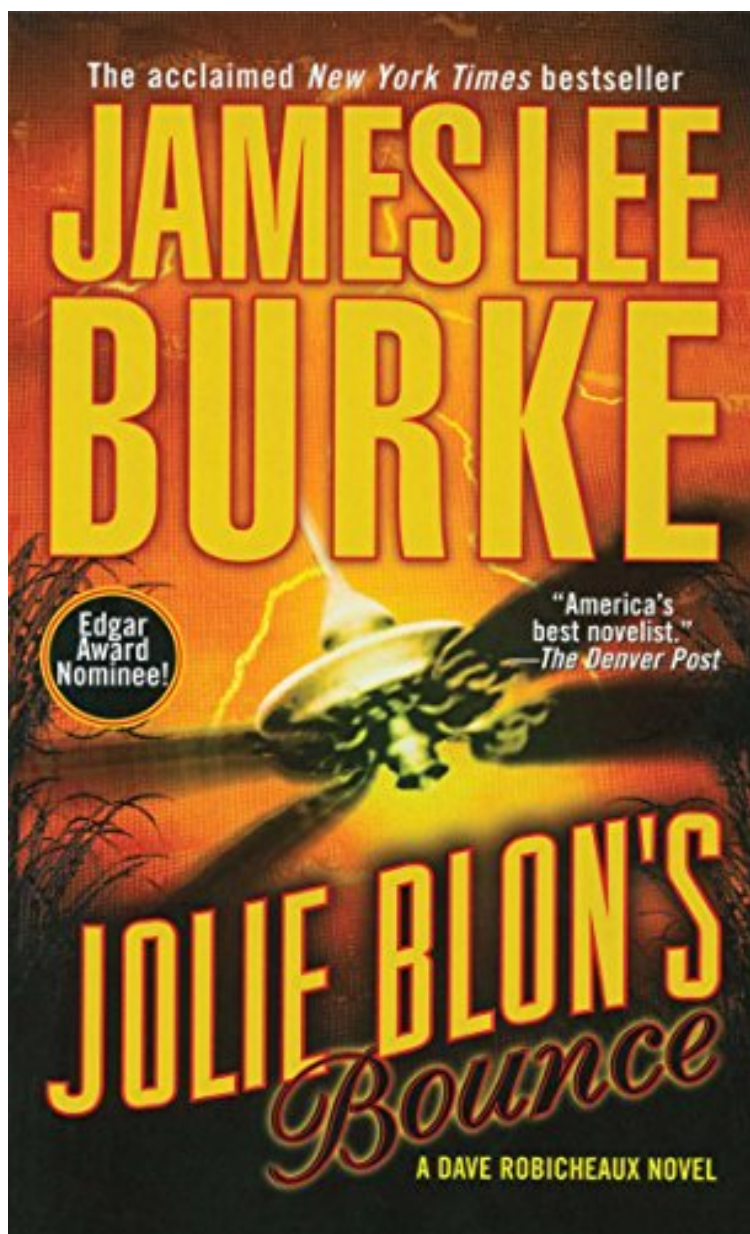


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## Jolie Blon's Bounce: A Novel



*Par James Lee Burke*  
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**Par James Lee Burke : Jolie Blon's Bounce: A Novel** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jolie Blon's Bounce: A Novel:

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**Description :** Description du produit When a beautiful teenage girl is killed, the victim of a particularly savage rape, New Iberia, Louisiana police detective Dave Robicheaux senses from the very start of the investigation that the most likely suspect -- Tee Bobby Hulin -- is not the actual killer. Though a drug addict and general ne'er-do-well, Hulin doesn't fit the profile for this brutal crime. But when another body turns up -- a drugged-out prostitute who is the daughter of a local mafia bigwig -- all clues point to Tee Bobby Hulin. The dead girl's father sets out to find -- and punish -- the killer. Before Robicheaux can bring the killer or killers to justice, he battles a painkiller addiction, a habit brought on by a humiliating beating he suffers at the hands of a diabolical character known only as Legion. Once the overseer on a local sugarcane

plantation, Legion scrapes by through doing odd jobs. In temperament, he's still the malevolent bully, seemingly possessed with supernatural skills of survival. When Robicheaux's longtime buddy Clete Purcel drops by New Iberia for a visit, he is quickly drawn into the struggle between evil forces, including Jimmy Dean Styles, a black man intent on maintaining his empire of corruption, Joe Zeroski, a trailer park mafioso with palatial aspirations -- and Legion Guidry in whom Robicheaux faces an enemy unlike any he has ever known. And soon, what began as a duel of wits turns into a dance of death. Gothic, dense, brutal, touching, and always compelling, Jolie Blon's *Bounce* is classic storytelling from a writer who has been dubbed "the Faulkner of crime fiction."

