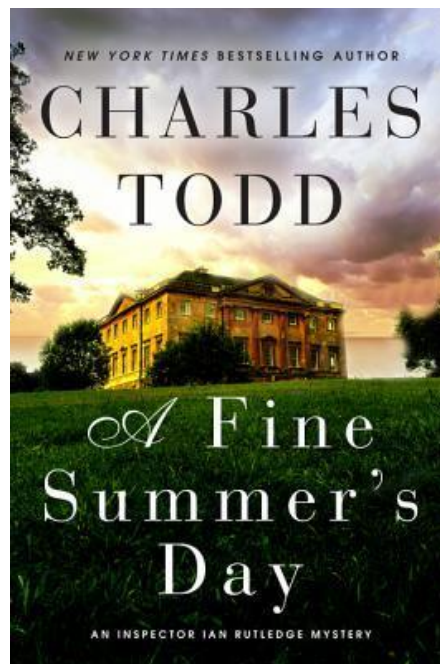




A Fine Summer's Day

Charles Todd

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On a fine summer's day in June 1914, Ian Rutledge is planning to propose to a woman he deeply loves, despite hints from his family and friends that she may not be the most suitable choice for a policeman's wife. To the north, another man in love—a Scottish Highlander named Hamish MacLeod—asks his own sweetheart to marry him.

Back in England, a son grieves for his mother, dredging up a dark injustice that will trigger a series of murders that Rutledge must solve. The victims are all upstanding and well-liked. The local police have their suspicions about the culprits and are less than cooperative with the London detective.

As clouds of war gather on the horizon, Rutledge digs deeper, finding similarities and patterns between the murders. With every moment at stake, he sets out to right a terrible wrong—an odyssey that will eventually force him to choose between the Yard and his country, between love and duty, and between honor and truth.

A Fine Summer's Day Details

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From Reader Review A Fine Summer's Day for online ebook

Annette says

Summary:

It's late June 1914. Detective Ian Rutledge is in his early years of detective work for Scotland Yard. His superintendent is Bowles, a man who is often difficult to comprehend, he's moody and sullen. Rutledge is sent on an assignment for a murder case. Meanwhile, Rutledge becomes engaged to the lovely Jean Gordon. Their engagement comes on the day of the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and his wife Sophie. Talk of war begins immediately in Europe. Rutledge hopes the talk will not proceed Great Britain's involvement. Jean's father is a military man and she has vainglorious visions for Rutledge. A Fine Summer's Day is a perfect title for the last of the "fine" days before World War I began.

My Thoughts:

I've read several books in the Ian Rutledge Mystery series. I'm pleased A Fine Summer's Day shares Rutledge's life prior to World War I. The rest of the series of books are post World War I.

A Fine Summer's Day gave me background information about Rutledge. His family life, romance, pre-World War I personality, parents, and relationship with superintendent Bowles.

Another aspect of the book showed me Rutledge's insecurities in regard to his career choice; further, his struggles of being a detective and balancing a personal life.

A Fine Summer's Day explores the gusto and naivete of people vigorous for war. However, they did not understand war's burdens, most pronounced the maiming of peoples lives, destruction, and death.

Rutledge is a vulnerable character because of his torn feelings. He is a torn character through all of the series, but in A Fine Summer's Day I see where "it" all began.

From the beginning of the story when the labor pangs of war begin, through to the end of the book, there is a crescendo of war building. At first it is talk that seems far away, then Russia becomes involved, and later when Germany over-takes Belgium, the verdict is set. Britain will be at war.

I loved every aspect of this story and feel it is the best in the Ian Rutledge Mystery series!

Deb says

A Fine Summer's Day goes back to the very beginning of World War I. Inspector Rutledge has just become engaged to Jean Gordon. His rapid promotion at Scotland Yard may be part of the reason Chief Superintendent Bowles dislikes him even now. Rutledge has been called into to investigate the death of a well-liked upstanding citizen of a small town. Rutledge is convinced that the death is linked to several other equally mysterious death, but Bowles believes Rutledge is just wasting time. As usual, Rutledge's dogged perseverance in following even the tiniest lead, reveals a killer bent on revenge. One of the interesting pieces of this book, of course, is the portrayal of Jean Gordon. Readers who have followed the series, know what will happen in the future, and the seeds for that are laid in this installment. I liked the back story and I liked the customary investigative focus. Rutledge, without the later darkness, is still a good read. However, he's more interesting with the darkness.

