



## A Cold Treachery

*Charles Todd*

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### **A Cold Treachery** Charles Todd

Charles Todd returns to the world of Scotland Yard's Inspector Ian Rutledge in a series that the *New York Times Book Review* called "harrowing psychological drama" and the *Washington Post Book World* hailed as "among the most intelligent and affecting being written these days." This time the embattled Inspector has met his match hunting a brutal killer across a frozen hell and the one witness who may have survived a crime of...

### A COLD TREACHERY

"You'll hang for this—see if you don't! That's my revenge! And you'll think about that when the rope goes around your neck and the black hood comes down...."

Called out by Scotland Yard into the teeth of a violent blizzard, Inspector Ian Rutledge finds himself confronted with one of the most savage murders he has ever encountered. Rutledge might have expected such unspeakable carnage on the World War I battlefields, where he'd lost much of his soul—and his sanity—but not in an otherwise peaceful farm kitchen in remote Urskdale.

Someone has murdered the Elcott family at their table without the least sign of struggle. Was the killer someone the young family knew and trusted? When the victims are tallied the local police are in for another shock: One of the Elcotts' children, a boy named Josh, is missing.

Now the Inspector must race to uncover a murderer and to save a child before he's silenced by the merciless elements—or the even colder hands of a killer. Haunted and goaded by the soldier-ghost of his own tortured war past, Rutledge will discover the tragedy of war that splintered one marriage—and pulled together another. Love, jealousy, greed, revenge—or was it some twisted combination of all of them? Any one could lead a man or woman to murder. What had the Elcotts done to ignite their killer's rage? With time running out, Rutledge knows all too well that such a cold-blooded murderer could be hiding somewhere in the blinding snow... preparing to strike again.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

### **A Cold Treachery Details**

Date : Published (first published January 25th 2005)

ISBN :

Author : Charles Todd

Format : Kindle Edition 416 pages

Genre : Mystery, Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Historical Mystery, European Literature, British Literature

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## From Reader Review A Cold Treachery for online ebook

### Charlene says

Very good -- great atmosphere and description of the Lakes District countryside during a winter blizzard. I felt like I was there, in the little village and on the sheep farms, in 1919. WWI's horrors continue to play out here, both in the story and in Ian Rutledge's head. A bit different from the other Ian Rutledge stories -- more gruesome, modern murder. This was the first one of the Todd mysteries where my first guess of "who done it" was accurate. The plotting isn't as tight as in some other mysteries but the author's strengths are in characterization and setting. I'll keep reading this series.

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### Jan C says

Very readable, as are most of Todd's works. Great thing to read when its 11° and snowy out. Not sure why this book took me so long (other than my arthritic hands).

There's a blizzard going on and a family - mother, father, 2-3 kids - are killed and an older boy has disappeared into the snow and rough terrain of Urskdale. It is sheep country. No one knows what happened. Did the boy see it? Or did the boy do it? These are the questions that don't get resolved until close to the end. Meanwhile there are plenty of other suspects. Rutledge was called in on the case. Nobody wants to talk to him, this cop sent from London. But it is beyond the capabilities of the local constables.

And Rutledge is still haunted by his experiences in the Great War, especially in the voice of Hamish.

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### Jina Howell-Forbes says

This is book #7 in the Inspector Ian Rutledge Mystery Series. The Inspector is a WWI veteran who is still suffering the effects of shell shock. (Now called PTSD, but back then it was called Shell Shock, so that is the terminology used in the series). The series is set in the years immediately following the war, when Rutledge is back to his pre-war job as an Inspector with Scotland Yard.

It is a good-but-not-great series. It is certainly not nearly as good as it could be with tighter writing and better editing. I really like Rutledge and his post war struggles. I love the 'outside the box' idea of a voice that only Rutledge hears in his head, and I especially love the actual character of Hamish, the man whose voice Rutledge hears. It is a wonderfully unique plot device, and it works great. I also love the setting and time-period of the story.

What I don't like as much is the murder mysteries themselves. They tend to be slow and plodding, with so many characters and suspects that it is difficult to care who did it by the end.

