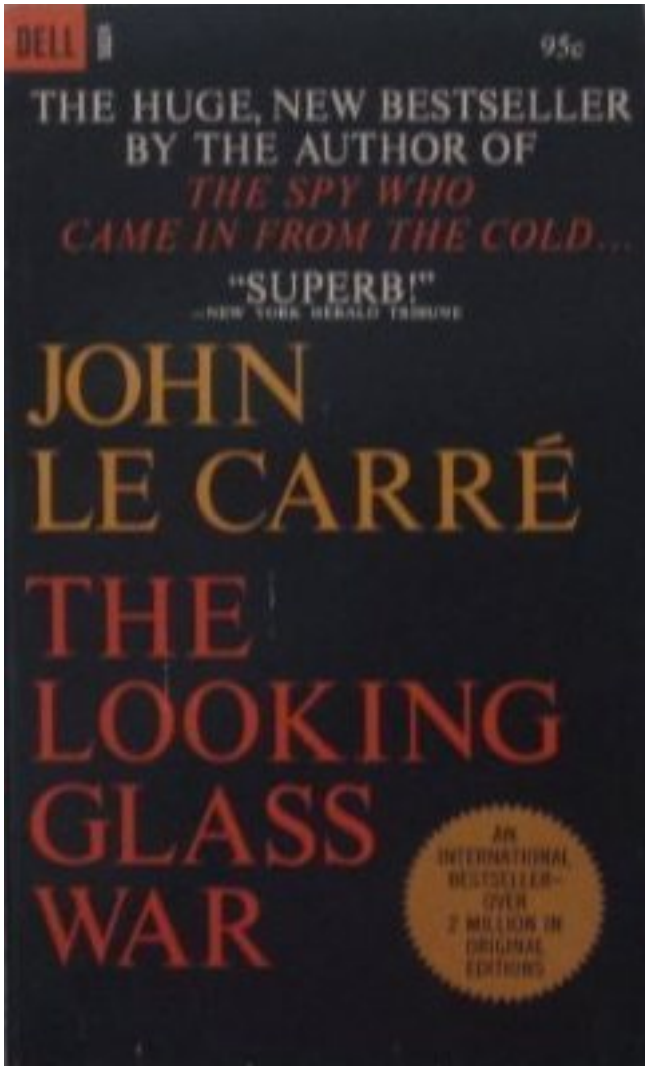

John le Carré

The Looking Glass War (George Smiley #4)



Title: The Looking Glass War (George Smiley #4)

Author: John le Carré

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Description

John le Carré's classic novels deftly navigate readers through the intricate shadow worlds of international espionage with unsurpassed skill and knowledge, and have earned him unprecedented worldwide acclaim.

THE LOOKING GLASS WAR

Once upon a time the distinction had been clear: the Circus handled all things political while the Department dealt with matters military. But over the years, power shifted and the Circus elbowed the Department out. Now, suddenly, the Department has a job on its hands. Evidence suggests Soviet missiles are being positioned close to the German border. Vital film is missing and a courier is dead. Lacking active agents, but possessed of an outdated mandate to proceed, the Department has to find an old hand to prove its mettle. Fred Leiser, German-speaking Pole turned Englishman -- once a qualified radio operator, now involved in the motor trade -- must be called back to the colors and sent East....

Insightful reviews

Maureen: LeCarre excels at bringing the human condition into his work, and nowhere is it more evident than in these pages. An wartime bureaucratic agency is gradually dwindling away until it is provided with information that the Russians are arming missiles on the East German border. Without resources to track down the intelligence, the agency relies upon a former spy behind the Iron Curtain to act as their agent. They constantly have to lie to him so that he will not discover how close to defunct the agency really is. The Circus, the agency that Control and George Smiley and a host of other characters from LeCarre books both written and yet-to-be, get in on the action. As the story unfolds, there are ethical decisions which await, and in the end, the conflict between loyalty to the agent and loyalty to the agency take center stage.

I think this was LeCarre's fourth book. It is more of a character study than an action thriller. That being said, one of the characters being studied is history, and another is government. This book has earned a place of honor for the moral dilemmas it presents to the reader.

Kev Bartlett: The Looking Glass War was published shortly after perhaps Le Carre's most famous work [The Spy Who Came In from the Cold](#) and is every bit as murky, grim and depressing as the aforementioned (possibly even more so).

The book starts brilliantly in a Finish airport where a British agent (Taylor) anticaptures the arrival of a pilot who, having undertaken a risky flyover, should have some vital information in his possession. From the moment the uneasily dialogue with the airport barman begins you know this agents fate hangs in balance. And so sets forth a chain of events that culminates with four over-the-hill civil servants huddled together in a North German farmhouse hoping to recapture their WW2 glory days.