Nancy says

This is a prequel to the earlier Rutledge mysteries. It takes place just as WWI is breaking out. Hammish and

Rutledge do not meet until the final pages, but we know from the start that meeting is coming.

Rutledge is engaged. With love and death in the air, I expected some emotional impact, but there really is none. Rutledge's fiancée is a cardboard cut out. There is no chemistry between them. There is no mystery to speak of either.

Normally I read a mystery in a few days. This book was so easy to put down that it took the better part of a month. I doubt if I would have finished it if it had not been a Goodreads win and I felt obligated to review.

Not worth your time.

Nell says

I liked it, but with some reservations. So really 2 1/2 stars.

It's difficult to see why Rutledge is attracted to Jean. She is shallow and immature. She and Rutledge don't seem to have any interests in common, unlike her cousin Kate, who as little as she appears in the book feels like more of a real person than Jean and of whom Rutledge remarks that he's always been fond and enjoyed her company. Perhaps it's that Jean is so carefree and sheltered, when Rutledge has seen so much and had to deal with tragedy. Yet he is more worried about fulfilling Jean's expectations than she is a support or solace to him. What does he get out of this relationship?

Except for Hamish, of course, Rutledge is the same person as in the later books. He is as sure of his instincts in his cases as after the war, as obdurate in the face of Bowles and as creative in getting around him, as unflappable with local police, witnesses, and those affected by crimes.

I hope the next installment sees Rutledge continuing to overcome his past sufferings and perhaps to have some happiness in his life.

Barbara says

This 17th book in the 'Inspector Ian Rutledge' series is a prequel that harks back to the beginning of WWI, before Rutledge goes to war and returns suffering from shell shock (PTSD).

In 1914, Rutledge is a Scotland Yard detective courting a privileged young lady named Jean Gordon. Like other women of her class, Jean is concerned mostly with clothes, socializing, going to balls, and maintaining her position in society. Jean's family isn't happy with Rutledge's job, and her father, Major George Gordon, gently suggests that Rutledge take up some other profession - like architecture. (This made me laugh. As far as I know, even in 1914, a person couldn't wake up one morning and decide "Today I'll be an architect."). Rutledge's sister and friends think Jean is the wrong woman for him, but hold their tongues once he gets officially engaged.

As the story opens, Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand has been assassinated in Sarajevo, and it's clear that Europe is on the brink of war - a conflict that will inevitably envelop England. As hostilities escalate, British men start to enlist in droves, inspired by patriotism and the belief that England will emerge victorious in a few short months.

As some of his acquaintances march off to war Rutledge is investigating a string of homicides in towns across England. In each case, a man is found dead with a large amount of laudanum in his system. Rutledge is convinced the deaths are connected, perpetrated by a single killer. However Rutledge's boss, Superintendent Bowles, doesn't want to hear it. Bowles' sole concern is making quick arrests, and he wants a local suspect nabbed for each murder, even if the evidence is sparse or non-existent. Bowles comes across as a jealous, unimaginative supervisor who looks for any excuse to chastise Rutledge, who's wealthier and better educated.

Rutledge more or less ignores Bowles instructions and pursues 'the real killer' across Britain. Rutledge essentially has to work alone, but gets secret tips from another detective, Chief Inspector Cummins, who doesn't think much of Bowles. (One has to wonder how a lackluster detective like Bowles becomes a Superintendent at Scotland Yard. LOL)

Rutledge's investigations take him away from London for days at a time, which distresses Jean - who wants her fiancé to escort her to dinners and parties. Jean also gets caught up in the excitement of war talk, especially when her friends discuss sending off their brothers, fathers, friends, and beaux. As a consequence, Jean pushes Rutledge to join the military.....apparently thinking he'll be gone for a couple of months and return covered in glory. (Jean and her friends seem to be very naive, not realizing that soldiers - even English ones - die in war.)

Rutledge resists Jean's entreaties to enlist, feeling that his detective job is important, and that he does it well. And Rutledge does demonstrate intuition and smarts as he pursues the killer - a wily fellow who's been planning his crimes for a long time.

Though Rutledge dedicates most of his time to his job and his fiancée, he sometimes dines with his sister Francis - a parentless 20-year-old who's entering society, or visits with Melinda Crawford - a kind of surrogate mother who provides advice and support. Francis and Melinda are among the more savvy women in the book.....much more sensible than shallow Jean.

Through most of the book Rutledge drives back and forth across England in pursuit of the killer, whom he eventually confronts. In the end, Rutledge also enlists in the army, with consequences that play out in the rest of the series.

