

LEE'S LESSON (PREVIEW)

DITCH LANE DIARIES 4



D. F. JONES

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DEDICATION

To my loving parents, I will miss you forever.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

2017 IRC Book Awards for Best Paranormal Romance

D. F. Jones began her career as a broadcast consultant at the ABC Affiliate in Nashville, which led her to open an advertising agency over twenty years ago.

Writing not only is a source of creative expression, but it also releases stress. Writing takes her to a place where anything is possible, and fiction is a place made of dreams.

D. F. Jones is happily married to the love of her life with two gorgeous sons. Besides writing and reading, she loves attending music concerts and the theater. She's an avid fan of the Tennessee Titans, MT Blue Raiders, and enjoys working in her flower gardens.

Whether it's angels or demons, time travel adventures, witches and wizards, or ghosts, her books are action-packed with supernatural, suspense, and romantic elements.

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PROLOGUE



1986

The Battle of Arrington

Lee's heart hammered wildly as she walked out of an abandoned hunting cabin to join the other warriors in the wooded area. A misty fog rolled in from the nearby creek. She looked up into the inky sky, watching it turn a pale blue. The sun barely peeked over the horizon.

She didn't fear for her safety, but she did for those she loved. Her adrenaline kicked in as she looked at her daughter, Ruby, and her husband, Reed, and her childhood friends, Anna and Jerry. They had enlisted with the Angel Armed Forces (AAF), and this would be their first angelic battle to save their friend Sandy who'd been kidnapped by Luc and his army of the fallen.

Lee double-checked her weapons. She had a divine sword calibrated to her energy fields along with varying sized daggers plus death stars for hand to hand combat.

She'd dreamed of this battle many times over the last three decades, and each dream ended with the same outcome. Sweat trickled down her spine as her mouth went bone dry. She'd trained with Ruby and her mortal friends. They knew the drills and the angels they would fight alongside.

“Mom. Breathe. Your face is turning red.” Ruby squeezed her hand.

“Keep your eyes open. Fight to kill. Do not second-guess your instincts. Remember, demon angel wings are solid black.”

“I’m ready.” She pointed to Reed, Anna, and Jerry. “We’re all ready.”

Row after row of fierce warrior angels stood wearing golden armor, their wings shimmering bright light. Each angel carried various divine weapons of mass destruction, and they waited on instructions from their commander, the Archangel, Michael.

Most angels were tall except Michael. He wasn’t short but stocky. He was also the most seasoned warrior in Heaven. Lee knew they’d be victorious in battle with him leading them, but at what cost?

The thought of losing her daughter filled Lee with such anxiety. Ruby’s infant son needed her. Reed needed her too.

And the idea of never seeing her darling Harry again, took her distress to the next level. She fought the urge to scream but tamped down the feelings so she wouldn’t give the demons an upper hand in the pending conflict.

Last night, Harry and Lee had said their goodbyes in their bedroom at Everglade Farms. Unable to sleep, he held her in his arms through the night and into the early morning hours with no mention of the battle or the possible outcomes. Instead, they reminisced about a lifetime of fond memories.

Harry was her rock, and he knew what she faced today.

Oh, my sweet husband, I must push you out of my thoughts so that I won’t falter.

The time had come to foster bravery, to wipe out all negativity, and to focus her eyes on the prize.

Luc.

Her teeth clenched. She should’ve used her powers to kill Luc years ago, but the Spirit of Man forbade it. Luc feared her because, even in her aging mortal suit, some of her abilities exceeded the Morning Star’s, and he knew it.

The difference—Luc was immortal, and she was not.

She’d fought with the Angel Armed Forces before and knew the protocols. Most of her encounters in the previous years were skir-

mishes at best. Only once had she fought in Hades, after learning who and what she was. That had been over thirty years ago. She'd been so naïve, and inexperienced, but ready and willing to give her all.

Thunder rumbled, and dark clouds rolled swiftly across the sky.

Lee watched with her unit as Michael signaled to the AAF.

Sounds from the trumpet blowers shook the ground.

Shrieking battle cries of the warrior angels filled the air.

Lightning bolts struck the ground and crackled.

She blocked out the noise and zoned in on the enemy.

