

Book: *After the Fire*

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In the 1945 Oscar-winning movie, “The Lost Weekend”, Ray Milland gives a riveting portrayal of an alcoholic. The film, based on a book by Charles R. Jackson, is still regarded today for its portrayal of alcoholism and addiction. Although the movie includes a caring girlfriend and brother, it still centers on the alcoholic main character, his struggle with addiction, and his inevitable downfall. But what about those who struggle with a loved one’s addiction?

Best-selling mystery writer, J. A. (Judith) Jance, has brought us the book “After the Fire”. Unlike “The Lost Weekend”, Jance portrays her own personal struggle of being married to an alcoholic. “After the Fire” chronicles the author’s journey of living with an alcoholic, her own denial as his life spirals downward dragging her with him, her awakening, the divorce, his death, and her eventual triumph.

During her years of marriage, Jance composed poetry that captured her feelings and circumstances happening in her life. Written in secret and kept hidden, the poems were finally published as a chapbook in 1984. The following year would be the debut of her first novel that would begin a career as a popular mystery writer.

“After the Fire” was re-issued in 2004 with the addition of prose that gives insight into where she was and what was taking place at the time each poem was written – and why they were written. It is a very personal and candid description of a life spent under the weight of alcoholism, but also one person’s struggle to find herself.

In speaking about “After the Fire”, Jance has said, “My life is far richer because of this book. My hope is that others will find

answers here as well – answers and their own share of strength and courage.”

An audio edition of “After the Fire” has now been released, that finds Jance telling her story with her own voice. Reading in a soft matter-of-fact voice, she brings added emotion and feeling to the already compelling prose and poetry.

*I walk in fog
Its velvet touch caresses me
And hides the hurt.*

*Beyond the fog, the sun
Shines clear and bright.
I must keep moving,
I have earned the light.*

(From *Fog* by J.A. Jance)

