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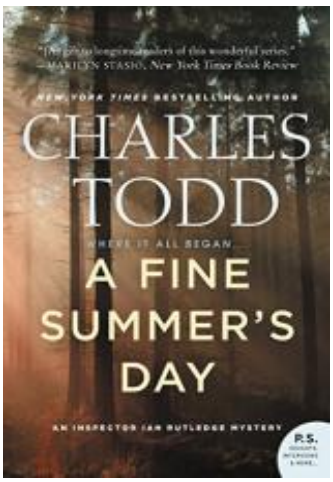
A Fine Summer's Day: An Inspector Ian Rutledge Mystery

by Charles Todd



About the Book

New York Times bestselling author Charles Todd takes readers into Scotland Yard detective Ian Rutledge?s past --- to his perplexing final case before the outbreak of World War I.

On a fine summer?s day in June 1914, Ian Rutledge pays little notice to the assassination of an archduke in Sarajevo. An Inspector at Scotland Yard, he is planning to propose to the woman whom he deeply loves, despite intimations from friends and family that she may not be the wisest choice.

To the north on this warm and gentle day, another man in love --- a Scottish Highlander --- shows his own dear girl the house he will build for her in September. While back in England, a son awaits the undertaker in the wake of his widowed mother?s death. This death will set off a series of murders across England, seemingly unconnected, that Rutledge will race to solve in the weeks before the fateful declaration in August that will forever transform his world.

As the clouds of war gather on the horizon, all of Britain wonders and waits. With every moment at stake, Rutledge sets out to right a 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.

Discussion Guide

1. A FINE SUMMER'S DAY begins on June 28, 1914, exactly one month prior to the start of World War I. What do you think is the significance of choosing this date to open the book?

2. How does Ian Rutledge's family feel about his decision to work as a Scotland Yard detective? How does this impact the story?

3. Why do Rutledge's family and friends disagree with his choice to marry Jean Gordon? How do you feel about her? And what is the contrast with Kate?

4. What is the relationship between Ian Rutledge and Hamish MacLeod? This relationship will change Rutledge's life, but we see only a fleeting depiction of MacLeod in this story. Why do you think this was done, and what does it foretell?

5. How does the news from the Continent impact and shape Rutledge's investigation in England?

6. The past plays a huge role in the Ian Rutledge series. What effect do Rutledge's late parents have on A FINE SUMMER'S DAY?

7. Sometimes the most obvious connection between victims is not obvious at all when they live in different parts of England. How did the fact that jurors are not permitted to talk about their service make it more difficult for Rutledge to convince his superiors that one person was responsible for such scattered cases?

8. The killer has his own sense of justice driven by his mother?s suffering. Did you feel any compassion for him before you learn near the end how he kills his victims? And afterward?

9. Rutledge indicates that soldiers kill people while his role is to catch the people who kill. How do you think he will change as he goes into battle and sends other young men across No Man?s Land to their deaths, even for military necessity?

10. The Rutledge we see in this novel has a strong sense of justice. How did this help you to understand the man he is in 1914? Do you want to read more about this character, to discover in the later books how he survives the war? And if you have already read the next books in the series, do you feel that A FINE SUMMER?S DAY gave you greater insight into this man?

11. Jean Gordon's father is career military. How does the fact that Rutledge remains behind while her father is sent to the Front strain their relationship? Is it fair for Jean to put such pressure on Rutledge? Is she more concerned about appearances than about the man she says she loves so deeply?

12. Rutledge's pursuit of the killer puts a member of his own family at risk. How does he handle the dual stress of protecting a witness and protecting his own family? How does Melinda Crawford help him see his way?

Author Bio

Charles Todd is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the Inspector Ian Rutledge mysteries, the Bess Crawford mysteries, and two stand-alone novels. A mother-and-son writing team, Caroline passed away in August 2021. Charles lives in Florida.

Critical Praise

?A FINE SUMMER?S DAY is a bittersweet gift to longtime readers of this wonderful series...This intimate look into the personal life of a detective we?ve known only as a damaged soul is no small gift...the greater gift here is the portrait it presents of England before the war."

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