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The Complete George Smiley Radio Dramas



Synopsis

George Smiley is one of the most brilliantly realised characters in British fiction. Bespectacled, tubby, eternally middle-aged and deceptively ordinary, he has a mind like a steel trap and is said to possess ‘the cunning of Satan and the conscience of a virgin’TM. With a star cast including Kenneth Cranham, Eleanor Bron, Brian Cox, Ian MacDiarmid, Anna Chancellor, Hugh Bonneville and Lindsay Duncan, these enthralling dramatisations perfectly capture the atmosphere of le Carré’s taut, thrilling spy novels. *Call for the Dead* is the first Smiley novel, which sees him looking into an apparent suicide only to uncover a murderous conspiracy. *A Murder of Quality* finds Smiley investigating a murder in a private school. Who could have hated Stella Rode enough to kill her? *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* introduces Alec Leamas, a British intelligence officer whose East Berlin network is in tatters. Recalled to London, he is offered revenge on the man who destroyed his agents: but to have it he must stay out in the cold a little longer... *The Looking Glass War* features former spy Fred Leiser, lured back from retirement to investigate a claim that Soviet missiles are being installed close to the West German border. But the harsh realities of the Cold War now prevail, and there is no place for heroes... *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* is the first book in the Karla trilogy, and sees Smiley searching for a mole who has infiltrated the Circus. *The Honourable Schoolboy* sees Smiley determined to destroy his nemesis, Karla, and his spy networks. He recruits Jerry Westerby – the Honourable Schoolboy of the title – and despatches him to the Far East, where a new battle is about to begin... Smiley’s *People* finds George Smiley called out of retirement to exorcise some Cold War ghosts from his clandestine past. What follows takes to a thrilling conclusion his career-long, serpentine battle with the enigmatic and ruthless Russian spymaster Karla... *The Secret Pilgrim* sees Smiley invited to dine with the eager new recruits at the Circus. He offers them his thoughts on espionage and, in doing so, prompts a former colleague to re-examine his own eventful secret life. ‘A radio triumph... Simon Russell Beale’s pitch-perfect master spy’TM - *Financial Times*. 21 CDs. 21 hrs. --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

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Customer Reviews

"A radio triumph . . . Simon Russell Beale's pitch-perfect master spy." â "Financial Times --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

John le Carré is the nom de plume of David John Moore Cornwell, who was born in 1931 in Poole, Dorset and educated at Sherborne School, the University of Berne (where he studied German literature for a year) and at Lincoln College, Oxford, where he graduated with a first-class degree in modern languages. He taught at Eton from 1956 to 1958 and was a member of the British Foreign Service from 1959 to 1964, serving first as Second Secretary in the British Embassy in Bonn and subsequently as political consul in Hamburg. His first novel, a story of espionage called *Call for the Dead*, was published in 1961. It was quickly followed in 1962 by *A Murder of Quality*, a mystery story set in an English public school. His third novel, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, secured him a wide reputation, and was made into a successful film starring Richard Burton. This was followed by *The Looking Glass War*, *A Small Town in Germany* and *The Naive and Sentimental Lover*. However, the success of his third novel was consolidated by the acclaim for his trilogy *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, *The Honourable Schoolboy* and *Smiley's People*. Next came *The Little Drummer Girl*, which was a departure from the Smiley novels, and dealt with the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. This was followed by his most autobiographical novel, *A Perfect Spy*. Then came *The Russia House*, *The Secret Pilgrim*, *The Night Manager*, *Our Game*, *The Tailor of Panama*, *Single & Single*, *The Constant Gardener*, *Absolute Friends*, *The Mission Song* and *A Delicate Truth*. As well as *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, many other le Carré novels have been made into films or television series. Alec Guinness starred as George Smiley in the TV mini-series of *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and *Smiley's People*, while Denholm Elliott took on the role for *A Murder of Quality*. The 2011 remake of *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* starred Gary Oldman as Smiley, and featured a stellar cast including Colin Firth and Benedict Cumberbatch. *A Most Wanted Man* (2013) starred Philip Seymour Hoffman in one of his last roles, and 2014 saw the release of *Our Kind of Traitor*, featuring Ewan McGregor, Damian Lewis and Naomie Harris. David Cornwell has won many prestigious

prizes and awards for his novels over the years. He is an Honorary Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford and has Honorary Doctorates at the University of Bern and Oxford University. He has won the Crime Writers' Association Gold Dagger twice (for *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, which also won him the Dagger of Daggers in 2005, and *The Honourable Schoolboy*) and in 1988 he won the Diamond Dagger for Lifetime Achievement. He donated his literary archive, containing 85 boxes of draft manuscripts, to the Bodleian Library in 2010. --This text refers to an alternate Audio CD edition.

These stories are presented on 21 each one hour CDs. The stories are two or three hours long. The two hour ones are the *Looking Glass War*, *Call for the Dead*, and *A Murder of Quality*. The presentation is in stereo and the speakers are spread (most of the time) across the left-right space so you can keep track of them more easily. There are all sorts of background sound effects. The stories are abridged and simplified somewhat in order to make them fit into the time limits. Also radio cannot show things visually and these things are even spoken or missing. One example is the missing portion of the *Tinker Tailor* story when Smiley steps in a water puddle that is deep enough to submerge his shoes and fill them with water. Some things are described verbally, such as Peter using a sports car to transport Smiley to Oliver's home. Some poetic license has been taken to slightly alter the stories. One example is where Irena and Boris are in Hong Kong instead of Spain. All in all, These stories are just as entertaining as the book and the dramatizations made fifteen or more years ago (as opposed to the more recent dramatizations that are terrible). I find that listening to them with headphones is more entertaining because I feel that I am there with the people.

Voice acting is perfect. Simon Russel Beal almost sounds identical to Alex Guinness. The cast of characters are likewise cast perfectly and use the perfect balance of dark emotion and level enunciation to create gripping stories that measure up to the Hollywood productions starring Guinness and Oldman. The Ambient sound effects are just right and add to the superb visualization that unfolds as the scenes play out. Word of recommendation, listen to these at night or in the dark with a good stereo system or a good set of Headphones. If you are burning it, be sure to do it lossless in ALAC (iTunes), WAV or FLAC. If possible, listen by a fire! don't give 4 star Rating very often, but this set is everything I was hoping it to be.

I recently re-read many LeCarre novels and because my work sometimes takes me a long drives or

flights, I thought this might be fun. Some of the stories are abridged and sometimes interesting details are edited out. Many of these stories have been made into TV series or movies: The Spy Who Came in from the Cold, Smiley's People, Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy,

Fab!

In the past I've never been much on these sorts of things. The BBC production of Len Deighton's Bomber changed all that. When I saw this I jumped at it, and I was immensely impressed. I had read all of these books years ago, but these dramatizations are a completely different experience. Simon Russell Beale is absolutely wonderful as George Smiley, but he is accompanied by some of Britain's best actors. I think my personal favorite is The Spy Who Came In From The Cold, with Brian Cox as Alec Leamas. I highly recommend these productions. They made me look forward to commuting every day!

These are extremely well done dramatizations. I wish all book dramatizations met this quality. Top marks.

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