The whipping wind lashed her face as she raced toward Luc's foothold with daggers in each hand. She released a deep guttural roar the moment she made lethal contact with the first demon. "Die beast."

The surprise attack gave the AAF a temporary advantage as her team ripped through the unsuspecting demon angels.

In minutes, the demons regrouped and unleashed chaos.

During battle, Lee's supernatural strength and speed kicked in. She didn't take time to swipe the dead demon's blood from her weapons before moving onto the next one.

Ducking a blow, she slid on her knees and plunged her dagger deep into the demon's sternum with a jarring pain that went up her arms. She pushed the brute off with her right foot, rolled, and reached for the sword sheathed at her side.

The demon took a chunk of her shoulder before she sliced off his head with her blade. Her adrenaline kept the pain at bay.

To the left of Lee, the AAF archery division released flaming hot arrows of blue energy in rapid succession, dropping the human guards stationed on the roofs. The guards' flesh exploded and disintegrated before hitting the ground.

She fought hard against the demons with her divine sword and daggers, weaving in and out with precision, cutting the demons to ash. She clashed with body and blades against the next beast.

His mouth split open in a terrifying grin revealing jagged teeth oozing saliva. "We meet again, crossbreed."

The demon lost his footing in the mud, and she knocked the saber out of his hands.

“Yeah, I don’t remember you.” She plunged divine steel into his heart.

Blue energy spheres with nuclear fission properties hit the ground, spraying debris into her eyes. She blinked several times.

Lee’s guardian angel, Erinelle, fought beside her. She blew into her eyes, and her vision restored.

“Thanks.” Lee moved forward and didn’t look back as another legion of warrior angels entered the playing field of horrors.

On the other side of the meadow, her daughter fell to her knees in combat against a female demon.

Lee screamed, “No, no, no.”

She raced toward Ruby. She had to reach her in time.

Please, Lord, help me.

A crushing blow to her side stole her breath. She tumbled to the ground and rolled several times before regaining her momentum.

Erinelle attacked the shrieking demon. “Go to Ruby. I’ll be right behind you.” She sliced the demon’s midsection severing his torso from his trunk.

Lee and Reed reached Ruby at the same time.

Frantic, she yelled, “Ruby, Ruby, are you alright—”

“I’m okay.”

Relieved, Lee glanced up to find demons circling them.

By the saints, they’d used Ruby as bait. The demons attacked from the sky and the ground. Surrounded by enemy forces with no way to retreat, they must fight to the death. The demons would not take them prisoner.

Lee had dreamed about the battle. She’d witnessed the moment of truth. Regardless, and without hesitation, she forged onward to save her daughter’s life.

Erinelle and other AAF warriors unleashed on the beasts. Lee looked at Reed. They were gaining ground.

Maybe her dream had it wrong. Perhaps everything would be all right.

Suddenly, Hell’s fire spread through her.

A demon’s blade had pierced her back.

She was burning inside and out.

She looked at Ruby. Thousands of images flooded her mind. Her parents, Harry, George and Ruby's births, their childhood, so much laughter and joy, giving way to her sinking heartache and pain.

Life was precious, and too many mortals wasted time on stupid stuff. Not Lee. Her gifts from The Creator had saved many. Her blessings overflowed. Little Joe in Harry's arms was the last image revealed.

"Mama, don't leave me," Ruby cried.

She smiled at her daughter as tears slid down her cheeks. "I love you," she mouthed.

Everything went black.

Seconds later, she woke in Erinelle's arms. They flew above Luc's compound, above the clouds. The brilliant blue sky seemed endless.

Her eyes flickered. "Is this Heaven?"

The angel smiled. "Oh, my darling girl, Heaven is so much more than blue skies and sunshine. Heaven is love."

"What's next?"

"You're going home. Stay with me," Erinelle pleaded.

They materialized inside her bedroom at Everglade Farms. Erinelle laid her gently on the bed. She cried out in pain.

"You knew what would happen today?"

Lee wept. "Did I? It freakin' burns. I'm not ready to die. My family needs me."

The angel knelt beside the bed, placing her hand on the entry wound. She grimaced. "Saints and sinners. We need a healer. I'll call for Raphael."

"He's fighting with Jerry," she sighed.

Erinelle went down on bended knees and bowed her head. Blue light emitted around her form. She closed her eyes and prayed in an indecipherable language of the angels.

