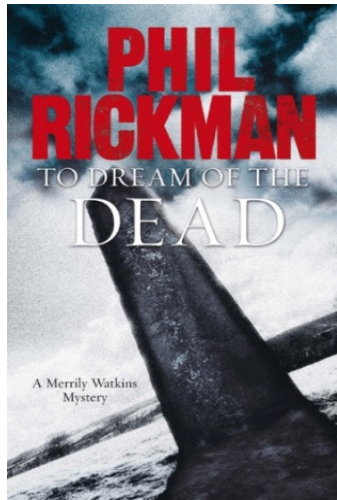


Quercus

Media Release



To Dream of the Dead

By Phil Rickman

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It's December, and the river is rising. The village of Ledwardine has never been flooded in living memory. Within days it will be an island. There's no electricity. The church is serving as a temporary mortuary for two people who drowned. Only one man feels safer; an aggressively-atheist author has been moved, for his own safety, Rushdie-style, into a secluded house just outside the village. Fundamentalist Christians have hated him for years. Now he's offended the Muslims. Bad move.

Meanwhile, archaeologists, assisted by Merrily Watkins' teenage daughter, Jane, are at work in Coleman's Meadow, unearthing an ancient row of standing stones which some people would rather stay buried. The atheist's temporary home is close to the site. And his young wife is becoming conspicuously agitated. Is it the fear of discovery – or the kind of fear that she, of all people, could never disclose? One thing is clear: the last person who's going to be welcome in that house is an exorcist.

With the flood water washing up Church Lane towards the vicarage and the shop running out of cigarettes it looks like a cold and complex Christmas for Merrily Watkins in an ancient community forced to untangle its own history against the swirling uncertainty of the future.

'Merrily is a most original sleuth and an interesting, sparky woman of emotional and spiritual depth. Rickman is an excellent writer, terrific on atmosphere ... The best so far'
– *The Times*

'Compassionate, original and sharply contemporary. Rickman's crime series is one of the best around' – *Spectator*

'First rate. A passionate, flawed modern woman, every bit as concerned with the intricacies of crime as with demons that go bump in the night' – *Daily Mail*

Phil Rickman lives on the Welsh border where he writes and presents the book program Phil the Shelf on BBC Radio Wales. He is the author of ten Merrily Watkins' mysteries, including *The Remains of an Altar* and *The Fabric of Sin*, both published by Quercus.

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