



A Morning for Flamingos

James Lee Burke

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A routine assignment transporting two death-row prisoners to their executions goes fatally wrong, leaving Dave Robicheaux brutally wounded and his partner dead. Obsessed with revenge, Dave is persuaded by the DEA to go undercover into the torrid sleepy depths of New Orleans, a volatile world of Mafia drug-running and Cajun voodoo magic. He becomes irrevocably snarled in the nightmarish web surrounding Mafia don Tony Cardo and must put himself against his own worst fears in order to survive.

A Morning for Flamingos Details

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Colin Mitchell says

The Dave Robicheaux is improving with each book and I am now looking forward to the next. In this one a routine transfer of prisoners goes wrong, his partner is killed and Dave is badly injured. This leads to an undercover narcotics sting and life threatening action for Dave and his old partner Cletus Purcell. The action does not go as planned but the action is fast and furious, with fine descriptions that might have you sipping a cocktail on the veranda or fishing in the gulf. I still struggle with some of the slang terms. Perhaps there is an opening for a glossary of terms?

Mark says

It's hard to imagine anyone writing crime/mystery fiction that's better than James Lee Burke. The prose is lyrical, the settings so are richly described that you can almost taste and smell New Orleans, and his characters are wonderfully complex. As this one opens, Dave Robicheaux has taken a job with the sheriff's office to help pay off some heavy debts incurred in book 3. He's transporting prisoners Tee Beau and Boggs to death row when things go awry, the prisoners escape, and Dave is left for dead in a ditch. As he recovers, he's approached by a colleague who offers him a role in a DEA sting operation to nail local mob boss Tony Cardo. As he digs in, Boggs enters the scene once again, Dave becomes surprisingly close to Cardo, and his old high school girlfriend reenters his life, and Dave becomes quite conflicted as the sting operation proceeds.

The compelling thing about these novels is seeing things through the eyes of Robicheaux, and getting inside his head. As a alcoholic and Viet Nam veteran, he has some heavy baggage. He's tortured and conflicted, but despite his frequent self-doubt, he's good at what he does, and is full of compassion and typically take the moral high ground.

Fascinating, very well-written, and the reoccurring secondary characters are just as good as Robicheaux himself. Interestingly, there is a certain amount of closure at the end of this one, and Burke could have easily stopped here. But I know there are quite a few more books to follow. I'm very curious to see where this drama goes in the next book, and I hope this series never ends. It's so good I can see myself re-reading these novels.

Luca Lesi says

"Non dire niente. Sei troppo serio. È tutta una gran commedia, amico. Alla fine della fiera si muore tutti, e si resta morti per molto tempo. È una grande inculata, da qualsiasi parte la si guardi."

Quarto volume della serie Dave Robicheaux, si conferma un ottimo libro che fa di James Lee Burke uno dei maestri del noir per profondità e costanza.

Dura poco la tranquillità per Dave Robicheaux, con un passato che sembra sempre solo ad un minuto di distanza, ma questo è soprattutto il romanzo di Tony, un gangster cajun italo americano del quale riusciremo a comprenderne carattere e paure, crudeltà e generosità fino ad essere inconsapevolmente partecipi e

complici della soluzione finale.

Anche l'amico Clete Purcell o il giovane Tee Bobby con il suo nascondersi ed apparire, riempiono di personaggi , coraggio e amicizia questo bel romanzo.

Se non c'è nulla come l'odore di cordite per ripulirti la cavità nasale, non si riesce a non entrare a far parte del club della vita alla giornata. Il domani si prende cura di se stesso ma l'oggi è tutto nostro, delle persone che ci vogliono bene e di quelli che ci vogliono male

"Sono le persone per le quali proviamo qualcosa quelle che ci fanno più soffrire. Ed è raro che lo facciano di proposito. È proprio questo che rende tutto così doloroso, ragazzo mio."

Qualcuno aveva acceso il juke-box e aveva selezionato una vecchia versione di "Please Don't Leave Me" di Fats Domino. — Balla con me — disse e noi con loro. Godetevela !