Lee didn't believe in accidents or coincidences. She did believe in divine intervention. She prayed for Ruby and Reed. She prayed for Anna and Jerry, and she prayed for Sandy's safe return.

D. F. JONES

She wasn't afraid of death in this realm because death would take her to Heaven.

Destiny brought her guardian angel, Erinelle.

Divine Providence brought Lee a life full of love.

The years seemed to fade away.

She had no regrets.

“COMING IN ON A WING AND A
PRAYER”



1950
Everglade Farms, Tennessee

LEE QUICKLY DRESSED and jogged down the front stairs. She met her father, Joseph, in the kitchen where he sipped black coffee and read the morning newspaper. She leaned over and kissed his forehead. “Good morning, Dad.”

He folded the paper, then placed it on the table. “Sleep well?”

“Like a baby.” She poured herself a cup of coffee.

“Are you ready to go and pick up your mother?” Dad looked as though he hadn’t slept in days.

“I’ll drive.” She quickly ate a banana and gulped the rest of the java.

Without much chitchat, they left the house and got into her father’s 1947 Plymouth Special Deluxe four-door sedan. She backed out of the garage and drove down the drive and onto Campbell Ridge Road.

Two weeks earlier, her mother, Jenny, had collapsed from a debilitating headache while working in her herb garden. Everglade’s doctor had moved his practice to Nashville so one of their family friends,

Blaine Glenn, suggested Sacred Heights Sanatorium specializing in various maladies.

Reluctantly, Dad took mom to the sanatorium while she finished her final semester in college. Mom seemed to respond well to the treatments, so Lee returned Easter weekend to go with her father to bring her mother home.

Dad tapped his foot impatiently. "I've never been away from your mother more than one day since the day we said our I do's. I didn't want to take her to Sacred Heights, but I didn't know what else to do. The county hospital kept pumping her full of drugs and then sent her home. It's awful watching someone I love in pain, and there's not a dad-blame thing I can do about it."

At the stop sign, she looked both ways before taking a left onto Highway 99 for the forty-five-minute journey to Sacred Heights. "You did the right thing. I got in so late last night. What did the doctor say when he called yesterday?"

"Not much. The physician used electroshock therapy on your mom. Did I mention that? It seemed to work. The staff wouldn't allow phone calls during her stay. Of course, I called anyway, but the doctor repeated the same thing, no calls or visitors while undergoing treatment. I didn't want to worry you at school, but I've been going stir crazy without your mother."

"You should've called me. I could've come home. Murfreesboro is not that far of a commute. And I'm sure Mom's fine."

She had a few lingering doubts. She'd scoured the college library regarding sanatoriums, and one of the most recent articles mentioned electroshock therapy (ECT or electroconvulsive therapy) as well as hydrotherapy treatments used for a variety of medical conditions. However, one noted medical journal stated concerns over the abuse of ECT and possibly long-term memory effects, but she kept those thoughts to herself.

Joseph linked his fingers together, rotating thumb over thumb. "If they hurt your mother in any way, I'll kill that doctor."

"I did some research at the library, and Sacred Heights is rated one of the best in the state of Tennessee. We must trust the doctors and

staff did their best, and if she's coming home today, that's good news. We'll celebrate Easter together. I'll bake a ham and cook all of mom's favorites."

He gave her a weak smile. "I hope Jenny doesn't think I abandoned her. She was furious when the nurse took her away. She screamed vulgarities at me. I didn't know she even knew those words."

"She was in pain. You know, most of the time, when her headaches pass, she doesn't remember what she's done."

Lee bit her tongue.

No need to tell him how mean her mother had been in the throes of such pain. She hated to go off to college and leave her mom's care to her father, but on the other hand, she wasn't subject to her tirades. The painful memories still burned inside her.

* * *

Christmas morning while her father gathered wood for the fireplace, Lee walked into the den next to the decorated evergreen. She stopped in her tracks when she looked into her mom's dazed dilated eyes.

She wore a grim expression indicating her unstable condition and spoke in a heated voice. "That dress makes you look like a whore, and your lipstick screams Jezebel. Go upstairs and change before your father comes inside."

With caution, she said, "Mom, you bought the dress and the lipstick."

