



The Final Over: The Cricketers of Summer 1914

Christopher Sandford

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August 1914 brought an end to the 'Golden Age' of English cricket. At least 210 professional cricketers (out of a total of 278 registered) signed up to fight, of whom 34 were killed. Cricket stands as both a statistical, and very human, representation of the price paid in British blood as a whole. The sun-baked atmosphere of English society's last carefree weeks is graced by some of the Corinthian greats of their day, like Lord Lionel Tennyson and the polymath C B Fry, brought alive through the words of their own letters and diaries, both on the sports fields of England and in the bloody trenches of France. There is the unassuming cricketer-lawyer Robert Jesson, who writes of the 'great adventure' of the Gallipoli campaign where he fought heroically in the carnage and muck, only to be later shot dead by an enemy sniper. This is the very personal story of how some of the greatest characters ever known in English sport performed some of their greatest feats against the ticking clock of events in Europe, and the moving, sometimes tragic, always gripping story of how they met the 'great adventure'.



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