

The Spy on Putney Bridge: A Mystery Novel of Espionage, Murder, and Betrayal in London

David Fitz-Enz

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A British woman's national loyalty is compromised during World War I in The Spy on Putney Bridge, a captivating historical novel.

In David Fitz-Enz's historical novel *The Spy on Putney Bridge*, a World War II soldier comes to terms with his family's hidden support of Germany during World War I.

In this riveting novel that's packed with surprises and reversals, Freddy, who served as a first lieutenant in WWII, learns that his origins are not as he assumed. After the war, he returns to his family home in London eager to reunite with his grandmother, Charlotte. Although a war injury causes him to use a cane, he is still her little boy and favorite.

However, as the reunion unwinds, Freddy is shocked to learn that Charlotte was a German spy in WWI—and that she has no regrets about betraying her country. Charlotte's tales of the war, and the implications of her espionage, change the way that Freddy understands WWII and his own identity. As Freddy learns more from Charlotte, he unravels the mystery of his family and comprehends their role in the larger theater of two global conflicts.

Charlotte is a delightful, twisted lead whose lively reminiscences and anecdotes bring the past to life. Although portrayed as a sweet, elderly lady in her last years, Charlotte's frail exterior conceals an iron will. Her motivations for spying are compelling. She discusses her first love with a German artist, her pregnancy, and her resentment at being married off to another man. Her high-class background gives her access to some of the delights of her time, like the Langham Hotel's Palm Court, where "The lights were bright to pick up the color of the Wedgwood china and the treats to come." The romantic, sometimes violent acts of Charlotte's younger years exist in shocking juxtaposition to her caregiver role with Freddy.

Freddy is a strong foil for Charlotte, though his story is driven by his shock at discovering that his grandma spied for the kaiser. As Freddy's sense of betrayal deepens, the novel splits into two perspectives, with Charlotte and Freddy's separate Englands appearing in alternating chapters. Time changes are indicated at the head of each chapter, making them easy to follow, and subtle historical details make the text more rich. The result is a family history that is immersive and attentive to everyday life—as well as to the far-reaching consequences of individual actions.

As Freddy attempts to understand why his grandmother preferred Germany's culture to her own, *The Spy on Putney Bridge* captivates. It's a historical novel that concerns both the covert life of a British woman whose national loyalty was compromised, and the impact of her espionage on her family.

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