Jenny reared her open hand to smack Lee's face, and for the first time in her life, she stood up to her mother, grabbing her wrists. The look of shock or possibly fear reflected in her mom's eyes, but she had no choice but to subdue her.

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I don't know what makes me lash out. Oh, please forgive me, darling. I never want to hurt you."

Lee pushed the hair away from her mom's face. "No need to apologize. I can't imagine having a headache for two straight months."

"I don't know if it's the headaches or the pills. I don't feel like myself anymore." Her mom plopped onto the sofa and stared into the crackling fire. "Don't tell your father, but when my headaches are in full swing, I try to sleep, but I have horrifying dreams. The devil is out to get us, well, more specifically, he is out to get you, and I fight him until I wake."

"Our dreams sometimes create distractions to hide our deepest fears." She

noticed the dark circles under her mother's eyes. "I hate you're going through such a hard time. I wish there were something I could do to help you. Have you taken your medication this morning?"

Jenny shook her head. "It makes me sleepy. I'm afraid to sleep."

"Does your head hurt?"

"Uh-huh. All the time. I can't remember the last time I went a whole day without pain."

Lee went to the kitchen cabinet where they stored medicine and a first aid kit. She picked up several bottles before finding the one marked, Percodan. She poured her mother a glass of water and gave her the pill. "You don't have to be afraid. I'll be right here. The meds will relax you. You don't have to sleep just rest your eyes, and I'll bring you a cold compress."

Mom's brows furrowed. "But it's Christmas. The turkey and dressing."

"You taught me well. I'll cook, so don't fret. Do you want to go to your bedroom?"

"No. I'll stretch out on the couch. You'll stay close by?" She took Lee's hand and kissed it.

"Of course, I will."

"You're a good daughter. I love you. Don't ever forget it even when I'm snappy."

Her mother dozed on and off for the rest of Christmas Day. Father was none the wiser.

** * **

Lee rolled down her window allowing the warm fragrant breeze to flow inside the car, releasing the stagnant air. She loved driving down Highway 99, especially in the spring. Blooming trees cascaded down the hills with shimmering colors.

She flipped on the radio and fiddled with the dial until landing on Perry Como's, "Some Enchanted Evening" then leaned back in the seat and hummed the tune.

"Harry Glenn's discharge is around your graduation day." Dad grinned.

Her stomach fluttered at the mention of his name. How did her father know she was thinking about Harry? It'd been two years since

he came home on leave. She didn't like talking about her love life. "Hm, that's nice."

Joseph chuckled under his breath. "Hey, stop by the flower shop. I want to buy your mother a dozen yellow roses. She loves them."

"You're such a romantic." She parked in the space at the end of the building. Her father went inside and appeared a few minutes later with a large bouquet of yellow roses and white lilies.

"Gorgeous. Mom will love them."

A few minutes later, they drove up and around a winding road. Several road signs pointed to the visitor's station upon entering the impressive Sacred Heights Sanatorium brick entrance with giant magnolia trees full of buds. The facility reminded her of a European Castle instead of a hospital.

She parked and cut the engine, then grabbed her purse. She rummaged inside until finding the tube of soft pink lipstick, applied, then blotted her lips with a tissue. "Ready?"

"Been ready." Joseph exited the car with the flowers in his left hand.

Walking along the sidewalk and up the steps, she marveled at the Victorian-inspired architecture with four towers, turrets, and even a couple of gargoyles resting on the outer edges.

Several patients milled around outside with staff on the second-floor balcony. Joseph opened the door for Lee and entered the grand lobby with a four-level open atrium framed by intricately designed railings topped by a domed skylight. A room to the right held rows of books on cherry bookshelves.

A perky brunette receptionist worked the check-in desk. "Welcome to Sacred Heights Sanatorium. May I help you?"

"I'm here to bring my wife home. Jenny Campbell."

"Oh yes, Dr. Brickman is waiting for you in his office, Mr. Campbell, if you and your guest will sign in."

"This is our daughter."

The woman nodded. Her piercing dark eyes changed to light blue with oblong pupils like a slit in the center.

Lee did a double-take, and the receptionist's eyes returned to normal.

What the heck?

He handed the bouquet to Lee and pulled out his pen from inside his summer jacket. He leaned down and wrote their names on the page of the brown guest ledger. "Where is Jenny?"

