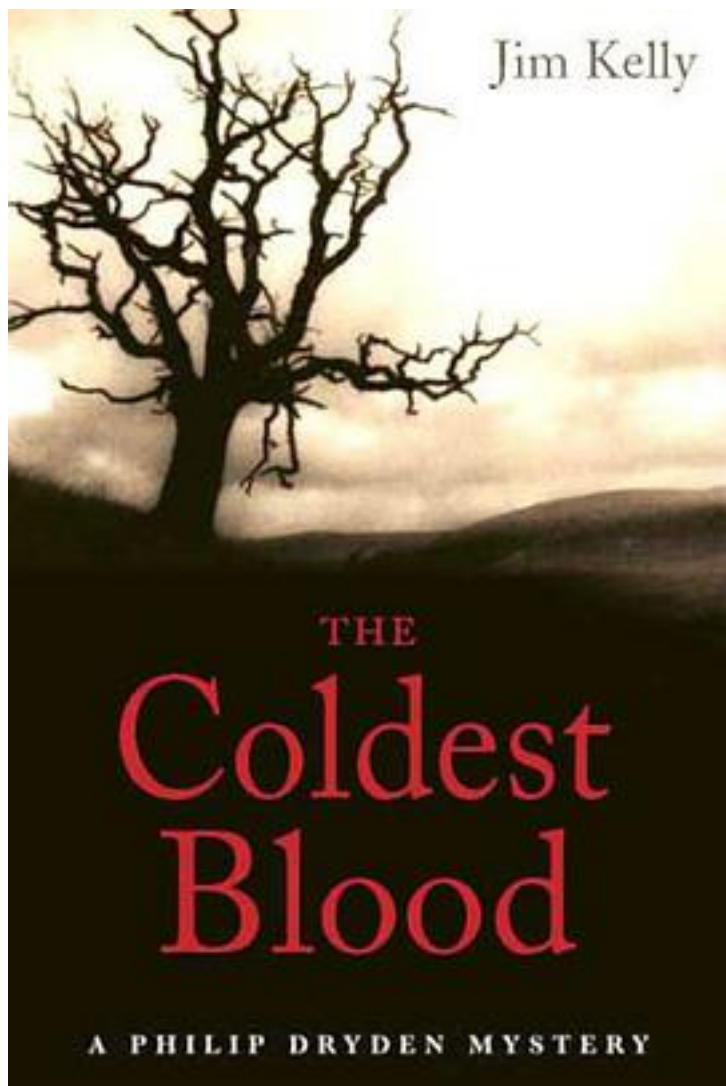


The Coldest Blood



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A man lies hidden in an abandoned boat. Stifling his own screams, he draws a knife across his arm, letting the blood flow free. Soon he' ll be dead – and life can begin again.

Three decades later, small-town newspaper reporter Philip Dryden is experiencing a cold, bitter Christmas on the Fens. Dryden' s wife, Laura, is emerging from years in a coma, unsure if she wants to go on living. Meanwhile, people are freezing to death, among them Declan McIlroy, a 39 year old loner found dead in his flat with the windows thrown open. The police rule the death a suicide, but Dryden has his doubts – especially when he finds the body of Declan' s best friend Joe frozen within a shell of ice on the doorstep of his secluded farmhouse.

At the same time, Dryden is investigating allegations of abuse laid against a Catholic orphanage – a touchy subject, due to his own Catholic upbringing. The incidents seem unrelated until Dryden discovers that Declan was one of the victims. Could his death have been part of a cover-up?

Soon, Dryden is picking his way along a disturbing trail of cruelty and betrayal to a brilliantly executed crime, and to a chilling, half-remembered mystery from his own childhood.

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