Sempre sullo sfondo New Iberia, Louisiana. Una terra magica e aspra, bellissima e crudele. Una terra dove si respira ancora l'odio razziale, dove il male sembra agirarsi indisturbato per le strade, dove la violenza dimora dentro la pelle delle persone come un verme.

Resta il fascino dell'eroe ai margini, con il suo codice morale inattaccabile e con le sue debolezze, quello che affascina nel noir e nell'hard boiled

"E immagino che ciò che ho imparato sia una lezione che gli anni o il mio costante pensare a me stesso avevano iniziato a nascondermi; e cioè che al mondo le persone più coraggiose e leali e pronte ad amare hanno raramente le caratteristiche fisiche degli eroi o le aureole dei santi. In realtà i loro volti sono precisamente come quelli che si potrebbero ritrovare a caso nella coda di un supermercato, le loro caratteristiche fisiche così comuni e banali che è difficile ricordarsi del loro aspetto dieci minuti dopo che si sono allontanati."

Chiudiamo con un altro pezzo citato nel libro, la Rampart Street Parade, musica Dixiland in una rara versione con niente di meno che Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong, & Phil Harris !

Barbara says

3.5 stars

In this 4th book in the 'Dave Robicheaux' series, Detective Robicheaux goes undercover to take down a New Orleans drug lord. Dave's personal life evolves through the series, as he ages, marries (and remarries), raises his daughter, etc. So some readers would probably prefer to read the series in order. Still, the novels can be read as standalones because the mystery in each book is self-contained.

At the beginning of the book, Detective Dave Robicheaux - who works for the Sheriff's Office in New Iberia, Louisiana - is transporting two convicted killers to death row. The jailbirds are Jimmie Lee Boggs - a sociopathic multiple murderer, and Tee Beau Latolais - a hapless young man who claims he's innocent. The transport goes wrong, Boggs gets hold of a gun, and the convicts get away after Dave is shot and his partner is killed.

Dave, who's recently widowed and raising his adopted daughter Alafair, recuperates for several months before going back to work. However, the shooting preys on Dave's mind, and he vows to recapture Boggs. So when the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) asks Dave to go undercover in New Orleans, to help take down a drug lord, the fact that Jimmie Lee Boggs has been spotted in 'The Big Easy' is an added inducement

to take the job.

Posing as a disaffected former cop who plans to get rich by selling drugs, Dave makes the acquaintance of Tony Cardo - a New Orleans gangster who runs a drug syndicate. Tony is a mobbed up crook, but Dave has some empathy for the man because - like Dave - Tony is a Vietnam vet with deep psychic scars from the war. Moreover, Tony is a solicitous father to his disabled little boy.

Still, it's Dave job to get Tony arrested, and he means to do just that. It so happens that Dave's best friend, ex-cop Clete Purcell, now runs a night club/bar in New Orleans. Clete wants to help with the sting operation, so Dave convinces the DEA to put Clete on the payroll, so he can help take Tony down. Clete is a big, tough guy who eats too much, drinks too much, and gets involved with too many wrong women - but he has a heart of gold where Dave and his family are concerned.

Once Dave's ensconced in New Orleans, he gets re-acquainted with his former sweetheart Bootsie, whom he abruptly deserted several decades ago. Since then, Dave went to war and became a fall down drunk. Dave's now a recovering alcoholic, and finds himself falling in love with Bootsie all over again. The Dave-Bootsie romance is complicated by the fact that Bootsie doesn't know Dave is working undercover. In addition, Tony Cardo's extra-marital girlfriend, Kim Dollinger - who has a lot of problems - repeatedly comes to Dave for help.....and possible hanky panky.

As Dave works with the DEA to get Tony arrested, he has to associate with rough gangbangers. This places Dave in very dangerous situations.....and threatens to make Alafair an orphan. Dave also comes up against Jimmie Lee Boggs - who's as murderous as ever.

On the upside, Dave gets to have delicious beignets and coffee at New Orleans Café Du Monde (a treat I've enjoyed myself on occasion. ?)