The receptionist looked at the nine-foot-tall mahogany clock trimmed in gold against the wood-paneled wall. "It's art day. She's in the craft room on the second floor."

"Is it okay if I go and surprise her?" Lee inquired.

"Certainly. The elevators are at the end of the hall." The woman pointed in the right direction.

The receptionist picked up the phone. "Mr. Joseph Campbell is here for Dr. Brickman." She hung up. "His assistant will be here in a moment to take you to his office."

He turned to Lee. "I'll meet you upstairs after I speak with Dr. Brickman regarding your mom's release."

She handed her father the flowers, then kissed his cheek. "See you soon."

The grandeur of the facility surprised her as she walked along the corridor, then noticed there were no patients on the main floor. She pressed the button to the dome-shaped elevator doors and stepped inside the cherry-paneled walls with brass handrails and hit the second-floor button.

The elevator rose steadily, then silently slid open. A rotten scent hit Lee so hard she nearly vomited but quickly covered her nose and mouth with one hand while looking for a handkerchief in her purse with the other. She exited the elevator looking around for someone to ask for help.

A large mural of angels and demons covered the foyer wall. Suddenly, the celestial beings in the painting began to engage in a battle scene with three-dimensional effects.

Her heart raced, and her throat constricted.

She closed her eyes. Stress did strange things to the mind. She took several breaths, counted to ten, then opened her eyes again. The

mural didn't move, but the angels and demons depicted in the image stared at her.

A cold shiver ran down her spine.

She walked briskly down the hall, looking for the art room. The large windows to the right revealed she was on the top floor, not the second. She stopped at the door and peeked into a small window.

To her utter amazement, a man appeared in a cage with large chains around his neck, wrists, and ankles. She pressed her hands to the door. Visions of the man in grotesque scientific experiments hit her brain with a jolt.

The patient screamed, "Evil is coming. Evil is here. RUN."

Lee sensed the presence of darkness, something she'd been able to do since her childhood but never spoke about it. Prickles of fear rippled on the back of her neck. She glanced to the left and right but didn't see anyone. She investigated the next room through another small window in the door, finding a patient wearing a straitjacket and foaming at the mouth.

Holy crow.

Cold air enveloped her.

The top floor was a far cry from the opulence of the main lobby. Wails from the patients made her tremble.

A handsome man dressed in a doctor's white coat stepped out of one of the rooms with hair as dark as onyx and eyes the color of turquoise blue. "Are you lost?"

"I'm looking for the art room, and somehow I landed on the top floor."

"You're on the acute patient floor," he said. "No visitors are allowed. The art room is on the second floor, not the fourth. May I escort you to the elevator?"

"I pushed the second-floor button. How did I end up here? Those poor patients. Why are they here?"

"The top floor of the sanatorium holds our most severe cases. Patients with schizophrenia, paranoid delusions, and psychopaths reside on the floor. Absolutely no visitors are allowed." He had an air of superiority about him. And, something else nagged her.

She'd met him before, or possibly dreamed of him. Sometimes her dreams came true.

"But one of the patients is in a cage with chains. Why?" she asked, adamant. "No one should be treated so disrespectfully regardless of their condition."

"You must be mistaken. Which patient?"

Lee pointed to the room. "He's in there."

She looked again. The room was empty. Her heart sank.

Am I delusional?

"I swear there was a patient in that room just seconds ago."

"Do you believe in the supernatural?" the man asked with a raised brow.

"I do." She had to believe because weird and unexplainable things happened to her all the time.

He gave her a grin that would've melted most female hearts, but it held no warmth. "I've been told by the staff the fourth floor's haunted. A patient died a violent death in that room over sixty years ago."

She wanted out of here, pronto. "I am sorry to intrude. It wasn't intentional." She went inside the elevator again, and the man pushed the second-floor button as he stepped inside. "Have we met? You look familiar."

He gave her a look. His eyes held a message. She couldn't help but stare. She could've sworn he said, "Yes, I know you." But the man hadn't spoken a word.

Was he a real doctor or a patient?

Either way, she had some seriously bad feelings about the darkly handsome man. She rarely disregarded her instincts. She could spot the good from the bad nine times out of ten. She had a keen intuition. The man riding in the elevator with her was bad with a capital B.

