

In the Wink of a Heartbeat

A death row comedy by Wendy Jo Cohen

The Scoop



Summarily sacked from his production internship, the young and humiliated Maarten van der Klooster knows one way to regain his dignity: produce a documentary that will make him famous. His subject: the notorious Starleigh Squibb, a woman facing execution for blowing up her ex-husband's house – with her ex-husband's fiancée, Randi, inside it. There's just one hitch: Starleigh swears she was framed, and that Randi was killed in an unfortunate sinkhole incident. His documentary having taken on life or death proportions, Maarten decides to use “the power of cinema” to exonerate the damsel in distress.

His investigation soon uncovers faked evidence, questionable witnesses, and signs of political expediency – all the makings of an Oscar-caliber doc.

But events spiral out of control when these discoveries transform Starleigh's case into a cause celeb, attracting a horde of agitators to the small town of East Shokanawe. Branded a meddler, Maarten finds himself caught between the “Free Starleigh Movement” and the local townsfolk (led by the victim's fanatical twin sister), who demand that Starleigh “fry on schedule.”

As the clock ticks down towards Starleigh's “Date with Destiny”, Maarten accepts help from a pair of self-serving celebrity lawyers, an eccentric British movie star, and a loony local reporter – each with an agenda and all trying to horn in on his Oscar dreams. And though it'll be worth it if he can save Starleigh's life and make a name for himself in the process, what about that nagging suspicion that his damsel in distress is the devil in disguise?