The story has a rich assemblage of characters, including Dave's colleagues and acquaintances (including Tee Beau Latolais's grandmother); Tony Cardo's bodyguards and underlings; a collection of thugs and murderers; and more. As always, the author does a superb job of capturing the ambiance of southern Louisiana with its mixed population of Acadians, whites, blacks, and others; the swamps and bayous; the spicy Cajun food, the jazz music; recreational fishing, etc. The reader almost feels like a visitor.

Unlike most of James Lee Burke's 'Dave Robicheaux' stories, this is more of a thriller than a mystery. It's not my favorite book in the series, but I enjoyed it, and recommend it to mystery fans.

You can follow my reviews at <https://reviewsbybarsaffer.blogspot....>

Havers says

James Lee Burke naserümpfend als 08/15-Krimiautor abzutun wäre eine grobe Fehleinschätzung seiner Qualitäten. Wie kein anderer Autor dieses Genres versteht er es, die vielen Facetten der menschlichen Natur auszuleuchten, und das macht er besser, als so manch hochgelobter Literat. So auch in „Flamingo“, dem vierten Band der Reihe, in überarbeiteter Neuauflage bei Pendragon erschienen.

Dave Robicheaux ist zurück in New Iberia, der Alltag hat ihn wieder. Das soll aber nicht lange so bleiben, denn es gibt einen neuen Auftrag für ihn und seinen Partner. Die beiden Mörder Jimmie Lee Boggs und Tee Beau Latiolais sollen zu ihrer Hinrichtung ins Staatsgefängnis überführt werden. So weit, so gut, aber Boggs' Helfershelfer haben vorgesorgt. Bei einer kurzen Pause kann dieser eine versteckte Waffe an sich nehmen, und in dem nachfolgenden Feuergefecht wird Robicheauxs Partner Benoit erschossen. Er selbst kann verletzt fliehen, Latiolais verfolgt und erwischt ihn, aber lässt ihn am Leben. An Leib und Seele schwer angeschlagen weiß Robicheaux, dass er nur dann Frieden finden kann, wenn der den Tod seines Partners rächt. Boggs hat sich nach New Orleans abgesetzt und arbeitet dort mittlerweile als Auftragskiller für die Drogenmafia, an deren Spitze Tony Cardo steht. Ein alter Freund bei der DEA verschafft Dave die Möglichkeit, als Undercover Agent in dessen Organisation eingeschleust zu werden und so zwei Fliegen mit einer Klappe zu schlagen. Er soll Cardo ans Messer liefern und kann Boggs für die Ermordung Benoits bezahlen lassen. Wenn es denn so einfach wäre...

Schaut man sich Robicheaux und seinen Gegenspieler Cardo genauer an, kann man sich des Eindrucks nicht erwehren, als ob letztgenannter die dunkle Seite des Protagonisten verkörpert, schleppt er doch wie dieser auch die Wunden, die Vietnam in seiner Seele hinterlassen hat, bis heute mit sich herum.

Gut und böse, schwarz und weiß. Auf den ersten Blick scheint so, als ob Burke diese Gegensätze verwenden würde, um seine Figuren zu klassifizieren. Aber das täuscht, denn auf den zweiten Blick zeigt sich das ganze Spektrum von Grautönen der menschlichen Existenz, die durch viele Faktoren bestimmt wird. Das Milieu, in das jemand hineingeboren wird. Die Brüche in den Biografien, verursacht durch einschneidende Erlebnisse in der Vergangenheit, die bis in die Gegenwart reichen.

Burke wertet nicht, lässt die Moralkeule an Ort und Stelle. Es sind die Handlungen seiner Figuren, die uns Lesern die ganze Bandbreite dessen, was wir Menschsein nennen, aufzeigen. Wie immer großartig und beeindruckend. Nachdrücklich empfohlen!

