has also spawned many literary works from Theodore Dreiser's *AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY* (made into the classic film "A Place In the Sun" featuring Montgomery Clift); to tales of the Lady In the Lake murder in Lake Placid, and, most recently the mystery series written by Julia Spencer-Fleming who

lives in nearby Plattsburgh in Northern New York.

Debut author Jamie Sheffield now presents his own entry into the sub-genre that can be entitled Adirondack fiction with his release of *HERE BE MONSTERS*. This novel is the result of thirty years of research and personal experience that Sheffield was able to fit into this first effort in the Tyler Cunningham Adirondack Mystery series.

The term ‘here be monsters’ refers to the language often found on old maps when map-makers and sea travelers could not describe unchartered territory and relegated the unknown region that possibly houses monsters and mysteries yet to be seen by man. Tyler Cunningham is a highly unique protagonist and has a personal obsession with maps which the title of this novel draws obvious reference from.

To put it succinctly, Tyler is technically homeless with no one he can really call a friend. He has issues with social interaction and prefers to live off the land in the manner of a survivalist. He likes to do research and help people out. Legally, he is not a private investigator, but that does not stop him from getting involved in situations where his particular expertise and knowledge of the Adirondacks terrain is needed.

HERE BE MONSTERS opens with Tyler rescuing a young Amish girl from some bad guys and safely returning her to her family. This is only the beginning for Tyler Cunningham. A much larger problem --- and the one that drives the plot of this novel --- is when Cynthia Windmere (the closest thing to a girlfriend Tyler has ever had) --- goes missing. She works at the local library in Saranac Lake and also is a fan of research. Cynthia had mentioned to Tyler her desire to track down a local businessman named George Roebuck who she thinks is a major league drug dealer.

Tyler also has similar suspicions and it turns out they were both right. George is a drug kingpin, specializing in meth (Breaking Bad anyone?) and his network spans well beyond the Adirondack Park. When Tyler attempts to confront George on his own and demand Cynthia’s safe return he underestimates the crime lord and is nearly killed in the process. He also learns that Roebuck’s goons claim to have dumped Cynthia in the nearby lake. For once in his life, Tyler Cunningham may truly have bitten off more than he can chew and it will take every ounce of his creativity and vast knowledge of the surrounding area to get his revenge on the bad guys. Like Arnold Schwarzenegger in “Predator”, Tyler must use his knowledge of the terrain and become one with it in order to battle evil.

Tyler Cunningham is one of the more unique protagonists you will ever meet. He is clearly damaged goods having lost both of his parents in the 9/11 tragedy and now forced to deal with the loss of Cynthia. His inner monologue is covered on every page and makes up for the lack of dialogue that results from Tyler being a true lone wolf. He is also a fan of classic crime noir --- Spenser, Parker, Travis --- and *HERE BE MONSTERS* is a clever homage to that great genre. A fine debut and I eagerly await what comes next for Mr. Cunningham.

Reviewed by Ray Palen for New Mystery Reader

Lynn says

Tyler Cunningham is not your typical, hard boiled private detective; he's mostly a loner all right, but (due perhaps to Asperger's?) relates to and interacts differently with the world than most of us. Even with his quirks he's still an immensely likable character; the author doesn't drown the reader in Tyler's quirks, just enough to explain the way he is. A great story full of interesting, believable characters, and the descriptions of the Adirondacks area where it takes place were beautiful. I can't wait for the next in the series; I hope there are a lot more to come! (P.S. Mr. Sheffield, do you know where I can get the cane-sugar Cokes that Tyler drinks? I'm a Coca-Colaaholic too! :D)

Marilyn Switzer says

Great Book

I really enjoyed this book. The main character, Tyler, is unique and interesting. The end of the book was fast paced. I could not put it down. I definitely recommend this book.

Bruce says

What an amazing book!

Jamie Sheffield's main character Tyler Cunningham is unlike any person I've ever read about before. Shy, introverted, possibly a bit autistic, missing the emotional firmware that most humans come with that help them understand the behavior of people around them but intelligent, a reader and researcher who seeks to expand his personal map of the world around him. I identified with his suppressing his attention to detail when dealing with others. I like the (personal comments and asides) scattered through his thoughts and dialog.

Tyler is a lover of the outdoors (camping, hiking, and fishing) and what a setting to put him in: Adirondack Park and the wilderness surrounding the Lower, Middle, and Upper Saranac Lakes. It made me want to live there and expand my personal map.

Tyler is a lover of dogs, especially ones that find themselves in the Tri-Lakes Animal Shelter through no fault of their own.

It did seem like the main climax of the book (the "boss battle") happened about two-thirds of the way through the book; this kept feeling early to me (subjective). I kept expecting one of the henchmen to climb back out of the mine and renew the conflict.

His "Grandma's" recipe for tiramisu is included at the back of the book.

Sarah says

I have read many of the same authors as the protagonist of this book, and I think he has done them proud. (Block, Sandford, Child...he doesn't mention him, but I think of C.J Box...)

I enjoyed turning every page. There are clever plot turns mixed in with true gems in turns of phrase. There's darkness, underbelly, dosed with coke (the soda) and social awkwardness, and kindness, in just the right proportions.

Sheffield has a real way with language.

This will my go to gift for the next year - for anyone who doesn't discover it on their own.

This is a find.

Yay to the reader!

Niamh225 says

I really like the concept and the protagonist, but, at 24 pages in, find myself wishing Sheffield's editor had told him to ease up on the use of the forward slash (/). Leashes/leads - pick one! In places it's effective but it's seriously over-used. I'm really hoping he eases up as I want to immerse myself in this book and enjoy the story but his stylistic choice is seriously getting in the way.

update

Having finished this book I can honestly say I found it entertaining and interesting. The device that so frustrated me in the beginning was less frequent throughout the rest of the book. Tyler is an interesting protagonist and I liked that the book continued past the event that in other novels would be the culmination of events. I look forward to the next book featuring this character.

