

ODD JOBS Synopsis

A Novel by Karl Meade

Marty Drysdale should be a happy man: the woman of his dreams lives next door and has declared her mutual love; he's writing the Great Canadian Screenplay, for which he has funding; and he just sold his old house for thirty grand in cash, wrapped in a bag from Wayne's Bagels. But as he watches his beloved house ease down the street on a flatbed, the house collapses, taking out three Harleys and a Mercedes. The problem is, the house belongs to his ex-wife, Chick—that ex-Mountie dream woman next door—and the Harleys belong to the lead Devils biker, Donald—Marty's ex-script-writing partner, now loan manager, to whom Marty owes fifty grand.

Odd Jobs tells the comic-caper love story of how Marty got into this mess, and how he just might get out of it. It is a story of house and family, scriptwriters and cat-burglars. A modern tale of movie magic in the wrong hands: the Big Lebowski meets Elmore Leonard's niece.

When limo-driver Marty first met Chick, he had an ounce of marijuana in the backseat and a B&E on his record. He escaped that first meeting with a traffic ticket and a major crush on "Officer Beautiful." Within a month, Marty asked Chick to marry him, and against all hope, she agreed, with a chuckle. A decade later, Chick suddenly returns after seven years of incommunicado divorce to move in next door, complete with an alluring prosthetic leg, a job in insurance, a new husband—who happens to be Marty's ex-business partner, "FitZ" Fitzgerald, the Al Capone of entrepreneurs—and a precocious, six-year-old daughter, Susan, who looks oddly familiar.

It isn't long before FitZ convinces Marty that Marty's life-dream—to write the Great Canadian Film Noir—is perfectly aligned with FitZ's life-dream—to be a copy-cat cat-burglar! FitZ's plan is convincingly simple: they'll "method-write" a script, using Chick's insurance-investigator files as source material. When Susan spends all her non-school hours in Marty's garage play-acting and play-boxing, and FitZ hires Donald-the-biker as "technical consultant" and investor for their

non-existent film, Chick's Mountie radar takes a fresh interest in Marty's new "hobby." Marty literally has to write a script to save his life. And maybe win Chick back in the process.

But the script portrays real burglaries that Chick is actively investigating, undercover, and that FitZ has roped Marty into actually doing, as "research." Donald's seed money disappears, only to magically reappear in every safe FitZ and Marty burgle—FitZ is using the money to pay off old debts, and then stealing it back! When Donald demands the script include a love-interest, Marty panics and writes a sexy, undercover Mountie who cracks the burglary ring by seducing the side-kick burglar, and whose daughter adopts the side-kick burglar as a surrogate father. Chick and FitZ are outraged, for different reasons—'You put *us* in the script!'... 'You put our real *jobs* in the script!' Marty's brain hurts. He can't tell fact from fiction anymore.

Meanwhile, an angry Donald gives chase. Donald catches Marty and straps his head into a vise—'where's my money, where's your partner Fitzgerald gone?'—but Marty's distressed brain asks its own questions. Why did Chick marry him in the first place, and why did she come back, to live right next door? When did Chick and FitZ get together, and who is Susan's real father?

When Chick announces she's pregnant and FitZ declares their next "job" is a bank, Marty decides he has to get out. But how? He knows a guy who buys houses and trucks them away....

The past and present collide when Marty escapes Donald's vise-interrogation and sells the stolen jewels, only to be caught by both Donald and FitZ while trying to make his get-away and save Chick and Susan. All of them converge on Chick's deck. Donald grabs Susan and holds a gun to her. They all freeze, but it is Susan who saves them, rabbit-punching Donald in the groin, just like she'd practised in Marty's garage. Donald collapses on his gun, shooting himself in the gut.

Chick forces a deal. The money goes to the homeless. Marty rebuilds the house, using the salvaged materials. FitZ runs his crazy schemes from L.A. or Winnipeg, while Marty raises Susan and the newborn, with Chick. FitZ makes monthly visits. This time he has big news: he sold their script! And it's a two-script deal! Marty and Susan better get cracking.