What I REALLY hate is the long standing total lack of support and credit that Rutledge gets from his superiors and colleagues. After continuously being set-up to fail and look bad, but always defying the odds and coming out on top, it is time for Rutledge to get the credit he deserves. His supervisors should man-up or be replaced. The "brilliant subordinate vs. bumbling jealous supervisor," is a tiresome, unbelievable, and unnecessary plot line.

## Amy says

A good read, as usual, but the nexus between the crime and the motive was weak. But, as usual, one can't wait to find out what will happen to Ian and Hamish next. Plus I can't help wondering if eventually Bowles gets a real comeuppance!

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## Joanne says

Ian Rutledge breaks my heart. On the surface, he's an upper class British officer returned from the front after WWI to resume his position as an inspector at Scotland Yard. Underneath the handsome facade, he is the ultimate casualty of a terrible war-- tortured by his memories, haunted by a decision made in the heat of battle and abandoned by his fiancée, he throws himself full force into solving the cases he's assigned. Instead of a partner or a sidekick, Rutledge has only the ghostly specter of a dead colleague and brother-in-arms, Hamish McCleod, to help him sort out the details. Smart and original.

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## Patsyann says

No CSI, no DNA evidence, not even fingerprints and the detective doesn't even carry a gun. How crimes were solved without these conveniences.

Love these books. The mystery meanders along very slowly but the mystery does get solved and the journey is well worth it.

Lots of suspects.

No heroes

No heroines

No sex

Just a scarred, damaged detective and a murder to solve.

Love these books!!

This book had a great murder mystery with many suspects, each with a secret. (Make a movie of these mysteries, please) This book even had a little altercation at the end in a small kitchen no less.

BEST USE OF: sheep and barns

ALPHA MALE – many here – none of them the hero Ian Rutledge

SPUNKY HEROINE - only one – and she is a 7

CUTE KID 10

RUNNING THROUGH HILLS AND MOUNTAINS 6

NO SEX 10

HEA(HAPPILY EVER AFTER) Never in these books

PROLOGUE/EPILOGUE None

Rating System

10 - Perfect! -

Heat Level

0 – No sex, swearing or sexual thoughts – not annoying- but very unlikely in 1919

COVER COVERS IT: The cover does reflect the story.

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## **Eleni says**

Reading this as the temperatures were rising well into summer-like territory was a little weird since it takes place during a blizzard. After the winter we had in New York, I nearly put the book down, but of course, I can't resist this mystery series, so I trudged on along with the characters through the snow and the cold. It was worth it I think for the denouement of this one was pretty good in spite of the circuitous route the book takes to get there. An entertaining read for fans of the Inspector Rutledge series and mysteries/historical fiction.

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## **Annie Oosterwyk says**

I know I said I wouldn't continue this series, but I couldn't stay away and ended up awarding 5 stars. Go figure. The characters are worth the occasional frustrating plot device. Ian Rutledge works to solve the brutal murder of an entire family in the kitchen of their farm, while a blizzard rages outside. The young boy (who is missing) is the only survivor and is under suspicion of killing his entire family. Once again, the disruption of the country by WWI plays a major role in the schemes and outcomes of the participants and it is not obvious who is guilty until the bitter end.

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## **Mary Ellen says**

The book kept me reading, but left me a little dissatisfied.

Ian Rutledge is called in to a real horror: an *In Cold Blood*-like murder of 5 members of a family, in a remote village, in the middle of a snowstorm of historic proportions. The locals judge it too treacherous for Rutledge to trek the snow-obscured paths alone, so much of the time he is confined to the village's lone "hotel," with two other guests, each connected to the murdered mother.

Like all the books I've read in this series, this was atmospheric as all get-out (claustrophobically so). And I always come away from these books feeling that I understand the WWI and post-WWI era in Britain just a little bit better, which I really enjoy.