Amy Cronin says

Excellent story-telling in this first novel by Jamie Sheffield, who by day is a special ed teacher in Lake Placid. Captivating story and characters. And the fact that its setting is the region of the Adirondacks in which I grew up was an added bonus. I could place Tyler Cunningham's every move!

John says

Good should be rewarded, or at the very least, embraced. Bad, however, must be destroyed. And if doing so sometimes means tip-toeing along the outer boundaries of the law, or in some cases, racking up a series of felonies, so be it. This pretty much sums up the uncomplicated moral philosophy of Tyler Cunningham, the protagonist created by Jamie Sheffield in his debut novel, *Here Be Monsters*. While Tyler's philosophy may be uncomplicated, he most certainly is not.

It's a delight to follow this gifted and child-like character through New York State's Adirondack Park as he rights perceived wrongs all the while loading up on carbs and swilling Coke. The Park, in all its beauty and

quirkiness, plays a role as important as Tyler himself. Readers living inside the blue line are sure to recognize many familiar landmarks, while those on the outside may shake their heads and wonder if such a place truly exists in the 21st century. This is a fun, entertaining read, and I hope Tyler continues to follow his inner map setting the world right in many more adventures.

Katie says

Jamie Sheffield has written a wondrous novel. It is one of the more interesting, unusual books I've read in many years.

We retired and moved to the Adirondacks about 7 years ago and I look for books with this setting. I read the reviews of this novel and was undecided if my husband would like it or not but when I ran across the title again a few weeks later, I ordered it. My husband was soon mentioning places in the Saranac Lake area that we had visited this past summer. He enjoyed the book for both its uniqueness and settings.

I picked it up not expecting to do more than skim it as the reviews hadn't inspired me to read it. I was almost immediately engrossed in the book. The author nailed the main character whom one expects has a form of Asperger's. Tyler shines with authenticity. I am awed by this novel and am anxious to share it with friends.

I hope we will soon be gifted with another novel by Mr. Sheffield with further Adirondack adventures of Tyler Cunningham.

Geneva says

This was pretty good!

Rebecca Sofferan says

This self-published first novel by Jamie Sheffield is a treat for anyone who loves the Adirondacks. This is the first time I've read a book written by a good friend, and it was a very interesting experience to see so much of the author's experiences come into the characters and the story! Although the book does a great job of describing many of the places in the Adirondacks that I experience on a daily basis, the true treasure is the focus on the many quirky characters that live among us here within the blue line. I always say that I came to the Adirondacks for the scenery but stayed for the people - Sheffield highlights this sentiment masterfully. I always enjoy reading novels written by authors that are head over heels in love with their location, and that sense of place is prominent in *Here Be Monsters*.

Tyler Cunningham, the book's protagonist, is a quirky character in and of himself. Socially distant, addicted to coca-cola, and more comfortable with dogs than people, he fancies himself an undercover detective and sometime vigilante. When his closest friend (a research librarian at the local public library) goes missing, he is determined to not only discover what happened to her, but to also avenge any wrongdoing. (An aside: it bothered me that Sheffield has his librarian character exhibit extremely uncharacteristic behavior by spying on her library patrons, since normally librarians are champions of patron privacy, but he and I have already had words about that!) My favorite part of mystery titles is usually the "mystery," where the characters and

the reader analyze clues and try to find out what happened; I would have liked to see that part fleshed out a bit more in this book, but I believe the author preferred to focus on the action scenes. It was interesting how the pace of the book reflected the action - the intense scenes moved very quickly and the reflective camping scenes much more slowly. An effective plot device.

Some readers may be bothered by the very casual writing style of the author, including excessive use of parentheses and slashes (and a few typos), but these writing mannerisms were included intentionally as a means of providing the reader with insight into Tyler's unusual mind and understanding his sometimes interesting choices. I enjoyed this book, especially the sections where Tyler describes his experiences with walking and choosing dogs from the animal shelter, and camping in the Adirondack woods (frequent peeing descriptions notwithstanding). The book is as much a crime drama as a mystery, and several scenes were fairly intense. The violence and some swearing put this title into the YA and above reading level. Sheffield is an entertaining writer, with many fun asides that at times made me laugh out loud. I look forward to reading more Tyler Cunningham mysteries!

Mark says

I wanted to give this 4 1/2 stars but Goodreads doesn't allow that level of exactitude. The only reason I docked it half a point from a perfect 5 was that you have to be patient with Tyler Cunningham. By his own words he's socially retarded (in the descriptive term not the offensive meaning of the word) who even admits early on that his nigh obsessive compulsive attention to detail is something that people don't need or want – including perhaps the reader. I initially had to resist the urge to skip ahead because I was getting as tired and irritated with Tyler as other characters in the book did. When I stopped to think about it though, I have a sneaky suspicion that was the whole point and that I was caught in the author's subtle plan all along. Tyler is a character of incredible depth, eliciting the same reactions "normal" people commonly might have when they encounter socially awkward, compulsive, or "weird" individuals who just don't fit in our neat little mental schemas. But when Tyler's world is thrust into chaos, I was riveted and unable to put my Kindle down. Like Frodo Baggins, he's the last person you expect to face monsters, and I had to know how it was going to turn out with this very unlikely hero. In short, be patient with Tyler as you follow him around drinking God knows how many Cokes along the way. In the end, it's definitely worth the story he will tell you.