I liked the book, which has a suspenseful plot and engaging characters. The story also has an interesting historical perspective on an 'upper-class' segment of society that hopes for peace.....but must prepare for war.

I'd recommend the book to mystery readers, especially fans of non-traditional cozies.

You can follow my reviews at <http://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot.com/>

Judy Lesley says

What a pleasure it was to thoroughly enjoy this book in the Inspector Ian Rutledge series. And what a very good idea for the authors to go back to show us what Rutledge was like before he became so tormented by what happened to him in the fighting during World War I. This is definitely a stand alone book for any reader thinking about trying this series, then you can move on to the first book, A Test of Wills, with a smooth transition.

The book begins in the summer months of 1914 when the rumblings of war are being heard throughout

Europe. This novel is classic Rutledge vs Bowles confrontations with the Chief Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police wanting cases closed as quickly as possible while Rutledge wants to be completely sure the guilty person is the one who goes to trial. There are multiple crimes committed during this relatively short period of time and Rutledge has to travel by car over a large portion of England to find the link that ties all of them together.

Sometimes in our modern world it is difficult to read a novel which takes place in a past time; to understand how the lack of technology could have such an impact on criminal investigations. As a reader I must allow myself to slow down and put myself in the time frame established by the authors. The activities in this story take place over large areas of very rural countryside. Public telephones are few and far between, never mind trying to find one in a private home. Transport is not available every moment of the day. The reader needs to be willing to travel back from a technology standpoint in order to find that human nature was still the same as it is now. I find historical novels to be relaxing and these authors have created a multi-faceted criminal problem which kept me fully engaged the entire time I was reading. Thank you, Charles Todd. This is a special book much appreciated by your fans.

Debbie Maskus says

When I first started to read this book, I was not in the right frame of mind, so I waited and restarted reading. I really enjoyed learning about Ian Rutledge and her family and co-workers in this looking back book. Ian has probably made the biggest mistake of his life, but the war steps in to dissolve the error. The characters jump off the pages, especially many of the minor characters. Ian rushes between Jean in London and his duties in several surrounding villages due to many suicide or murder investigations. The reader is forewarned of the murderer, but not given the criteria for killing each man. The tension builds in Ian's cases, as well as in Europe with the threat of war. The ending brings resolution and closure, but in an obscure method. I could not stop reading and finished the book, even though I needed to go to bed.

Gail Cooke says

Those of us familiar with the superb Scotland Yard Inspector Ian Rutledge series created by the mother/son team writing under the name of Charles Todd well know that Rutledge is a dedicated but haunted survivor of World War I. His experiences on the battlefield have created the man he is today, and will leave him little peace.

Now, with *A Fine Summer's Day* we are introduced to a young Rutledge in the year prior to the war. Not only that but we are given a touching picture of an innocent, idealistic England before the war. Following the assassination at Sarajevo and growing rumors of conflict young men cannot wait to enlist, believing any war would be over shortly and they are eager to be a part of it before it is finished.

However, an oncoming war is not first in young Rutledge's mind. He has decided to propose to Jean Gordon, a woman he deeply loves. His sister, Frances, and good friend, Melinda Crawford, aren't at all sure she's the right choice for him but only wish him happiness. Further, he has been assigned to investigate the death of a man who presumably hanged himself. Those who knew the departed said he was the least likely to take his own life, he had no reason to. Suddenly there is another and then another unlikely death at different points in England. Local constabulary do not welcome a man from Scotland Yard on their turf, yet Rutledge presses on believing that somehow these deaths are connected, but how?

When Jean presses Rutledge to enlist and be her hero, he responds with something to the effect that he is not a soldier who kills but a policeman who catches those who do. Yet as the war becomes a reality he must choose between the Yard and his country.

Suspense, excellent writing, period detail, plot twists - who could ask for anything more?

- Gail Cooke

Mary says

This 17th novel in the Ian Rutledge series comes out in January, 2015. Amazingly, Charles Todd is a pen name used by a Mother and son team writing together to achieve an amazing body of work which includes two separate series and some stand-alone novels. Inspector Ian Rutledge deals with major crimes in a post-World War I world while struggling to cope with his personal demons from the war. Todd's second series stars Bess Crawford, a World War I nurse who solves mysteries. Two new books in the Crawford series came out in 2014, "An Unwilling Accomplice" and "The Maharani's Pearls." In August, 2015, they are planning on bringing out only their second stand-alone novel called "A Pattern of Lies." This body of work is for those who like literate, historical mysteries.

