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Missing Mona: A Tommy Cuda Mystery



Synopsis

Foreword Reviews 2015 INDIEFAB Book of the Year Awards Finalist 2016 New York Book Festival - Runner Up "Klingler presents his craftiest yarn to date, summoning the pulpy spirits of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett. The setting of Chicago rattles from the page in lines such as, 'The buildings held noise and exhaust fumes around me like a torture chamber.'" --Kirkus Reviews (Kirkus Recommended List) Tommy has boomeranged back to his parents residence and a dead-end job after too many years in college. As he looks squarely at his next decade of life, his smartphone convinces him the time is ripe for a change. A gift from his grandfather provides the means, so he embarks on the path of blues artists and beatniks before him--and hits the road. He immediately meets a damsel in hitchhiking distress who says her name is Mona. Her presence persuades him that the bright lights and dark clubs of Chicago might be his kind of town. So on a summer Saturday night they settle into a fancy hotel overlooking the beaches of Lake Michigan. On Sunday...Mona disappears. But she leaves behind more than a sweet memory that involves Tommy in a brand new cash flow problem he never imagined. While trying to sort out how to stay on the right side of the law and get back on the road, he meets a young criminologist who helps him, a DJ who doesn't, and a librarian who teaches him about the city, women, and the art of the makeover. After truth and lies are stirred like a blue martini, being assaulted by a pink monkey, and witnessing a drive-by shooting that drowns a Ferrari--Tommy is desperate to help Mona. If he can find her. "A private investigator, a mysterious hitchhiker, dancers, gangsters, a mysterious bag that holds the unthinkable and twists and turns that will have the reader unable to put it down, Missing Mona by Joe Klingler has it all." --San Francisco Book Review (5 of 5 stars)

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Customer Reviews

Missing Mona Joe Klingler's latest novel begins with a departure from the world of hi-tech with the protagonist, being a just turned thirty, college graduate and car mechanic at Wal-Mart, tossing his cell phone out the window of his restored Hemi Barracuda as he heads west on I-80 to see the Pacific Ocean. He picks up a beautiful hitchhiker along the way named Mona. After an evening at the W in Chicago he awakens to find her missing with a note, "Find Me". This begins a wild ride with Tommy Cuda desperately search for Mona. Along the way, in less than a week, he meets six beautiful women all of whom want to be with him. (Makes me want to move back to Chicago) As he searches, he is drawn deeper and deeper into the hi-tech world of surveillance, encryption, and undercover disguises and the dark world of murder, theft, counterfeit money and deception. The twists and turns keep the reader involved and guessing all the way. A fun interesting read. Tom Hudson Key West

The real mystery here is what happened to me, the reader. I tore into Missing Mona enthusiastically, but about halfway through my interest waned. Hmmm. Writing: good. Characters: good.

Story: bread and butter mystery tale. In all fairness to the author, I think the problem was with my expectations going in. I really had my taste buds set for something more quirky and off-the-wall than dirty politics and cracking a counterfeit ring.

I'm now a Joe Klingler fan and eagerly look forward to whatever is next. Perhaps I've grown too used to crime and private eye stories on tv, I had a bit of trouble keeping all the players straight. If so then add that fifth star. Bottom line - so far, three good books that stand out for style and character.

I loved the book instantly. The idea of disconnecting from everything electronic and the need to instantly answer a call, text or email, is very appealing. Just enough background was given to get a sense that Tommy was a decent, legitimate person, with a family and not some sort of wacko. After a brief phone call with his mother, there was no more to the backstory. The reason I had to give it a four rating, not five was as much as I really enjoyed the story, there were times where there were just too many characters to keep them all straight and at times I was frustrated with the intertwined story lines. There were many distinct personalities and it was fun to watch the story unravel with the help of others, one step at a time. Very enjoyable, fast paced read. The people who helped Tommy were memorable characters. Penny and Lizz were my favorites. Lizz' business outside of the library was intriguing. The store sounded like a fun place to check out. Certainly her skills were invaluable more than once. Penny's background also made her character a great fit for the story. Helped put the pieces together. I was sorry when the book ended, because there is still a lot of story to tell. A continuation would be something I would buy as soon as it was available. There are loads of loose ends and I certainly was left wanting to know more. I received this book at no cost, in exchange for my honest review. Aside from a lot of characters and a multi faceted storyline, that sometimes was not easy to follow, this was an enjoyable read.

First, I was gifted this book in exchange for an honest review of the book. But no doubt about it, I loved the book. A Road Trip sounds really fun, right? Well, this is a Road Trip on steroids. Tommy Cuda (a last name he made up along the way) is a college graduate (taking 6 years and 3 majors before graduating) and currently a car mechanic at Wal-Mart, living at home with his parents. So who wouldn't want to get away and take a road trip?? Because Tommy decided today's technology was too invasive to live a real life, and because he doesn't want his friends to track him, he tosses his cell phone out the window of his restored Barracuda as he heads west with, maybe, California as his destination. Early in the trip he picks up a beautiful hitchhiker who says her name is Mona. He tells he is a PI even though he's never actually done any PI work - and she gives him money to find someone but doesn't say who. After an intimate evening at a Chicago hotel he awakens to find her missing with a note, "Find Me". This begins the start of his PI career as he has to discover ways to find someone who doesn't want to be found. As he searches, he is drawn into the hi-tech world of surveillance, encryption, and undercover disguises. But then there's the dark world of murder, theft, counterfeit money and deception. There are twists, turns which keep the reader guessing. Read the book and enjoy Tommy Cuda's Road Trip while he tries to find a missing Mona.

Let me start by saying I read books for entertainment and enjoyment. I don't read books so I can rip apart technical aspects. When I started the book I was very concerned about sentence structure, run on sentences, and sentences that were tough to actually decipher what description went with what other part of the sentence. There was some serious editing that needed to be done. This caused me concern about whether I'd even be able to get past it. Well, the editing got much tighter once the book started to develop. Trying not to give spoilers, there were aspects of the book that some who love totally believable scenarios and technically sound, by the book, police procedures, etc., you may have issues. It did seem odd that each and every person the main character sought help from was always a huge help and a "good guy." But for me, as I said, entertainment and enjoyment are what I'm looking for and this book delivered for me. I found it engrossing and a book I had trouble putting down. If the author does turn this into a series of books, I forward to them. I received a copy of this book in exchange for a review.

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