No characters come out well in this tale. Using one as an example: Avery, Leclerc's personal assistant, is a hopelessly naive fish out of water and is left aghast when he's tasked with returning to Finland to piece together Taylor's demise. His section reads almost like a horror film when he's holed up in the airport hotel jumping out of his skin over the smallest of knocks at the door. Spare a thought though for poor, poor Leiser; our main character in the second act. The moment the department tracks down the Anglicized Pole, who once was a British agent in WW2, for a risky cross border operation into East Germany you know he's doomed. Like the department itself he jumps at the chance to recreate his war hero image even if its only shared by the misfits in British intelligence. Quite how Leiser trusts and adores the monstrously aloof Haldane so much is particularly puzzling to me. But there comes the crux of the matter. The elite have found their willing pleb to do their grubby work for them and if he fails so what? Who will miss a Pole working in a petrol station?

Its scenarios like these that can make Le Carre particularly hard going at times; which is why he has to often rely on his most renowned creation George Smiley who seems to be the only character that possesses a moral compass.

The Looking Glass War is undoubtedly one of Le Carre's finest amongst his illustrious array of works. Highly recommended.

Donna: I have only read one other John le Carre book and I remember not being impressed. I liked this one so much better. I loved how his characters aren't super human and the egotistical savior to all. They are normal people and sometimes things don't work out quite right. He managed to insert realistic emotion into this book. I was hoping it was longer when I reached the end.

Daniel Bratell: John le Carré is not for everybody and specifically, he is not for me. He describes an international that's as alien as it really is boring and absurd. I do not doubt it really is realistic, yet realism is not what makes an relaxing analyzing experience. This is one in all just a couple of books ever that I have made up our minds not to learn through. In most cases simply because I used to be doubtful even if I should still ever begin it, yet determined to have a pass hoping it might be diversified from the former Carré e-book I read. It wasn't. Actually, contemplating different setting, it was once scarily similar.

Agnieszka: have you learnt what love is? I'm going to inform you: it's no matter what you possibly can betray. If there's something like a literary version of a secret agent such a lot people might most likely point out on James Bond. Fast automobiles, appealing women, shootings and all that fake glamour. And after not easy operating day - martini shaken now not stirred or conversely. Obviously, yet no longer in LeCarre's world. upset, drained and cynical males on the planet the place aim is vague, compliment uncertain, morality ambiguous and victory misleading. This can be a spy's fact and "The taking a look glass conflict" matches into that development of lifelike undercover agent novel completely. John le Carré is depicting a hopeless, gray international; fact during which guy is simply a pawn within the other's online game and the declarations and agreements are simply damaged. There's no position for naïve idealists. "The taking a look glass struggle" is without unforeseen twists and turns, bold chases, exciting struggle scenes. The plot is concentrated on competition among intelligence

devices and deliberate motion in South Germany. enjoying hare and hounds and looking for go well with candidate to harmful activity are within the centre of the book; and virtually from the beginning you're feeling it's not going to finish well. This is a research of morbid ambition and envy, ignoble betrayal and mediocrity within the intelligence group. But, such a lot of all it is a tale approximately loneliness of a undercover agent. In the identify of what? LeCarre turns out to ask. Novel is bleakly darkish and miserable, an environment claustrophobic, stronger through photograph of grotesque atmosphere and gloomy weather. And after examining you wish anything a lot enhanced than martini to appease that overwhelming feeling of melancholy and anger.

John: ...he was once witnessing an insane relay race during which each one contestant ran speedier and longer than the last, arriving nowhere yet at his personal destruction. For a few cause I hold considering le Carre as a author of thrillers, and it truly is actual that his contemporary crop of novels certainly persist with a type of mystery model, yet his previous novels, just like the secret agent Who got here in from the chilly and an ideal Spy, are quite excessive tragedies that use a number of the reversals of the normal secret agent mystery to ease the supply of the hearty dose of cynicism and disorder that fill his characters and the associations on the middle of his stories. they are very good graphics of the sluggish flow in the direction of madness that the chilly warfare set off, and so they come upon as lovely thorough condemnations of the extra secretive machineries that waged that war. The taking a look Glass battle is likely one of the least thriller-y and so much excessive tragedy of the le Carre i have but read. Like in classical Greek drama the place the tragic hero commits an act of hubris and is introduced low through the gods, within the taking a look Glass struggle it's a secretive British army intelligence business enterprise that commits an act of bureaucratic overreach culminating within the recruiting and coaching of a undercover agent to ship into East Germany to collect details on a possible missile site. Le Carre seeds the tale from the very starting with very refined tricks that the folks working this corporation are over their heads--the immense deal the characters make out of having the ability to cost expenses, for instance, and their pleasure at having the ability set up a automobile provider from the ministry, their inferiority advanced in the direction of their extra useful sister intelligence agency, nicknamed the Circus. by the point we get to education the agent--the unfortunate, hapless Leiser--alarm bells are ringing within the reader's head as Leiser fumbles via one keep fit exercise after another, by no means studying easy methods to paintings the instant set, for instance, the entire whereas the pinnacle of this intelligence organisation glance on seeing just a go back to their WWII-era operational glories. it is a bit cringe-inducing to learn for those who observe that this may now not finish good (and it isn't a spoiler to bare this, since, as I say above, the writer telegraphs this gorgeous early on), however it remains to be thrilling, with an finishing that takes just a little the wind out of you.

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