

A Duty to the Dead

Who is Charles Todd? Or is it Who ARE Charles Todd



Charles & Carline Todd

Charles and Caroline Todd are a writing team who live on the east coast of the United States. They are the New York Times Best Selling authors of the Inspector Ian Rutledge Series and the Bess Crawford series. They have published over thirty titles including two stand-alone novels, an anthology of short stories and over twenty short stories appearing in mystery magazines' and anthologies worldwide. Their works have received the Mary Higgins Clark, Agatha, and Barry awards along with nominations for the Anthony, Edgar, and Dagger awards. They also happen to be mother and son, and they have always found it easier to work a few states apart because that happens to be how they began their collaboration. They have written two mystery series and several standalone mysteries. The Ian Rutledge series and the Bess Crawford series take place in and around WWI. Others also use historical/war settings.

The Ship

HMHS Britannic was an ocean liner and hospital ship, sister to the famous Titanic, that sank after hitting a mine in 1916 during World War I. It was the largest hospital ship in the world at the time and had a tragic fate, with 30 lives lost out of over 1,000 on board.

Who's Who - not including those they replaced.....

Crawford family/friends

- Bess (Elizabeth) Crawford = nurse/detective in the making -
- Colonel Richard Crawford (Colonel Sahib) Bess's father
- Mrs. Crawford - Bess's mother
- Simon Bandon - served in the military with the Colonel and continues to serve the family
- Mrs. Hennessey- Bess's landlady in London -
- Elayne, Marianne and Diana - Bess's flatmates in London - all nurses

Graham Family and Household

- A.Graham - Father of 4 sons (=/-) deceased
- Arthur Graham - 2nd Eldest of 4 sons in the Graham family. deceased
- Jonathan Graham home from the front - wounded
- Timothy , Graham- youngest son - club foot
- Peregrine Graham -Eldest of sons- half brother to others (different mother)
- Margaret Graham - 1st wife of Richard and Peregrine;s mother-deceased
- Mrs Graham - 2nd wife & mother of 3 sons
- Robert Douglas - Cousin of Mrs. Graham and father of ????Timothy
- Susan - housekeeper

Owlhurst and surrounding towns (part of Kent)

- Dr. Philips -
- Ted Booker (Harry -Ted's twin)
- Sally Booker Marianne Denton - Sally's mother
- Mr. Montgomery - rector
- Matty West- Susan's mother
- Inspector Howard
- Mrs Clayton-seamstress
- Mrs. Oldsey - rector's housekeeper
- Nathan Appleby - tutor when the 'boys were young
- Lady Parsons - magistrate

AND

Lily Mercer

- Mr. Owens - driver to Rye to see Mrs. Gadd
- Mrs. Gadd
- Mrs Talbott - current owner of London house where murder took place
- Daisy - laundress in London house -on-going

QUESTIONS - SOME FROM BACK OF BOOK (thanks to Barbara)

1. What is about Bess Crawford's upbringing that makes her different from other young women during this time period? What did she become a nurse?
2. What is Bess's relationship with her father like? In what ways does she take after him?
3. Why do you think Bess feels drawn to deliver Arthur's dying wish? Is it just because she is attracted to him or is there something more at stake?
4. How does the author see the setting of Owlhurst and the place's history to reinforce the mysterious tone of the book?
5. Do you agree with Bess's decision to harbor Peregrine?
6. How is Peregrine tricked into believing that he killed Lilly Mercer and how does he start to remember the truth?
7. Mrs. Graham takes drastic action to protect her son. As terrible as it is, do you find what she does understandable?
8. Why do you think the three brothers lied for the sake of their mother even if it meant betraying one of their own?
9. How do Bess's feelings toward Arthur change after she discovers what he has done? Do you think this is justifiable?
10. What do you think will happen to Peregrine? Do you think he will be able to fully integrate into normal life again?
11. Do you believe a person should do their best to honor the wishes of the dead?
12. Do you think the depiction of shell shock - now usually called PTSD - is accurate? What does it show about the period of time of the story?
13. What was the plan for 6 events that the boys made up? Was this sinister? Pranks?
14. Why did Bess start to think things were not what she'd been told?
15. Who went to visit Ted the night he died?
16. Why was Timothy's clubfoot important?
17. Did Bess have a good interview style?
18. Did Bess seem to forget the words Arthur used to make his request? What was it he said?
19. Was it a red herring when it was reported that the killer was the 'apple of his mother's eye'. Who said that?
20. Were the rector's journal entries helpful?

ACCIDENTS(?)

Bess- on her way to the Graham's the 1st time with Robert - close call or change of mind?

Dr. Hadley- broken neck - fall from horse

Mr. Craig- fall at church

Inspector Gadd-

Ted's suicide Lady Parsons- close call with horse

Peter Mason - drowned

Mr. Graham - carriage horse bolted

QUOTES

"Courage will keep her safer than fear" Bess's father. "Your father is a fool" Bess's mother

"I should have trusted my instincts and let you die" Bess to Peregrine

"I would have sworn if I had been my father's son instead of my father's daughter. As it was, I was sorely tempted" Bess

