



# Keeping Bedlam at Bay in the Prague Cafe: A Novel

*M. Henderson Ellis*

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## **Keeping Bedlam at Bay in the Prague Cafe: A Novel** M. Henderson Ellis

Not long ago, John Shirting--quiet young Chicagoan, wizard of self-medication--held down a beloved job as a barista at Capo Coffee Family, a coffee chain and global business powerhouse. When he is deemed "too passionate" about his job, he is let go. Shirting makes it his mission to return to the frothy Capo's fold by singlehandedly breaking into a new market and making freshly postcommunist Prague safe for free-market capitalism. Unfortunately, his college nemesis, Theodore Mizen, a certified socialist, has also moved there, and is determined to reverse the Velvet Revolution, one folk song at a time. After Shirting experiences the loss of his sole "new-hire" -- a sad, arcade game-obsessed prostitute -- it is not long before his grasp on his mission and, indeed, his sanity, comes undone, leaving him at the mercy of two-bit Mafiosi, a pair of Golem trackers, and his own disgruntled phantom.

A dazzling combination of *Everything is Illuminated* and *Don Quixote*, with a jigger of *Confederacy of Dunces*, and *Lord of the Barnyard*, *Keeping Bedlam at Bay in the Prague Café* is the first novel to so exquisitely capture the ambiance of expat Prague. Poised to be an underground classic, it asks: what does it mean to be sane in a fast-changing world?

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