Prsentation de l'diteur James Lee Burke, acclaimed by critics as "America's best novelist," "the Graham Greene of the bayou," and "a poet of the mystery novel," returns with his popular character, Dave Robicheaux, in a novel rich with atmosphere, ripe with menace, and filled with the kind of crackling dialogue that has made Burke a consistent New York Times best-selling author. When a beautiful teenage girl is killed, the victim of a particularly savage rape, New Iberia, Louisiana, police detective Dave Robicheaux senses from the very start of the investigation that the most likely suspect, Tee Bobby Hulin, is not the actual killer. Though a drug addict and general ne'er-do-well, Hulin just doesn't fit the profile for this kind of brutal crime. But when another murder occurs -- this victim a drugged-out prostitute who happens to be the daughter of one of the local mafia bigwigs -- all clues once again point to Tee Bobby Hulin, and the cries for arrest become too loud to ignore. The dead girl's father, however, prefers to take matters in his own hands and sets out to find -- and punish -- the killer himself. But before Robicheaux can solve these crimes and bring the killer or killers to justice, he is forced to battle his own inner demons, including a painkiller addiction, a habit that begins as the result of a brutal and humiliating beating he suffers at the hands of the mysterious and diabolical character known as Legion. A fixture in the area for years, Legion was once the overseer on a local sugarcane plantation and now gets by doing odd jobs. In temperament, however, he's still the malicious and malevolent bully he always was, a man defined by evil and seemingly possessed with supernatural skills of survival. Added to the mix, and on the good guy side of the balance sheet, is Clete Purcel, a longtime buddy of Robicheaux's and a confirmed boozier and womanizer. Clete comes to New Iberia for a visit and is quickly drawn into the struggle between the various forces of evil in the town, including Jimmy Dean Styles, a black man intent on maintaining his empire of corruption; Joe Zeroski, a trailer park mafioso with palatial aspirations -- and of course, Legion Guidry, the devil incarnate, in whom Robicheaux finds himself facing a challenge and an enemy unlike any he has ever known. And soon, what began as a duel of wits has turned into a dance of death. Gothic, dense, brutal, touching, and always compelling, Jolie Blon's *Bounce* is classic storytelling from a writer who has been dubbed "the Faulkner of crime fiction."

.com Dave Robicheaux, the Louisiana cop who's easily one of the most complex and compelling protagonists in mystery fiction, confronts his own demons as well as a brutal adversary who might be the devil himself in this dark thriller. This is classic James Lee Burke, the master stylist, writing at the top of his game: "I wanted to drive deep into the Atchafalaya Swamp, past the confines of reason, into the past... on the tree-flooded alluvial rim of the world, where the tides and the course of the sun were the only measures of time (and) all you had to do was release yourself from the prison of restraint, just snip loose the stitches that sewed your skin to the hairshirt of normalcy." The plot hinges on a pair of murders that don't seem to be connected--a mobbed-up prostitute and a pretty young teenage girl--and the Cajun blues singer accused of both crimes. Robicheaux believes that Tee Bobby Hulin, the gifted musician whose original composition provides the title for this brilliantly realized Gothic crime novel, is innocent. Proving it puts him in the sights of a vicious old overseer named Legion, whose almost supernatural powers nearly drown Robicheaux in the swamp of his own addictions. The narrative proceeds slowly, but Burke's dedicated fans won't begrudge him one beautifully turned phrase, gloriously limned description, or insightful characterization: they just don't get any better than this one. --Jane Adams

Extrait Chapter 1 Growing up during the 1940s in New Iberia, down on the Gulf Coast, I never doubted how the world worked. At dawn the antebellum homes along East Main loomed out of the mists, their columned porches and garden walkways and second-story verandas soaked with dew, the chimneys and slate roofs softly molded by the canopy of live oaks that arched over the entire street. The stacks of sunken U.S. Navy ships lay sideways in Pearl Harbor and service stars hung inside front windows all over New Iberia. But on East Main, in the false dawn, the air was heavy with the smell of night-blooming flowers and lichen on damp stone and the fecund odor of Bayou Teche, and even though a gold service star may have hung in a window of a grand mansion,