Jim Thomas says

This, the fourth in the Dave Robicheaux series, is one of the best that I've read. Offhand, the only one that comes to mind that I like better is Jolie Blon's Bounce. To each his own. I can't explain lucidly why I recall it more than others but it's just a fact. It's all subjective. I'm not sure even professional reviewers can claim real objectivity. A Morning for Flamingos surprised me with Burke's ability to paint characters that are never even close to one dimensional; characters I cared about and felt empathy for almost against my will. More than a good mystery, I agree with many others that Burke at his best is one of the better authors of contemporary literature. I recommend this one to anyone who loves books. Even if you are not a mystery fan give this one a try. I think you will be satisfied.

Mal Warwick says

When you think of Southern writers, the names William Faulkner, Thomas Wolfe, Robert Penn Warren, Tennessee Williams, Margaret Mitchell, James Dickey, and Harper Lee may come to mind. I've read many books by these and other illustrious authors from the American South, but none has called to mind a more evocative picture of the region than the superb detective novels in James Lee Burke's Dave Robicheaux

series. However, chances are slim that you'll find Burke on any list of eminent Southern writers, since genre fiction apparently doesn't qualify as Literature. Too bad, because the man writes like an angel.

The Cajun detective, Dave Robicheaux, a twice-wounded Vietnam vet and former New Orleans cop, has returned to law enforcement in this fourth of the twenty novels that comprise the series to date. He's back with the sheriff's department in southern Louisiana's New Iberia parish to earn enough money to get himself out of hock.

While transporting two convicted killers from the local jail to the state pen, where they're destined for the electric chair, Robicheaux's fellow deputy sheriff does something stupid. The killers escape, grievously wounding Robicheaux and killing his partner. Months later, even as he teams up with the DEA to go undercover with the New Orleans Mob, he is fixated on hunting down the man who nearly killed him, a psychopath named Jimmie Lee Boggs. The tale that unfolds is deliciously complex and compulsively suspenseful, and it celebrates the rich tapestry of sights, sounds, and smells that is southern Louisiana. This is not a tourist's-eye view of the South but a deeply textured portrait by a native.

Twice winner of the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar award for best novel of the year and named a Grand Master of the field, James Lee Burke is 78 years old as of this writing. His daughter, Alafair Burke, is a crime writer in her own right, author of eleven novels and a long list of articles in law journals. (She is a Professor of Law at Hofstra Law School.)

Aditya says

The first series to get three consecutive 5 stars from me, A Morning for Flamingoes keeps Burke's purple patch going. Compelling characters, indelible dialogues, lyrical descriptions and a unique writing style that pulls off the finest of tightrope acts - where the violence remains vicious plumelling the narrative at every stage but never upsetting its realism.

The plot where Robicheaux has to infiltrate a drug lord's circle of confidants and gain incriminating evidence against him is nothing but the tapestry on which Burke weaves his magic. It is nice but the characters turn it into something memorable.

The alcoholic ex-cop Dave Robicheaux when removed from the vortex of constant self vilification and an urge or need for self destruction is essentially a righteous man. Yet what makes him different (and Burke so good) is that so far in the series he had never gone up against the antagonists for the inherent nobility in it. In Heaven's Prisoners his vengeance drives him, In Black Cherry Blues his misplaced sense of loyalty gets him in trouble and in this one his need to restore his broken pride makes him succumb yet again to a world where vice is a virtue and even the virtuous are vicious.

The secondary characters are equally strong. The love interest is not just a token throwaway or a tepid afterthought, she has a poignant story to tell in her own right. The femme fatale is always hard but never cold. Tony Cardo, the eccentric drug dealer is flippant and frequently glosses over what he does for living. Whether he displays a complete lack of morality or he hides a nightmare that he will recognize what he is truly is and not like it is left open to interpretation. All of them start life looking like a compilation of discarded drafts from crime fiction 101 and end up being the cornerstones of the story.

All the characters want some degree of absolution but will settle for some answers. However they are of the

kind that no confused priest or condescending shrink can provide. There is a small but brilliant scene when Robicheaux goes for a confession and comes back empty-handed. The central theme of search for redemption means the book ends on a more optimistic note than its predecessors and provides a fitting closure from both the character and narrative standpoint.