But, once again, Rutledge largely bumbles about and discovers whodunnit by chance. (He doesn't get fooled by another character's attempt to plant false evidence, so I give him credit for that.) But this was such a horrific crime that the motive seems pretty thin. Maybe early exposure to Agatha Christie books and Perry Mason on TV have made me unreasonably expect that every fictional murderer, once caught, will spill out his whole inner life and answer the *Why?* that is at the heart of the desire to solve the crime. The answer here just didn't hack it for me, but maybe that is more like real life...

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## **Elizabeth says**

I'm never disappointed by Ian Rutledge and his ghostly companion, Hamish McLeod. Ian is haunted by Hamish who he ordered executed when the sergeant wouldn't take his men "over the top" one more time in the WW I trenches. The mysteries always involve the wounds of this particular war either in the victims or more often the perpetrators who have returned from battle wounded in spirit if not in body and sometimes in

both.

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### **Pamela says**

This book gives me great hope for Inspector Rutledge in his journey to some level of recovery from the psychological trauma of WWI. I liked the story, which reveals anger and revenge at their worst. But it also reveals Rutledge at his best, as a man, as an Inspector in the Scotland Yard. He has the intuition he is slowly learning to trust again. He can be as much protector as Inspector. He instinctively knows that healing from trauma takes time, and he advocates for others.

The murder of all but one member of a farm family in the Lake District (NE England) sends local searchers out into a snowstorm to find the young boy who escaped. Different people are implicated as Rutledge continues his investigation. The story comes to a head just as Rutledge is being pulled off the case. The murderer is revealed, and people Rutledge cares for are seriously injured.

In the end, Rutledge is motivated to mend a self-assumed estrangement from an old friend. A sign that, even though Hamish still keeps him company, he is not letting the past control his life.

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### **Kiki says**

Not a bad installment in this series...I could use a little less snow and ice after this long, hard winter we've suffered through...but a mass murder happening during a blizzard is a great premise.

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### **Shannon Causey says**

I randomly grabbed this off the library shelf and then returned to read everything I could find by this duo. The books take some work to settle into, but I love the characters and the carefully woven plots. Plus they're clean.

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### **Greg says**

It takes a very confident author, utilizing a fascinating but mentally challenged Inspector/detective, to get away with what amounts to an "In Cold Blood" sequel, although thankfully a fictional one. First, a family in the middle of nowhere is found, slaughtered, and one key to the mystery (like in Truman Capote's non-fiction masterpiece) is the order in which the victims are murdered. Second, like "In Cold Blood", we actually have two "villains/suspects," and their relationship/participation is also a key to the solution. (But there is, in essence, only one crime: taking something that doesn't belong to you. Therefore, all crime/mystery novels hinge on this singular element.) Third, like "In Cold Blood", Rutledge, much like Truman Capote himself, takes a vital interest in one of the "villians/suspects", but it is an emotional factor that is fitting to the crime itself, thus giving the end of this book a very good emotional resonance. Three stars: one for atmosphere, one for the fascinating Rutledge, and one for an extremely satisfying conclusion.

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## Joan says

Bought second-hand after seeing a review of another of Todd's novels. This is a bit of an unusual book - set in the UK post WWI, but written by Americans and for the US market, so it has a slight 'American' feel to it in places, though not enough to detract from the writing.

However, the descriptions of Urskdale and the area are beautifully written as is Rutledge. I loved the way he comes across as damaged and vulnerable and yet determined to bring the killer to justice. The writing flows, the historical details perfect as far as I could see - apart from one instance:

The book is set in 1919, and yet the detective refers to 'Edward the Eighth'. Edward VIII was born in 1894, and didn't succeed to the throne until January 1936. So in 1919, Rutledge would have referred to him as 'The Prince of Wales' - and although his name was Edward, he might well have used a different Christian name as King. (I am anal about numbers and stuff like that, so this was a bit of a niggle for me.) The actual book itself had some printing issues - pages with extra wide margins at the middle and the narrowest of outer margins that had the words going almost to the edge of the page. It was a little off-putting in places.

The story was pretty simple, but all the more readable for that; not overpopulated with unnecessary characters, a decent mystery that had me intrigued to the end, and a protagonist who is simply a delight to read ( I like angst ; )

Definitely an 'author' to follow.

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