



## Black Cherry Blues

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Dave Robicheaux's life has not proven to be especially happy--at least not for very long at a stretch. First, his mother deserted her family for the excitement of the honky-tonk. Then, his father, an illiterate but loving Cajun, was killed in an avoidable accident on an offshore oil rig. Shortly thereafter, he found himself in Vietnam slogging through the rice paddies as a reluctant participant in the war. Nevertheless, Robicheaux persevered and ultimately found himself working as a detective for the New Orleans Police Department while drinking a great deal more than he could handle. Forced to leave the police department when his partner went bad, Robicheaux moved to the bayou country of southwestern Louisiana with his wife and their informally adopted Salvadoran daughter. There he enjoyed a brief idyll, shattered when his new position as a detective with the New Iberia Sheriff's Office resulted in the murder of his wife in a particularly callous manner.

Still, Robicheaux survived the event, and as BLACK CHERRY BLUES begins he has put his alcoholism on hold with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous and tried to put his life back in order operating a fish dock on the old family homestead. Unfortunately, Robicheaux's past returns to haunt him. A former college roommate drops into his life with a tale of murder and financial hanky-panky involving shady land acquisitions in Montana at the behest of a psychotic with ties to the Mafia. Robicheaux's efforts to clear his former friend from a charge of murder provokes a threat to the safety of his foster daughter. Moreover, when Robicheaux endeavors to persuade those who would harm his charge to desist, he is himself arrested and charged with homicide.

Unable to bring himself to take the easy way out, Robicheaux mortgages his future, makes bond, and takes off for Montana to confront those who seem determined to place him behind bars. Once there, he pursues a dangerous course of action which places him in constant danger and leads to still more murders. Through it all, however, Robicheaux endures--proving his innocence and extracting an appropriate punishment for the guilty. BLACK CHERRY BLUES is a well-written and intriguing novel about a man visited with enough challenges to test the patience of Job. It is to be hoped that Burke will see fit to chronicle Robicheaux's further adventures.

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