With this book Burke in my estimation joins Chandler and Ellroy as the best crime writers of all time. Chandler is more entertaining, Ellroy more labyrinthine but Burke scores over both of them when it comes to characterization. Rating - 5/5.

Ctgt says

And I suppose that what I have learned is a lesson that the years, or self concern, had begun to hide from me, namely, that the bravest and most loyal and loving people in the world seldom have heroic physical characteristics or the aura of saints. In fact, their faces are like those of people whom you might randomly pull out of a supermarket line, their physical makeup so nondescript and unremarkable that it's hard to remember what they look like ten minutes after they walk out of a room.

I don't follow many ongoing series but Burke keeps pulling me back into this one with his writing. I also like the fact that Burke never keeps Robicheaux in the same place career wise. I'm only four books in but this series still seems fresh.

Dave is back with a law enforcement gig and has a very close brush with death that serves as the pivot for the rest of the story. Dave doesn't like the way he handled himself in the situation and ends up working undercover with the DEA as a form of self reproach. Burke uses this assignment to once again point out that very little in life is black and white. So many shades of gray.

Of course Clete shows up again but seems to have straightened himself out a bit

"Where are you?" Clete said.

"At Tony's."

*"Can you talk, or do you want to call
me back from somewhere else?"*

"What is it?"

"Nate Baxter's in the bar."

"I see."

"He says he's here if you want to talk to him."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

*"You know Nate. Always looking inside his
pants to make sure of his gender."*

Gotta love Clete.

Even though I've never been to Louisiana, Burke seems to be able to transport me there.

*The sky was black, the windows fogged with humidity,
and white veins of lightning
pulsated in the bank of thunderheads out on the Gulf.*

*The sun came up red and hot above the tree line
in the east, and the fog that clung to the bottom
of the coulee was as pink as blood diffused in water.*

*I came out of the trees and drove through
a wintergreen field that was
filled with snowy egrets and blue herons
feeding by a grassy pond. Ahead
I could see the coast, the palm fronds whipping
in the wind, and the waves
cresting and blowing out on Lake Borgne
and the Gulf. The air was cool and
flecked with sunlight and smelled like
salt and distant rain. And I realized
that in the west the sun had broken through
the gray seal of clouds, and left a rip in
the sky like a yellow and purple rose.*

What can I say? I really enjoy his writing.

Carol. says

With some series, you fall in love with the main characters. Watch with interest as they confront their problems, admire their decisions, root for them during lows, and celebrate the victories. Dave Robicheaux is the protagonist in James Lee Burke's series of the same name, and I'm not particularly sure I like him (Robicheaux, that is, not Burke). I do know one thing, however—I'm in love with Burke's ability to bring a setting to life. In fact, if Burke ever leaves the mystery gig and heads into travel writing, I'll be there in a hot minute:

“It has stopped raining now, and the air was clear and cool, the sky dark except for a lighted band of purple clouds low on the western horizon. I drove through the parking lot to the back of the building, the flattened beer cans and wet oyster shells crunching under my tires, and through the big fan humming in the back wall I could hear the zydeco band pounding it out.”

further uncensored thoughts at : <http://clsiewert.wordpress.com/2014/0...>

Chris Birdy says

Another riveting novel in the Dave Robicheaux series. Although wounded he agrees to go undercover to smoke out some New Orleans dope dealers. This story is action packed, brutal and part of his eternal quest for peace and happiness.

Mike says

Great book!

James Lee Burke is an amazing writer. I have read a lot of his Dave Robicheaux novels. This is one of his best books. I highly recommend it.

Sherie Giulante says

I love all of the Dave Robicheaux series. It's a series you can read over and over and not get tired of!

I love all of the Dave Robicheaux series. It's a series you can read over and over and not get tired of!