The short ride to the second floor didn't last long. The man held the door open. "Here you go. The art room is down the corridor on the left side. You can't miss it. Do you think you can manage to find it, or would you like me to take you?"

She blushed. "Um, no, thank you. I'll find it. I did press the second-

floor button. I'm not sure how I landed on the fourth floor, but I appreciate your help."

He grabbed her hand and held it firmly. "There are no accidents. I'm sure we'll meet again."

With the touch of his hand, Lee had a more sinister vision—a vision of this same man as one of the beings in the mural with the battle scene. She had an impulse to go back to the fourth floor, but something told her not to.

She exited the elevator and swiveled back to glance at him. The man had simply vanished.

Geez, Louise.

Something eerie, dark, and bizarre lived within the walls of Sacred Heights Sanatorium. The elevator doors closed behind her, and she sighed in relief. Thank God, her mother was leaving the place today. Lee would make sure she'd never return.

* * *

Luc used the fourth floor of Sacred Heights Sanatorium as one of many portal entries around the world which led him and the fallen to Hades. But it was the first time he'd sensed the presence of a celestial angel in the place.

The scent from his real home in Heaven was undeniable. He materialized only to find a mortal, but the female wasn't just a mortal. She was something else entirely.

He waited in spirit form for Daglan, one of the generals in the army of the fallen, to materialize. "Did you recognize the woman walking into the art and craft room? I know her scent but can't place it. Only angels possess that scent from Heaven, but she also smells of a mortal. I want to know everything about her."

Daglan steepled his fingers. "Rumors have surfaced from our spies within the AAF that our father, The Creator, has made a new species to help in the angelic conflict. Maybe, she's one of them."

"Hm. I hardly think the girl is a warrior angel, but she did see Malcolm's ghost. Maybe she's a medium, and her scent is not of this world. I want a full report." Luc watched as the young woman went into the room. "She has untapped powers rolling off her form that I

can't quite put my finger on, and I didn't see any guardians accompanying her, which is odd. If she's a fluke of nature, then I want her on the team. If she is one of The Creator's new projects, I want her even more. Are we clear?"

Daglan bowed low to him. "We are clear, my lord. I'll find you as soon as I complete my inquiries from our spies on the other side."

He grabbed Daglan's arm. "I want to know about her family, friends, anyone we can use as leverage. Got it?"

Daglan nodded and vanished, leaving a slight trace of mist in the air.

Luc floated through the walls into the art room to find the young woman with a patient, Jenny Campbell. He'd interviewed the woman upon her arrival at Sacred Heights once he'd read her file regarding her gift of dreams.

The mortal mind had many components, and he'd learned centuries ago, he could exploit mortals with delusions and other susceptible brain disorders to his benefit in the angelic war that he'd been waging against his father for thousands of years.

Luc had monitored Jenny's dreams and learned they were of him and his fallen angels, so when he first interrogated her, he appeared as an angel of light. She eventually figured out his real identity.

Was the girl her daughter? The one she'd been protecting against demons. He inched closer to eavesdrop on their conversation.

"Mother, you look beautiful. Are you well?" asked the young woman.

Jenny stared right at him.

He placed his forefinger to his lips, transmitting a silent message. "*You mustn't tell her you see me.*"

The female clenched her teeth. "*My daughter is off limits. You may do as you wish to me, but leave her alone.*"

"*I am interested in you. Your good health is my utmost concern. No more headaches. No more visions. But I can change it in a heartbeat. Is that your wish?*"

Jenny didn't reply.

He smiled at her. *"Good girl. I'm not going to hurt your daughter. I am only interested in her gifts as I am interested in yours."*

"She has no gifts. Leave her be."

"Then you have nothing to worry your pretty little head over. You're going home today."

"Mom, what's wrong?" The girl glanced over her shoulder, then looked back at Jenny. "What do you see?"

Jenny blinked several times before standing, then hugged her daughter. "Just looking for your father."

The girl's expression softened. "He's signing your release paperwork. Are your headaches gone?"

"Yes. I haven't had one in over a week."

"So, the shock treatments worked?"

"Yes, they worked."