Lawyer says

A Fine Summer's Day: Inspector Ian Rutledge Before the Great War

Channel Firing

THOMAS HARDY

*That night your great guns, unawares,
Shook all our coffins as we lay,
And broke the chancel window-squares,
We thought it was the Judgment-day*

*And sat upright. While drearisome
Arose the howl of wakened hounds:
The mouse let fall the altar-crumb,
The worms drew back into the mounds,*

*The glebe cow drooled. Till God called, "No;
It's gunnery practice out at sea
Just as before you went below;
The world is as it used to be:*

*"All nations striving strong to make
Red war yet redder. Mad as hatters
They do no more for Christ's sake
Than you who are helpless in such matters.*

*"That this is not the judgment-hour
For some of them's a blessed thing,
For if it were they'd have to scour
Hell's floor for so much threatening....*

*"Ha, ha. It will be warmer when
I blow the trumpet (if indeed
I ever do; for you are men,
And rest eternal sorely need)."*

*So down we lay again. "I wonder,
Will the world ever saner be,"
Said one, "than when He sent us under
In our indifferent century!"*

*And many a skeleton shook his head.
"Instead of preaching forty year,"
My neighbour Parson Thirdly said,
"I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer."*

*Again the guns disturbed the hour,
Roaring their readiness to avenge,
As far inland as Stourton Tower,
And Camelot, and starlit Stonehenge.*

I have relished the Inspector Ian Rutledge novels by Charles Todd since the first, *A Test Of Wills* was published in 1996. *Charles Todd* is the pen name for the mother and son writing team, Caroline Todd and Charles Todd (Author). While Mrs. Todd lives in North Carolina, son Charles lives in Delaware. One would never suspect the novels are the product of separate authors. The writing is seamless. I've often wondered how these two manage the magic they produce.

Previous novels in the series have been set in Post World War One England beginning in 1919. Inspector Ian Rutledge has served throughout the Great War and survived. He has returned to service as an Inspector at Scotland Yard. However, Rutledge carries a secret. He returns shell shocked and haunted by the voice of a young Scottish Highlander, Hamish Macleod, executed at Rutledge's order when Macleod refused to carry out an order to launch an assault over the top into the mouth of murderous fire.

Since their appearance, the Rutledge novels have received numerous awards and accolades from every imaginable source related to mystery novels. Small wonder. They are that good. I have been accosted by more than one reader of a previous review of a Rutledge novel in which I referred to the work as one of my "guilty pleasures." I abashedly stand corrected.

After discovering Inspector Ian Rutledge, I've often wondered what kind of man he was before experiencing the futility of four years of trench warfare in "The War to End All Wars." After penning sixteen Ian Rutledge novels, the very talented Todds have given us that answer in *A Fine Summer's Day*. Quite simply, it is excellent.

Consider this novel a prequel to the sixteen previously published. The fine summer's day is June 28, 1914. Ian Rutledge proposes marriage to Jean Gordon, the daughter of a Colonel in Army service. History buffs may recognize the date as the fateful occasion of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria

in Sarajevo, Bosnia, or Herzegovina, if you prefer.

The Todds masterfully blend the growing news of the possibility of war throughout this novel, as the civilians of England would have received it. There is an air of forboding that grows throughout the development of the cases being investigated by Rutledge that aptly brings to mind Hardy's "Channel Firing."

As masterfully plotted is a series of deaths which could either be interpreted as murder or suicide. The deaths, the first by hanging, the remainder by drinking from a glass of milk containing a fatal dose of laudanaum. Each of the dead has practiced a different profession. They are of varying ages. Each lives in a different town or village. There is no apparent link among any of them. While Rutledge is dispatched by Superintendent Bowles of Scotland Yard on each of the death inquiries, other Inspectors are looking into the desecration of graves in two different country churhyards. The names of the dead have been completely obliterated by a person or persons unknown. Is there a link? Of course, there will be.

For lovers of the Rutledge series, all the usual cast of supporting characters are present. Chief Inspector Cummins and Sergeant Gibson who recognize that Chief Superintendent Bowles, better known as "Old Bowels" resents Rutledge who easily runs rings around the man who is always satisfied with the "easy answer." Rutledge's lovely sister Frances, an independent and caring young woman. Jean Gordon, with whom Rutledge is hopelessly in love. Beautiful, but perhaps more shallow than Rutledge is capable of recognizing. Melinda Crawford, the older friend of the Rutledge family, who once was a close friend of Ian's and Frances' parents. Kate, Jean's Cousin, who is definitely not a favorite of the beautiful Jean. David and Ross Trevor, David, Rutledge's Godfather; Ross, his best friend from childhood. And, last of all Hamish Macleod, very much alive, courting his beloved Fiona, as the fleet tests its guns in channel firing.