Jim says

I am amazed at James Lee Burke's writing skills. The books in the Dave Robicheaux series keep getting better. No other author that I have read has shown such skill in portraying life in New Orleans and the bayous of Louisiana. When you read one of these books you can almost smell and taste New Orleans. But the New Orleans in these stories are not ones that will appeal to tourists or families. The characters in his stories are fascinating, complex, sometimes evil. For those who are not familiar with Dave Robicheaux he is a Vietnam veteran, an alcoholic, twice married, an on and off again law enforcement officer, a small business man, a father to an adopted daughter, and one of the most complex characters in modern day fiction.

In this story Robicheaux has rejoined the New Iberia police force in order to pay off debts incurred during Heaven's Prisoners. He and his partner are transporting a pair of prisoners to Angola when things go wrong. His partner is killed, he is left for dead in a ditch, and the prisoners escape. While recuperating from the physical wounds he is dealing with emotional wounds that are not as easily healed. A friend from the DEA recruits him to go undercover believing this will help him and to stop the questioning of his abilities. The plan ... a sting operation to nail local mob boss Tony Cardo (a.k.a "Tony C"). Robicheaux agrees when he finds out that Jimmie Lee Boggs, one of the prisoners he was transporting, is working for Tony.

This is a story with many plots and subplots. Robicheaux finds himself drawn to Cardo and a girlfriend from his youth reenters his life. It was interesting to see that Robicheaux developed a bond with Cardo. The lines between good and evil are not always distinct. I think it is Robicheaux's humanness when confronted with so much evil that makes him so compelling. His apparent ability to retain this while dealing with his own

demons and his compassion for others.

Barry says

I had missed *A Morning for Flamingos*, one of the earlier books in Burke's Dave Robicheaux series, which is not surprise since I am never up in the morning. Had it been *An Evening*, or even an afternoon, for *Flamingos*, I am confident that I would have read it earlier.

In any case, it was another marvelous effort from a superb author. Burke uses the English language with skill far beyond that of most writers and he does so with the color and complexity of Louisiana's culture. The cajun, acadian, Southern, French and backwater-swamp elements combine with random scraps from here and there to form something unique in the world and Burke uses his considerable talent to draw the reader in and allow him or her to feel and taste that culture in all its splendor, simplicity, purity and depravity.

In the beginning of the book, Dave is shot by one of the prisoners that he and his incompetent partner are transporting to a dark place called Angola State Prison. His recovery is long and tortuous which fills him with doubt and misgivings about his life and about life.

Then, unexpectedly, a chance to track down and bring in the evildoer who shot him appears. Robicheaux has agreed to go undercover, for the DEA, as a failed cop turned bad by circumstances. His task is to catch a major mafia boss in the course of a significant drug transaction; an simple and easy ruse where, according to the DEA boss, nothing could possibly go wrong. As you have already guessed, everything does go wrong or at least differently than was anticipated.

It was great fun to go back to an earlier point in Dave's career and get a sense for some of the events that formed the older Robicheaux. In fact, there are a couple other early books in the series that I will eventually read. Since Burke is older than dirt, and me, for that matter, who knows how many additional Robicheaux books will be forthcoming.

Not being one of those people whose reviews are long as the book being reviewed, let me wrap this up here. The book can easily be read as a stand alone novel but knowing a bit about Robicheaux helps one appreciate many of the nuances. In any case, it is a damn fine story that I unreservedly recommend to anyone who enjoys an extremely well written thriller.

Hendrik says

Solider Südstaaten-Krimi. Detective Dave Robicheaux zeigt sich ganz als die genre-typische Ermittlerfigur. Ein in die Jahre gekommener, trockener Alkoholiker und Vietnam-Veteran, der von den Geistern seiner Vergangenheit verfolgt wird. Der Plot ist nicht besonders originell, eine Undercover-Aktion im Drogenmilieu von New Orleans, sowie die Suche nach einem flüchtigen Häftling. Zwar keine großen Überraschungen, aber die Szenerie Louisianas gibt der Story einen interessanten Hintergrund.