indicating the death of a serviceman in the family, the year could have been mistaken for 1861 rather than 1942. Even when the sun broke above the horizon and the ice wagons and the milk delivery came down the street on iron-rimmed wheels and the Negro help began reporting for work at their employers' back doors, the light was never harsh, never superheated or smelling of tar roads and dust as it was in other neighborhoods. Instead it filtered through Spanish moss and bamboo and philodendron that dripped with beads of moisture as big as marbles, so that even in the midst of summer the morning came to those who lived here with a blue softness that daily told them the earth was a grand place, its design vouchsafed in heaven and not to be questioned. Down the street was the old Frederic Hotel, a lovely pink building with marble columns and potted palms inside, a ballroom, an elevator that looked like a brass birdcage, and a saloon with wood-bladed fans and an elevated, scrolled-iron shoeshine chair and a long, hand-carved mahogany bar. Amid the palm fronds and the blue and gray swirls of color in the marble columns were the slot and racehorse machines, ringing with light, their dull pewterlike coin trays offering silent promise to the glad at heart. Farther down Main were Hopkins and Railroad Avenues, like ancillary conduits into part of the town's history and geography that people did not talk about publicly. When I went to the icehouse on Saturday afternoons with my father, I would look furtively down Railroad at the rows of paintless cribs on each side of the train tracks and at the blowsy women who sat on the stoops, hung over, their knees apart under their loose cotton dresses, perhaps dipping beer out of a bucket two Negro boys carried on a broom handle from Hattie Fontenot's bar. I came to learn early on that no venal or meretricious enterprise existed without a community's consent. I thought I understood the nature of evil. I learned at age twelve I did not. My half brother, who was fifteen months younger than I, was named Jimmie Robicheaux. His mother was a prostitute in Abbeville, but he and I were raised together, largely by our father, known as Big Aldous, who was a trapper and commercial fisherman and offshore derrick man. As children Jimmie and I were inseparable. On summer evenings we used to go to the lighted ball games at City Park and slip into the serving lines at barbecues and crab boils at the open-air pavilions. Our larceny was of an innocent kind, I suppose, and we were quite proud of ourselves when we thought we had outsmarted the adult world. On a hot August night, with lightning rippling through the thunderheads over the Gulf of Mexico, Jimmie and I were walking through a cluster of oak trees on the edge of the park when we saw an old Ford automobile with two couples inside, one in the front seat, one in the back. We heard a woman moan, then her voice mount in volume and intensity. We stared openmouthed as we saw the woman's top half arch backward, her naked breasts lit by the glow from a picnic pavilion, her mouth wide with orgasm. We started to change direction, but the woman was laughing now, her face sweaty and bright at the open window. "Hey, boy, you know what we been doin'? It make my pussy feel so good. Hey, come here, you. We been fuckin', boy," she said. It should have been over, a bad encounter with white trash, probably drunk, caught in barnyard copulation. But the real moment was just beginning. The man behind the steering wheel lit a cigarette, his face flaring like paste in the flame, then stepped out on the gravel. There were tattoos, like dark blue smears, inside his forearms. He used two fingers to lift the blade out of a pocketknife. "You like to look t'rew people's windows?" he asked. "No, sir," I said. "They're just kids, Legion," the woman in back said, putting on her shirt. "Maybe that's what they gonna always be," the man said. I had thought his words were intended simply to frighten us. But I could see his face clearly now, the hair combed back like black pitch, the narrow white face with vertical lines in it, the eyes that could look upon a child as the source of his rage against the universe. Then Jimmie and I were running in the darkness, our hearts pounding, forever changed by the knowledge that the world contains pockets of evil that are as dark as the inside of a leather bag. Because my father was out of town, we ran all the way to the icehouse on Railroad Avenue, behind which was the lit and neatly tended house of Ciro Shanahan, the only man my father ever spoke of with total admiration and trust. Later in life I would learn why my father had such great respect for his friend. Ciro Shanahan was one of those rare individuals who would suffer in silence and let the world do him severe injury in order to protect those whom he loved. On a spring night in 1931, Ciro and my father cut their boat engines south of Point Au Fer and stared at the black-green outline of the Louisiana coast in the moonlight. The waves were capping, the wind blowing hard, puffing and snapping the tarp that was stretched over the cases of Mexican whiskey and Cuban rum that my father and Ciro had off-loaded from a trawler ten miles out. My father looked through his field glasses and watched two searchlights sweeping the tops of the waves to the south. Then he rested the glasses on top of the small pilothouse that was built out of raw pine on the stern of the boat and wiped the salt spray off his face with his sleeve and studied the coastline. The running lights of three vessels pitched in the swells between himself and the safety of the shore. "Moon's up. I done tole you,

bad night to do it," he said. "We done it before. We still here, ain't we?"

