The Devil's Only Friend
Amanda Shrum

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Review

John Wayne Cleaver has found a use for his psycho and sociopathic tendencies in working for a special branch of the FBI that hunts down demons they call the Withered. While struggling to confront his own inner-demons and past, John and his team are confronted with a cannibalistic Withered who leaves messages addressed to John, insisting that they are both alike. Through the course of the investigation, John must figure out who to trust, often striking out on his own, and protect his friend Brooke, who is the only person left he cares about. At the final showdown between John and the Withered, John realizes that perhaps he is not as sociopathic as he once thought, but instead hides behind his tendencies as a way to protect himself from facing his past. By realizing how different he is from the monster he faces, John is able to end up victorious.

Past the initial discomfort at having a seemingly unlikable boy as a narrator and protagonist, The Devil’s Only Friend is a thrilling and gritty read. There is plenty of gory violence and it is best not to become too attached to any characters, but the ending, where good triumphs over evil, is all the more satisfying for it. The mystery is truly fascinating, with plenty of unexpected twists, and will keep the pages turning. The characters are fleshed out and unique, especially John Wayne Cleaver, who is one of the most intriguing characters in Young Adult fiction.

*Contains mild language and severe violence.