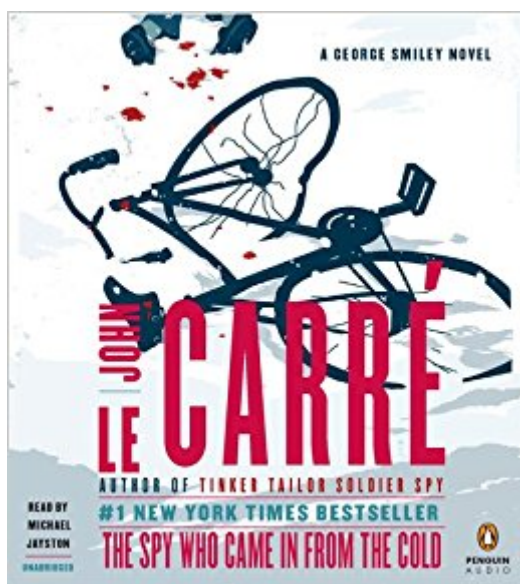


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The Spy Who Came In From The Cold: A George Smiley Novel (George Smiley Novels)



Synopsis

John le Carré's third novel — a #1 *New York Times* bestseller for 34 weeks — and the book that launched his career worldwide. In the shadow of the newly erected Berlin Wall, Alec Leamas watches as his last agent is shot dead by East German sentries. For Leamas, the head of Berlin Station, the Cold War is over. As he faces the prospect of retirement or worse — a desk job — Control offers him a unique opportunity for revenge. Assuming the guise of an embittered and dissolute ex-agent, Leamas is set up to trap Mundt, the deputy director of the East German Intelligence Service — with himself as the bait. In the background is George Smiley, ready to make the game play out just as Control wants. Setting a standard that has never been surpassed, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* is a devastating tale of duplicity and espionage. --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It would be an international crime to reveal too much of the jeweled clockwork plot of Le Carré's first masterpiece, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*. But we are at liberty to disclose that Graham Greene called it the "finest spy story ever written," and that the taut tale concerns Alec Leamas, a British agent in early Cold War Berlin. Leamas is responsible for keeping the double agents under his care undercover and alive, but East Germans start killing them, so he gets called back to London by Control, his spy master. Yet instead of giving Leamas the boot, Control gives him a scary assignment: play the part of a disgraced agent, a sodden failure everybody whispers about.

Control sends him back out into the cold--deep into Communist territory to checkmate the bad-guy spies on the other side. The political chessboard is black and white, but in human terms the vicinity of the Berlin Wall is a moral no-man's land, a gray abyss patrolled by pawns. Le Carré beats most spy writers for two reasons. First, he knows what he's talking about, since he raced around working for British Intelligence while the Wall went up. He's familiar with spycraft's fascinations, but also with the fact that it leaves ideals shaken and emotions stirred. Second, his literary tone has deep autobiographical roots. Spying is about betrayal, and Le Carré was abandoned by his mother and betrayed by his father, a notorious con man. (They figure heavily in his novels *Single & Single* and *A Perfect Spy*.) In a world of lies, Le Carré writes the bitter truth: it's every man for himself. And may the best mask win. --Tim Appelo --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

“The best spy story I have ever read.”
•Graham Greene “First-rate and tremendously exciting.”
•Daphne du Maurier “Le Carré is one of the best novelists of any kind we have.”
•Vanity Fair
“Written with a pitiless, elegant clarity. The Spy who Came in from the Cold is a first-rate thriller and more.”
•Time

I can't believe I'm writing a spy thriller and never really read anything by John le Carre'. This is an old school novel, but fantastic. In today's world all of the interrogation stuff would be considered dragging the story down, but true spy readers will appreciate the authentic feel of the story. It's not all flashing bang like the movies you know!

I have read and re-read all of Le Carre's "Smiley" novels, and my enjoyment just increases. He's such a fine writer - each re-reading, for me, reveals gems of wordsmithing and character revelation that I somehow missed the first time. This book, his first commercial success, was a revelation at the time - a non-jingoistic, clear-eyed look at the differences between the spymasters of the two Cold War blocs - Soviet Union vs. Western allies. Hint: There aren't any. In fact, when this book first came out, Le Carre's former colleagues in the British secret service accused him of being a traitor and damaging the department's morale! Apparently, the truth hurt. Anyway, I thought it was splendid - not his best, but certainly quite good - and I look forward to reading it again a year or so from now. Next up for me: the climactic Smiley's People.

The Spy Who Came in From the Cold is a fantastic spy vs. spy story set in the late 60s Cold War. Alec Leamas is a lonely and haunted spook who is well past his prime and knows it. After years of being in "The Cold" his moral compass is seriously confused, his loyalties are questionable and his daily scotch intake is enormous. For the entirety of his career he has been outsmarted and outgunned by his spook counterpart in East Germany and now in the twilight years of his life and career he is given the opportunity for the ultimate Coup de Grace. Alec Leamas is a true gem in a literary world over run by Bondesque assassin spies. The stark, arid and cold world that Le Carre paints in this book is fantastic and proves to be the perfect arena for a washed up old man to consider a life spent in the grey areas of morality. Leamas's character development is absolutely superb throughout and by itself would provide a worthy read, but the plot is fantastic. Throughout the book the plot twists and turns in unimaginable ways that, in my imagination, must be hauntingly reminiscent of what the real spy game looks like. The prose and literary style of this book are without peer in the genre, the main character is intriguing, the plot is amazingly twisted and convoluted, and the pace never slows down. This is my current favorite in the genre - Highly Recommended

This is an old Cold War classic, the first triumph by John Le Carré. It is suitably engrossing and depressing. I had forgotten or not known the ending, which I dare not reveal to you. Today it makes reading just as good as in the sixties, and the horrific portraits of the East Berliners even at that early stage of Soviet colonialism in Germany are chilling, the women party leaders sexless, cold, sallow and unhealthy, the men unstable and angry. Smiley makes only a cameo appearance, but a pivotal one. He returns later. Read it and drown your sorrows in the agony of history. Cheers!

I loved this book when it came out some years ago, and really appreciated reading it again and again. I am also reading Le Carre's Book on his life, and his sections on what was going on with his life at the time the book was written...I also appreciated his take on what went on during the filming of this book. This book, along with Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy are one of my favorite Le Carre Books..especially now I know the background of what was going on in his own life at that time..

This is Le Carre's third book. It is his second spy story. Smiley is lurking in the background as a puppet master. The character is a grizzled Circus operative Alec Leamas. If you have read Le Carre's first novel "Call For The Dead" (1961) some characters are carried over into this story, the principle one being Mundt. Here we see Le Carre's style being developed and refined for his novels to come. Do

not skip the Introductions on the Kindle editions. They are worth your time as le Carre, at least in the first four stories, discusses the process of his writing. This is his first big critical success as a writer for the genre. If you have viewed the 1965 movie you will realize that Richard Burton was perfect casting for Leamas.

The Kindle edition of this book is superb, without any formatting errors as far as I can tell--and I read through the entire book. This is an intellectual espionage story that builds tension as things unfold. Great dialogue and characters, with a powerful plot and emotional punch. I've read it three times over the years, and it's arguably Le Carre's best work.

A good and interesting read, the first I've read of John le Carre except for one when I was much younger that was missing the last couple of pages. As I learned in this one, without the last couple of pages the reader is left hanging -- although, in some ways, I still felt like I was left hanging -- this time on purpose. I plan to read more by le Carre in the future.

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