For those new to the Rutledge series, by all means start here. This is Inspector Ian Rutledge's first case. Be satisfied you have many more to follow.

On reflection, this may be Rutledge's most challenging case. I found its conclusion *completely satisfactory*. Without doubt, this is the Todds' most historically significant entry in the Rutledge chronology.

For new and old readers of the cases of Inspector Ian Rutledge, keep calm and carry on. No Shred of Evidence by the Todds will be released February 16, 2016. *Most satisfactory*.

N.L.B. Horton says

I write few five-star reviews, but joyfully grant the ARC (Advanced Reader Copy) of A Fine Summer's Day the rating I associate with my favorite author, Daniel Silva.

First, let me say that the ARC is almost flawless. The meticulous attention to detail that creates an ARC this clean is a testimony to the professionalism of the Charles Todd team of authors, editors, and proofreaders. I now have a higher standard for ARCs in my work: it can be done!

And this quality extends to the story itself. I am not a fan of prequels, and A Fine Summer's Day is a prequel for the Ian Rutledge series. But the book is a pleasure from start to finish because it is so well written, the characters are so finely drawn, and the details so carefully measured. It never drags, and the dialogue and

prose move the story forward in equal parts.

I appreciate more information about shallow Jean, Rutledge's fiancée. Background about his tense relationship with Chief Inspector Bowles puts the other books in the series in context. And the case that led Rutledge into war lays the groundwork for his mindset when he returns to Scotland Yard to resume his career. As an added bonus, I had no idea that Rutledge and Bess Crawford were "related," an epiphany revealed in *A Fine Summer's Day*.

While the ending is a little too "neat" for my taste, *A Fine Summer's Day* is a very accomplished work and a worthy addition to the Ian Rutledge stories.

Compliments to the authors and their team, and highly recommended.

WTF Are You Reading? says

A Fine Summer's Day is the 17th book in Charles Todd's Inspector Ian Rutledge Mystery series. Touching on a host of themes such as: love of country, familial duty, classism, romantic love, and honor; leading man Ian, finds himself, a man on the brink. With the specter of WWI looming on the none too distant horizon, and his proposal to the 'high born' love of his life Jean, coming under fire from those nearest and dearest to him. Inspector Ian Rutledge of Scotland Yard finds himself in the center of what, at first glance appear to be a string of unrelated crimes.

As time goes on and the death toll rises, Ian and his superiors at Scotland Yard come to realize that this case is one with a far greater scope and graver implications than anyone ever expected.

This book is so descriptive and has such a distinct and lyrical voice that it is difficult to believe that it is anything other than a standalone work.

Having said that however, it must be noted that because so much attention is paid to description and detail, the story has a tendency to wander.

This is evidenced in the opening chapters of the book; when readers are introduced to a myriad of scenarios and characters before introductions to leading man Ian, and his role in the unfolding saga are even addressed. Not to worry though, the plot lines found here are circular, and as such, do find their way back to answer the unanswered and tie the untied...eventually.

While there may be whispers of war and wishes for wedding bells, Ian is bound to his duty as a 'man of The Yard'. It is not very often that the vandalism of headstones at a cemetery leads to a call to Scotland Yard, but so begins one of the most mind boggling cases of our leading man's career. It is when, in a seemingly unrelated case, he is called to the murder of respected businessman Benjamin Clayton that things really start to get interesting for young Inspector Rutledge.

As contradictory clues come to light, which make the 2 + 2's in this case come together to equal anything but four, and other cases with similar modus operandi raise the stakes for all.

Inspector Rutledge finds himself facing opposition from both the local constabulary and one very prickly Chief Superintendent Bowles.

With things within his case progressing, Ian's thoughts sway toward the service of crown and country in the

coming war; at the behest of both Jean and her Major father.

A man born to both protect and serve; Ian must then choose how best to do so. All the while, weighing the cost to life, love, and future.

While this tale is not big on "edge of your seat action" its appeal lies in the interpersonal relationships built between both the characters themselves, and said characters and their audiences. We as readers are allowed to glimpse the inner workings of Ian the man, and Ian the officer. This coupled with the afore mentioned descriptive scene setting and lyrical prose, works together to form an unbreakable tether that pulls the readers into the story, and never lets go.

