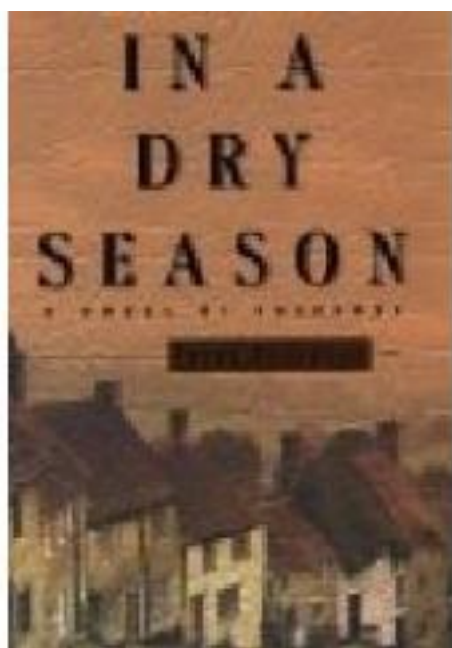


# In a Dry Season



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著者:

出版者:

出版时间:

装帧:

isbn:9780380975815

Amazon.com Detective chief inspector Alan Banks is a walking midlife crisis, full of rage because of his recently failed marriage, a career crippled by a jealous superior, and problems with his son. In less skilled hands, Banks could have quickly become a royal pain, but Robinson makes him instead a very likable character, who is slightly baffled and bemused by his bad luck. When he criticizes his son Brian's decision to drop out of college to become a rock musician, Banks quickly regrets it--recognizing the same impulses that made him rebel against his own parents, and some of the pain he felt when a college friend died of a drug overdose. The realization that Brian's heavy-metal band is actually quite good brings genuine pleasure to a man whose idea of rock is Love's Forever Changes and other 1970s delights. Banks is assigned to work on a case that the Yorkshire police department considers to be somewhat of a joke.

The skeleton of a woman wrapped in World War II blackout curtains has been found in a dried-out reservoir. This man-made watering hole was a village--Hobbs End--that had been flooded many years earlier. Through the journal of a major player we realize early on who the dead woman is, but a large part of the fun is watching Banks and an edgy, attractive female cop put the pieces of the puzzle together. In a Dry Season is a stylish and gently reflective tale of secrets and lies. Banks's other books include Wednesday's Child, Final Account, and Blood at the Root. --Dick Adler From Publishers Weekly Anyone who loves a good mystery should curl up gratefully with a cuppa to enjoy this rich 10th installment of the acclaimed British police procedural series. Detective Chief Inspector Alan Banks, on the skids since the breakup with wife Sandra, languishes in "career Siberia" until old nemesis Chief Constable Riddle sends him to remotest Yorkshire on a "dirty, pointless, dead-end case." It seems a local kid has discovered a skeleton in dried-up Thornfield Reservoir, constructed on the site of the deserted bucolic village of Hobb's End. Banks taps into his familiar network of colleagues to identify the skeleton as that of Gloria Shackleton, a gorgeous, provocative "land girl" who worked on a Hobb's End farm while her husband was off fighting the Japanese decades ago. Apparently, Gloria had been stabbed to death. As Banks and Detective Sergeant Annie Cabbot struggle to re-create the 50-year-old crime scene, wartime Yorkshire, with all its deprivations and depravities, springs to life. (Banks revives, too, showing renewed interest in his job, and in women.) Robinson brilliantly interweaves the story of Banks's investigation with an ambiguous manuscript by detective novelist "Vivian Elmsley," a 70-ish woman once Gloria's sister-in-law. Is the manuscript a memoir of events leading to Gloria's vicious murder, or "all just a story"? Either way, every detail rings true. Once again, Robinson's work stands out for its psychological and moral complexity, its startling evocation of pastoral England and its gritty, compassionate portrayal of modern sleuthing. Agent, Dominick Abel. Author tour. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. See all Editorial Reviews

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