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The Hot Kid

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Synopsis

Carlos Webster was fifteen in the fall of 1921, the first time he came face-to-face with a nationally known criminal. A few weeks later, he killed his first manâ "a cattle thief who was rustling his dad's stock. Now Carlos, called Carl, is the hot kid of the U.S. Marshals Service, one of the elite manhunters currently chasing the likes of Dillinger, Baby Face Nelson, and Pretty Boy Floyd across America's Depression-ravaged heartland. Carl wants to be the country's most famous lawman. Jack Belmont, the bent son of an oil millionaire, wants to be public enemy number one. Tony Antonelli of True Detective magazine wants to write about this world of cops and robbers, molls and speakeasies from perilously close up. Then there are the hot damesâ "Louly and Elodieâ "hooking their schemes and dreams onto dangerous men. And before the gunsmoke clears, everybody just might end up getting exactly what he or she wished for. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Before Elmore Leonard abandoned westerns to blaze across the pantheon of bestsellerdom with his hip, stylish thrillers, punctuated with dead-pan humor and dialogue worthy of a David Mamet play, he might have written *The Hot Kid*; it has some of the same crisp pacing and well-defined, if not especially complex, characters that marked his earlier novels. A show-down between Tulsa oil wildcatter and millionaire Oris Belmont and his 18-year-old son, who's attempting to shake him down, says all there is to say about both men: "I don't know what's wrong with you. You're a nice-looking boy, wear a clean shirt every day, keep your hair combed ... where'd you get your ugly disposition? Your mama blames me for not being around, so then I give you things .. you get in

trouble, I get you out. Well, now you've moved on to extortion in your life of crime ... I pay you what you want or you're telling everybody I have a girlfriend?" Jack Belmont's blackmail scheme doesn't work, but after destroying his father's property, forging checks in his name, kidnapping his mistress, and joining a gang of notorious bank robbers after his release from prison, he encounters another man trying to get out from under his father's large shadow and create his own, bigger one. Deputy U.S. Marshal Carl Webster, who at age 15 shot a man trying to steal his cows and six years later dispenses equal justice to Emmet Long, the leader of Belmont's gang, now has Jack Belmont in his sights. Webster's exploits have earned him even more celebrity than Jack, who dreams of rivaling Pretty Boy Floyd as public enemy number one. We're in the early 30's here, just as a dust cloud is rolling across the Oklahoma plains--the days of Bonnie and Clyde, when gangsters captured the public attention, and Leonard makes good use of place and time. His minor characters are much more interesting than his protagonists, especially the women, and the writing shows occasional flashes of his trademarked ironic humor. But it's not as cool--or as hot--as even his most dedicated readers are used to, and there's barely a trace of the bizarre plot twists and unlikely coincidences that define his most recent caper novels in this one. --Jane Adams --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review. Leonard's 40th novel, set in the world of 1930s gangsters and gun molls, features characterizations so deft and true you can smell the hair oil on the dudes and the perfume on the dames. Young Carlos Webster tangles with his first gangster at 15, when bank robber Emmet Long robs an Okmulgee, Okla., store, kills an Indian policeman and takes away Carlos's ice cream cone. Seven years later, Carlos, now Carl, a newly minted deputy U.S. marshal, gets his revenge by gunning Long down, an act that wins him the respect of his employers and the adulation of the American public, who follow his every quick-draw exploit in the papers and True Detective magazine. Cinematically, Leonard introduces his charactersâ "Carl's colorful pecan-farmer father, Virgil; Jack Belmont, ne'er-do-well son of a rich oilman; True Detective writer Tony Antonelli; Louly Brown, whose cousin marries Pretty Boy Floydâ "in small, self-contained scenes. As the novel moves forward, these characters and others begin to interact, forming liaisons both romantic and criminal. At the stirring conclusion, scores are settled and the good and the bad get sorted out in satisfactorily violent fashion. The writing is pitch-perfect throughout: "It was his son's quiet tone that made Virgil realize, My Lord, but this boy's got a hard bark on him." The setting and tone fall somewhere between Leonard's early westerns and his more recent crime novels, but it's all pure Leonard, and that means it's pure terrific. Agent, Andrew Wiley. (May) --This text refers to an out of

