

## Felonious Monk

**William Kotzwinkle**

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A monk with anger management problems leads William Kotzwinkle's novel *Felonious Monk*, which is a wild ride of double-crossing crimes.

Tommy Martini was born into a crime family, but removed himself to a monastery after killing a man in a bar fight. He deals with his anger through meditation and service. He is content to live out his life in peace—until his past comes back to haunt him.

Tommy's uncle, a crooked priest, passes away; Tommy inherits his uncle's home and money, but also his legacy of wrongdoings. When he travels to a New Age Arizona town to investigate his inheritance, he's targeted by some of his uncle's former associates. He falls in with a group led by Cheyenne, who believes that aliens are planting their seeds in humans in order to take over the world.

Even though he doesn't believe a word that comes out of Cheyenne's mouth, Tommy is not immune to her charms. He's also not immune to the urgings of his cousin, who wants to see him use his anger for a cause and become a professional fighter. Tommy struggles with his morality while solving the case of a missing person, all while trying to stay one step ahead of those who want him dead.

This hard-boiled mystery benefits from its frequent injections of humor and its appealing characters, who are never quite what they seem. Tommy's interior dialogue is entertaining; his struggles to reintegrate with normal life are thought provoking.

The book's numerous subplots include the disappearance of Cheyenne's husband and old family squabbles. The book's action is nonstop, and its parts come together near the end. They are resolved in a way that adds to the appeal of *Felonious Monk*, a character-driven thriller.

ANGELA MCQUAY (July / August 2021)

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