Ciro said. "Them boats off the bow? That's state men, *Ciro*," my father said. "We don't know that," *Ciro* said. "We can go east. Hide the load at Grand Chenier and come back for it later. You listen, you. Don't nobody make a living in jail," my father said. *Ciro* was short, built like a dockworker, with red hair and green eyes and a small, down-hooked Irish mouth. He wore a canvas coat and a fedora that was tied onto his head with a scarf. It was unseasonably cold and his face was windburned and knotted with thought inside his scarf. "The man got his trucks up there, *Aldous*. I promised we was coming in tonight. Ain't right to leave them people waiting," he said. "Sitting in an empty truck ain't gonna put nobody in Angola," my father said. *Ciro's* eyes drifted off from my father's and looked out at the southern horizon. "It don't matter now. Here come the Coast Guard. Hang on," he said. The boat *Ciro* and my father owned together was long and narrow, like a World War I torpedo vessel, and had been built to service offshore drilling rigs, with no wasted space on board. The pilothouse sat like a matchbox on the stern, and even when the deck was stacked with drill pipe the big Chrysler engines could power through twelve-foot seas. When *Ciro* pushed the throttle forward, the screws scoured a trough across the swell and the bow arched out of the water and burst a wave into a horsetail spray across the moon. But the searchlights on the Coast Guard cutter were unrelenting. They dissected my father's boat, burned red circles into his eyes, turned the waves a sandy green and robbed them of all their mystery, illuminating the bait fish and stingrays that toppled out of the crests. The boat's hull pounded across the water, the liquor bottles shaking violently under the tarp, the searchlights spearing through the pilothouse windows far out into the darkness. All the while the moored boats that lay between my father and the safety of the coastline waited, their cabin windows glowing now, their engines silent. My father leaned close to *Ciro's* ear. "You going right into them agents," he said. "Mr. Julian taken care of them people," *Ciro* said. "Mr. Julian taken care of Mr. Julian," my father said. "I don't want to hear it, *Aldous*." Suddenly the boats of the state liquor agents came to life, lurching out over the waves, their own searchlights now vectoring *Ciro* and my father.

*Ciro* swung the wheel hard to starboard, veering around a sandbar, moving over shallow water, the bow hammering against the outgoing tide. Up ahead was the mouth of the Atchafalaya River. My father watched the coastline draw nearer, the moss straightening on the dead cypress trunks, the flooded willows and gum trees and sawgrass denting and swaying in the wind. The tarp on the cases of whiskey and rum tore loose and flapped back against the pilothouse, blocking any view out the front window. My father cut the other ropes on the tarp and peeled it off the stacked cases of liquor and heaved it over the gunnel. When he looked at the shore again, he saw a series of sandbars ridging out of the bay like the backs of misplaced whales. "Oh, *Ciro*, what you gone and did?" he said. The boat rocketed between two sandbars, just as someone began firing an automatic weapon in short bursts from one of the state boats. Whiskey and rum and broken glass fountained in the air, then a tracer round landed on the deck like a phosphorus match and a huge handkerchief of flame enveloped the pilothouse. But *Ciro* never cut the throttle, never considered giving up. The glass in the windows blackened and snapped in half; blue and yellow and red fire streamed off the deck into the water. "Head into them leafs!" my father yelled, and pointed at a cove whose surface was layered with dead leaves. The boat's bow crashed into the trees, setting the canopy aflame. Then my father and *Ciro* were overboard, splashing through the swamp, their bodies marbled with firelight. They ran and trudded and stumbled for two miles through chest-deep water, sloughs, air vines, and sand bogs that were black with insects feeding off cows or wild animals that had suffocated or starved in them. Three hours later the two of them sat on a dry levee and watched the light go out of the sky and the moon fade into a thin white wafer.

*Ciro's* left ankle was the size of a cantaloupe. "I'm gonna get my car. Then we ain't touching the liquor bidness again," my father said. "We ain't got a boat to touch it wit'," *Ciro* said. "T'ank you for telling me that. The next time I work for Mr. Julian LaSalle, go buy a gun and shoot me." "He paid my daughter's hospital bills. You too hard on people, *Aldous*," *Ciro* said. "He gonna pay for our boat?" My father walked five miles to the grove of swamp maples where he had parked his automobile. When he returned to pick *Ciro* up, the sky was blue, the wildflowers blooming along the levee, the air bright with the smell of salt. He came around a stand of willows and stared through the windshield at the scene he had blundered into. Three men in fedora hats and ill-fitting suits, two of them carrying Browning automatic rifles, were escorting *Ciro* in wrist manacles to the back of a caged wagon, one with iron plates in the floor. The wagon was hooked to the back of a state truck and two Negroes who worked for Julian LaSalle were already sitting inside it. My father shoved his transmission in reverse and backed all the way down the levee until he hit a board road that led through the swamp. As he splashed through the flooded dips in the road and mud splattered over his windshield, he tried not to think of *Ciro* limping in manacles toward the jail wagon. He hit a deer, a doe, and

saw her carom off the fender into a tree, her body broken. But my father did not slow down until he was in Morgan City, where he entered the back of a Negro caf and bought a glass of whiskey that he drank with both hands. Then he put his big head down on his arms and fell asleep and dreamed of birds trapped inside the foliage of burning trees. Copyright 2002 by James Lee Burke