Cathrine ?? says

5★

“The Robicheaux novels are one of the crowning glories of mystery fiction.” John Connolly

Often a reader is engaged in trying to figure out or second-guess the bad guys but equal scrutiny must be given to Dave Robicheaux and friends. With one foot in and the other one out, he's intensely complex with a brain split right down the middle. Carl Jung would have loved this guy. I don't know how he keeps it together. Off the booze, down at the Café du Monde almost every morning eating beignets, po'boys for lunch, then later, red beans and dirty rice with boudin for dinner—and then there's the company he keeps.

This one is my favorite in the series so far. The action is intelligently restrained, sharing the spotlight with superb characters, poetical landscapes, and mouth watering dialogue while plumbing the depths of human souls in varying stages of unrest. *“Individuals in search of redemption”* Connolly would say, some of whom are trying to do the right and honorable thing. But hold on *podna*. Dave is trying to be a good guy by helping bring down the bad guy. But he likes and partly admires the bad guy and the bad guy likes and admires him. JLB had me thinking of Tony C as a *bon ami*. See? I need Freud's couch to lie down on and work this shite out. And Clete Purcell is back! With friends like him enemies will be closer. It was almost too much for me in one book. Local craft beer was necessary to keep my inner turmoil at sea level (Barrel House Big Sir Double IPA). I'm so grateful it is not necessary to attend Dave's AA meetings and drink Dr. Peppers to cope. I don't know how he does it.

Ah Jimmy, *cher*, you have cast the *gris gris* on me, you.

Of special note for fans: Via live chat a couple of days ago JLB said #21 titled Robicheaux has been delivered to his publisher and writing on #22 recently begun. Hmm, how many smiley emoticons can fit in this review? ??

If you've been tempted to try these out but daunted by the entire collection they will stand on their own and this one would be a great choice to pull out of the pack—all the stars plus a beer toast.

Michael Martz says

James Lee Burke's 'A Morning for Flamingos' continues the winning streak for novels in the Robicheaux series. It's the 4th, each is better than the last, and there's a couple dozen more to go.

'Flamingos' begins with Dave Robicheaux back on the local police force. Along with an incompetent partner, he's transporting a couple prisoners to a different facility when they manage to escape. One's a stone-cold killer, the other a young kid who decides to give Robicheaux a break by not killing him when he had the chance. In the subsequent effort to track down the escapees, Dave is talked into embedding himself as a disgraced cop-on-the-make in the local Mafia organization by the Feds. As with all the Robicheaux novels to date, violence, romance, tough talk, backstabbing, etc. ensue. Good guys win in the end, but not without some important topics being approached, particularly those related to soldiers who fought in Vietnam. It's a sort of time capsule of a period when Vietnam was still in mind, when crack cocaine was just ramping up, and when cops' jobs and approaches were considerably different.

Robicheaux is a fascinating character. His key trait seems to be adherence to his principles, which

fortunately are in alignment with our laws. He's a real badass who's happened to get shot and beaten up in every book so far, but he always manages to recover. He has a 'softer' side, if you want to call it that, with a young girl he adopted at home, and is on his 3rd wife by the end of *Flamingos*. He makes questionable decisions at times, which typically are principle-driven. In that respect he reminds me a bit of the Reacher character in Lee Child's series. In thinking about it, I guess his 2nd true trait is that he's action-oriented. There's not a lot of introspection involved in what he undertakes, although his past (he's a recovering alcoholic and Vietnam vet) does tend to haunt him. All in all, a great character in my favorite genre.

I continue to marvel at Burke's writing. It's relatively easy in this genre, at least judging by what's out there now, to let the story drive the writing and most of the prose tends to be very straightforward and simple. Burke seems incapable of that style. His descriptive technique, particularly when talking about the Louisiana physical environment and the local language, adds a layer to his books that is extremely rare.

Wendy says

A Morning for Flamingos

James Lee Burke is a genuinely fantastic writer, no one writes better mysteries. I have been devouring his Dave Robicheaux series. I can't read fast enough.

Jeff Dickison says

Wow! I'm just in awe of Burke's writing skills. I know of no other author who can match his ability to describe a scene, a landscape, and most importantly a character. I've read most of his Robicheaux novels out of order and it doesn't detract a bit from their enjoyment. Highly recommended.