print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is one of many novels that will cause the late Elmore Leonard's readers to miss him all the more. Set in the Pretty Boy Floyd era of the Oklahoma oil boom, the story pits Carl Webster, a newly minted hot shot young deputy U.S. marshal, against the bad guys who plied their nasty trade between Tulsa and Kansas City. Although this crime story is set in Depression-era Oklahoma, it harkens back to the shoot'em up Westerns that Leonard wrote earlier in his career. Deputy Marshal Webster always warns the evildoers in advance that if he has to draw his gun, he'll shoot to kill. Of course, they don't take the Hot Kid seriously and end up transitioning from the quick to the dead. Their last thought presumably being: "How'd he draw and shoot that fast." Webster's exploits and his quick-draw justice are chronicled by Tony Antonelli, a reporter for True Detective magazine, who is an anti-hero for those of us who worked the crime beat back in our newspaper days.

nothing against Raylon Givens, but Marshall Carlos Webster is a man with a story! one of EL's longer novels, it's a bit episodic, with a string of intertwining conflicts. this, of course, gives EL plenty of opportunity to develop some interesting characters--rotten hearts, gorgeous molls, and idiot gangsters--who people the land around Tulsa in the most memorable way. I've read around half of EL's novels, and this may be my favorite so far.

Elmore Leonard tells a great story here. He tells it clearly and engagingly, effortlessly presenting wonderful characters, period details, and plenty of action. At the same time, he is commenting on the all the richness of story telling; how to tell a story, what to put in what to leave out, what kind of language to use. I was sad to come to the end. Fortunately, some of the same characters reappear in Up In Honey's Room, a sexier, more violent, funnier book, if you can imagine!

This is a very nice departure for Elmore Leonard. The master of noir and the Runyonesque dramedy, he is also one of our top writers of westerns. In this novel he appropriates many aspects of the western to create a 30's period novel. These are the hardscrabble 30's, with elements of the depression and dustbowl sitting cheek by jowl with the exploits of the likes of Baby Face Nelson. The period details are exquisite--as finely etched as the lineaments of his characters. We are, quintessentially, in the world of genre fiction, with predictable characters--marshals and molls--inevitable results, and a string of laconic aperçus along the way. Very few can do this with the steady hand and light touch of a writer like Leonard and no one but Leonard can sustain focus and

the reader's attention while sketching a narrative that is unhurried and episodic. Leonard's sense of place is always impressive, whether that place be Miami, Los Angeles, or his native Detroit. Here the master does Tulsa and Kansas City. Enjoy and learn.

I have read several Elmore Leonard books. This one did not hold my interest.

Elmore Leonard, the king of dialog and suspense does it again. This is a page turner that never lets you down.

The joke is that those who can't do, teach, but Elmore Leonard disproves that. His rules for writing are readily available on the Internet and they aren't just advice: he also follows his own rules. Rules such as only using "said" in dialogue to avoid distracting the reader with unnecessary words like "exclaimed", "commented" or "remarked". Then there is probably his most well-known rule, to not write the things people skip over; in other words, keep the description to the minimum and focus on the dialogue and action. While it is quite possible to write a good book while defying these rules, Leonard shows that sticking to them works quite nicely as well. Such is the case with *The Hot Kid*. The title character is Carl Webster, son of Virgil Webster (from the earlier Leonard book, *Cuba Libre*). After killing a cattle thief as a teenager in 1920s Oklahoma, Carl is motivated to become a U.S. Marshal to capture fugitives. From the start, he is very good at his job, getting involved in dramatic shootouts and capturing notorious outlaws. Paralleling Carl's life is Jack Belmont. Like Carl, Jack is a son of a wealthy man, but where Carl is essentially noble, Jack is a sociopath whose behavior is getting more and more erratic. His crimes will put the two of them on intertwining paths that can lead only to one place, a final showdown. As is typical of a Leonard book, plot is almost secondary. What he is more interested in are characters and dialogue. Unlike some authors who seem to feel that every bit of conversation must be linked directly to the story, Leonard goes for something more realistic, using speech to reveal elements of the character. Also, as in most Leonard books, there are few master criminals; Belmont and the other crooks often bumble around; they're dangerous, but they're no geniuses. In other words, they're human. I've always considered Elmore Leonard books to be a real treat, and *The Hot Kid* continues his own string of quality books. To read one of the true masters of the crime novel, you can't go wrong with Leonard in general or *The Hot Kid* specifically.

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