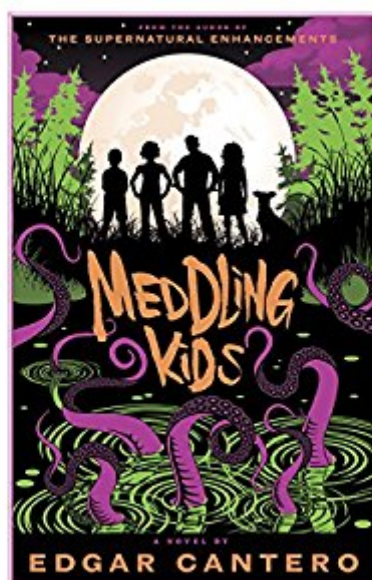


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# Meddling Kids: A Novel



## Synopsis

With raucous humor and brilliantly orchestrated mayhem, *Meddling Kids* subverts teen detective archetypes like the Hardy Boys, the Famous Five, and Scooby-Doo and delivers an exuberant and wickedly entertaining celebration of horror, love, friendship, and many-tentacled, interdimensional demon spawn. Summer 1977. The Blyton Summer Detective Club (of Blyton Hills, a small mining town in Oregon's Zoinx River Valley) solved their final mystery and unmasked the elusive Sleepy Lake monster - another low-life fortune hunter trying to get his dirty hands on the legendary riches hidden in Debo's Mansion. And he would have gotten away with it, too, if it weren't for those meddling kids. In 1990, the former detectives have grown up and apart, each haunted by disturbing memories of their final night in the old haunted house. There are too many strange, half-remembered encounters and events that cannot be dismissed or explained away by a guy in a mask. And Andy, the once intrepid tomboy now wanted in two states, is tired of running from her demons. She needs answers. To find them she will need Kerri, the onetime kid genius and budding biologist, now drinking her ghosts away in New York with Tim, an excitable Weimaraner descended from the original canine member of the club. They will also have to get Nate, the horror nerd currently residing in an asylum in Arkham, Massachusetts. Luckily Nate has not lost contact with Peter, the handsome jock turned movie star who was once their team leader...which is remarkable, considering Peter has been dead for years. The time has come to get the team back together, face their fears, and find out what actually happened all those years ago at Sleepy Lake. It's their only chance to end the nightmares and, perhaps, save the world. A nostalgic and subversive trip rife with sly nods to H. P. Lovecraft and pop culture, Edgar Cantero's *Meddling Kids* is a strikingly original and dazzling reminder of the fun and adventure we can discover at the heart of our favorite stories, no matter how old we get.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There are lots of very earnest reviews of this book that highlight its take on Scooby-Doo and similar kid detective classics. (The book has shout outs to Enid Blyton and Nancy Drew and so on, and about a million sly references to the whole Scooby-Doo canon, right down to who has red hair. And of course there are lots of Lovecraft references.) There is also a lot of discussion by readers about whether the book works as a horror/humor/Lovecraft/detective mashup. All of that, of course, is legit, interesting and helpful. But, it should be noted and emphasized that this is a book by Edgar Cantero, and that guarantees it will be both more and less than just a straight up entertainment. Cantero's "The Supernatural Enhancements" delighted some and frustrated, annoyed and outraged others, and this book is a milder chip off that block. So, be warned that this book is a lot more than just a fond trip down Scooby-Doo memory lane. At the risk of introducing the dreaded "meta-fiction" word, that's in part what we have here. Cantero comments on his book as a book within the text of the book. (Along the lines of "...two lines later, they were still stunned".) He occasionally throws in a script format. He makes up words. He uses ridiculously obscure words. ("Borborygmia thunder", where borborygmia means the rumbling sounds made by movement of gas through the intestines.) He addresses the reader. He uses inapt similes and metaphors. He peppers the characters' dialogue with non sequiturs and random thoughts. Verbs become nouns and anything can be an adjective or adverb. People don't see things when they can laser them. Sometimes his intentionally awkward sentence structure makes Cantero feel like English is his second language, after Venusian. Some readers, like me, think this is a hoot; some just get fed up. (BTW, actually and truthfully, he usually writes in Catalan or Spanish. "The Supernatural Enhancements" was his first novel in English.) What is sometimes off-putting with Cantero is that he occasionally seems willing to mock the characters, the genre and his readers. One sometimes gets the feeling that he is above the whole writing-a-book thing and exists on some higher plane than mere book-reading mortals. But then, he tosses in some heart-breaking or lovely bit of prose, or some ridiculously funny throw away line, and you love him all over again. So, you can read this and enjoy it as a Scooby homage/lark. Or, you can read it as an idiosyncratic, experimental, anything-for-a-laugh, meta project by an interesting and sometimes maddening one of a kind author with a taste for disguised

bizarro. Whichever way you go this is certainly a lot more interesting, entertaining and rewarding than any other Scooby-Doo based novel you're likely to find. I always enjoy checking out what Cantero is up to. Consider yourself warned, or is it invited?(Please note that I received a free advance copy of this book without a review requirement, or any influence, (which I would in any event ignore), regarding review content should I choose to post a review. Apart from that I have no connection at all to either the author or the publisher of this book.)

This book is a story about a group of crime solving kids who have grown up, and are not the happiest adults around. They join up in their old stomping grounds to resolve the things that have troubled them. I enjoyed the unusual premise, and liked the characters. The story did not bog down and get boring, and the writing was fresh. One just has to suspend their disbelief a bit and enjoy the story.

Really fun read. A great concept that doesn't take itself too seriously. A little too many long descriptions of action which, let's face it, work better visually. There were some annoying anachronisms for a book that takes place 27 years ago.

A fantastically clever spin on the "Mystery, Inc." gang, mixed with an equally interesting and imaginative use of Lovecraftian style horror, pitting troubled twenty-somethings against cosmic (or, in this specific case, "ancient") horrors. It's a fun read, and boasts visible improvement in writing when compared to Cantero's first English novel, "The Supernatural Enhancements" (also worth checking out). The story's darker moments are never out-shined by its pop culture quirk, nor vice versa. It's a good length, and doesn't suffer from pacing issues. I'd recommend it to those looking for some good fun with their horror tales.

As someone who grew up in the 70s watching Scooby Doo this book resonated with me and was very enjoyable to read. It really captures the "what if" and the "what happens after" possibilities of the adventures of those meddling kids.

This is a well written entertaining novel that catches up with a group of child detectives once the investigations stop and life goes on. The Meddling Kids(and one spirit) have grown up into deeply scared young adults haunted by the one case they never quite resolved. This book has a great mix of science and the supernatural and will keep you turning pages until the very end, and leave you

wanting more. Edgar Cantero does an excellent job allowing the characters of a beloved cartoon series to grow up and face the demons their childhood together.

This book is so funny and clever and action-packed and creepy, it defies a proper description. It had me laughing out loud from the start. It is all good things and I'll be giving copies to everyone I can. More please!!

This book, and its methods simply should not work. And yet they do. It's maybe not the "meddling kids" you grew up with, but you will probably like this alternate universe that imagines what they might have matured into.

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