Reviewer's Note: *A Fine Summer's Day* is a prequel to previous works in this series, and may be read at any point as a companion or standalone.

Donna says

This is the 17th book in the in the Inspector Ian Rutledge series by Charles Todd and it is also my first book in this series. I actually liked this one. I was pleasantly surprised.

I liked the MC. He was well drawn, but some of the other characters felt a little vague and there were a lot of them. I also liked the story line. But I didn't get the whole importance of the assassinations at the beginning. The author related it to something but that was it....I kept expecting it to come back into the story with some meaning attached to it. Did I miss something?

Overall, this had a nice flow. I liked that the reader knew early on who did it. The mystery was focused on how.

E.L. says

Frustrated with the exhausting and never-ending grimness of post-war Rutledge, I was intrigued by the chance to see what the man was like before Hamish began haunting him. Unfortunately, the grim, depressing nature of the stories only intensified in this.

Every police officer was prejudiced and more interested in their own agenda and importance than in justice. Bowles was even more incompetent and antagonistic than he is after the war - one wonders how he ever made it so far in the Force when he is so insistent on perpetuating blatant injustices in the name of wrapping things up quickly. The witnesses were all either hostile or incompetent (there were one or two who were not, but they were rare bright spots).

As for Jean, one wonders why and how Rutledge ever fancied himself in love with her - vapid, vain, shallow, self-centered, and unintelligent, without any redeeming qualities or any reason given as to why Rutledge would have fallen in love.

The mystery itself was massively unsatisfying. I had pegged the link (they kind of gave it away in the prologue, and then we had to wait forever for the penny to drop for Rutledge) between the murders early on, and figured out the method right away (nor do I understand why it was considered so shocking and horrible

that they couldn't reveal it to anyone, even in Scotland Yard). The ending ... well, the incompetence of the police force was painted so blackly all throughout the book that I suppose they had to end it the way they did.

The writing itself was excellent and vivid, as always, but the book was so unrelentingly bleak, without even a glimpse of hope at the end, that I fear this is my last Inspector Rutledge. And despite my fondness for the not-as-depressing Bess Crawford books, if this is the direction their writing is taking, I'm not sure I'll be able to continue with her, either. This is not why I read.

dianne says

The craziness, almost celebratory, of the onset of war in a generation that hadn't known it, the retrospective idiocy – may be the most thought provoking bit of this book.

Something about stories that happen at the start of, or just before, a horrible human chapter (in this case WWI) especially something as completely evil and stupid as that war, tug at a basic heart place. If only. Tell me why millions upon millions of lives were lost in such a fantasmagorically awful way ? and even many ba-gillions more lives ruined?

Um, well...say this country is your “friend” now (although they weren't 50 years ago) so you signed an agreement saying that their enemies were your enemies even if they were friends of a acquaintance before – so that enemy, er, friend, was hit by someone who – this time around – is your friend's enemy's friend and so your enemy (for now). Because of course the enemy of your friend is your enemy as are the friends of that enemy even if they could have been your friend.

See?

You're welcome.

Terrified teenagers with life threatening, constant dysentery, in a disgusting muddy trench that reeks of the dead and dismembered bodies surrounding? Sign me up!

Or maybe Wilhelm was just doing what Ed 7 (now dead but well remembered) wanted?

(see: <https://soundcloud.com/guns-and-butte...>)

A book done with lots of careful details. Maybe too many. Guess I didn't see the need for some, and other bits, appearing meaningful at the time – aren't. (“She said.....and he'd recall that she had said that weeks later.” but it's never mentioned again...).

A good plot, although mystery-wise certainly no Poirot, solved easily well before our pithy detective sees it. Even the “how did he get them to...” was easily foreseen. The answer was all given in the opening vignettes. Except the Scottish bit which is actually not relevant to this book at all, but stuck in for the other novels in the series. Seemed ectopic at the time and at the end, as well.

Some characters are written with depth and insight – Melinda and Frances for instance – but his fiance? Knock knock... (silence) I didn't see the attraction at all. But perhaps it is like May in the Age of Innocence? She's cute and from a “good” family, and that's enough? I doubt Jean (fiance) would have the insight that May shared with her son (that we learn of at the end) however. Doubt Jean could see the sacrifice of others as anything but what she deserved. “Oh, look! Shiny thing!”

This was a long awaited give-away win. Free books? Good.