Luc narrowed his eyes at Jenny. *"Good. No need to share with your daughter about our arrangement. All is well. We'll talk very soon."*

The presence of an AAF warrior entered the area as Luc was about to leave the room. *"Erinelle, my old love. What may I do for you today?"*

The fierce-looking female warrior drew her blade and pointed it at his chest. *"At the bequest of The Creator, you are to desist in your arrangement with Jenny Campbell. She and her family are under the protection of the AAF. Any violation from you or your lackeys will be deemed a threat and may result in swift action."*

Luc held a firm stance, then reared back his head laughing so loudly the more demented patients under his control looked in his direction. *"You have no power here. Tell Father, if he has a problem with me to come Himself next time."*

"You have been warned, he who has no name." Three more AAF warriors descended surrounding Jenny and her daughter just as her husband entered.

His brows popped. *"My, my, my, the girl isn't mortal, but she isn't immortal either. She has the scent of Heaven. I really should thank you for helping me do my work."* Daglan and Luc's wife, Sazae, a demon warrior, flanked him. *"Do we really want a battle here around these poor unfortunate souls?"*

“You prey on the weak-minded. Pick on someone your own size for a change.” Baldric the Warrior flexed his muscled biceps.

Luc laughed again, as Daglan and Sazae drew swords. *“Now, now, children. Baldric’s still a fool. No need to disrupt the serenity of my mood.”* He emitted a low growl. *“But the day is coming when I alone will rule all of the Earth and its inhabitants. Remember the ancient text, my old friends.”* His wings jutted toward the ceiling. *“I’ll bide my time until we meet again.”*

Luc, Daglan, and Sazae materialized inside his lair. “Alert the generals; a battle is brewing regarding this girl and her family.”

Daglan bowed. “As you wish,” then left the room.

“My lord, rest with me. Forget about the AAF and The Creator.” Sazae trailed her long, slender fingers across his chest.

“Damn it. Do you think I want to live on this planet indefinitely? I can’t forget them.” He backhanded her across the face. Her head snapped to the left. She straightened, then she licked the blood from her lip.

“How can I rest? The AAF is taunting me. I will destroy the girl and her family.” He poured a drink at the slate bar with star embellishments. “Come, Sazae, I will heal your wound.”

She went to him, and he placed his hand on her mouth, then kissed her.

“All is well, my lord.”

Luc’s former allies would pay dearly for entering Sacred Heights.



LEE’S LESSON (Ditch Lane Diaries 4) is available in print online at most major bookstores. For signed copies go to DFJonesAuthor.com

Thank you for supporting my work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing the Ditch Lane Diaries saved me.

I tried writing fiction many times over the decades, but the day I downsized my company to care for my mom, the floodgates opened.

My mother read the first three books in the series before her passing. My dad followed her to heaven six months later. Caregivers, especially at-home caregivers, often develop PTSD. Lee and Harry helped me work through my grief. I laughed, cried, and cheered.

Lee's Lesson is a tribute to my loving parents.

I'm not a biblical scholar, but I'm fascinated and intrigued by the stories in the Bible. The collection of ancient texts is considered inspired by the divine. Numerous biblical canons have evolved throughout the centuries. Many ancient texts are omitted, like the Book of Enoch. 1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude mention it.

Books, movies, and television explore the possibilities of other-worldly beings, both in theory and fiction. I recently came across one show, which suggests the Vatican possesses ancient texts that would rock the world.

Faith and belief are individual experiences. It is not my place to judge, agree, or deny another's belief system.

The Ditch Lane Diaries, including Lee's Lesson, is fiction. I love Lee and Harry and trust you will too.

I want to thank my critique partners and my launch team for your suggestions and comments. I thrive working with other creative individuals. I can't thank you enough. I want to thank my developmental editor, Alicia for punching plot holes and pushing my craft to the next level. A shout out to Amanda for creating stellar covers and marketing collaterals.

I want to thank my sweet husband for putting up with my elaborate ideas and overlooking the madness that comes along with the creative process.

I would be remiss not to thank The Creator, The Prince, and Spirit of Man for listening to my prayers and lifting my soul during some of the darkest times of my life and for helping me to move on.

May love light the way!

D. F. Jones

Special note: Song titles are listed for every chapter in the Ditch Lane Diaries. Check out my Spotify playlists for each book. Spotify Search, D.F. Jones, author.