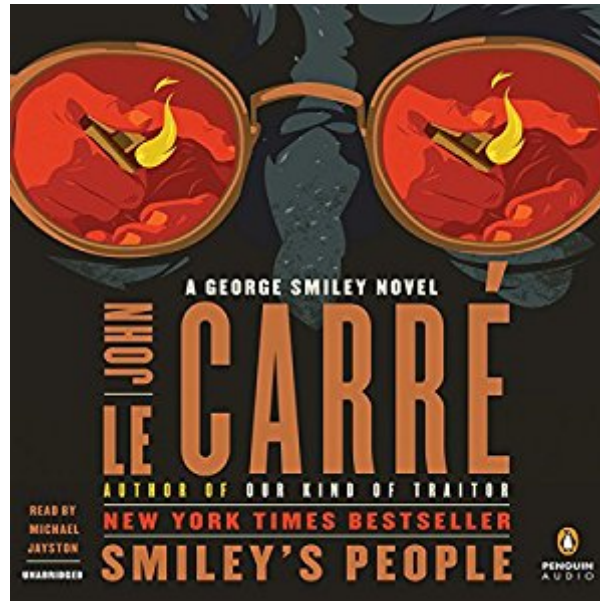




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Smiley's People: A George Smiley Novel



Synopsis

Tell Max that it concerns the Sandman.... A very junior agent answers Vladimir's call, but it could have been the Chief of the Circus himself. No one at the British Secret Service considers the old spy to be anything except a senile has-been who can't give up the game - until he's shot in the face at point-blank range. Although George Smiley (code-name: Max) is officially retired, he's summoned to identify the body now bearing Moscow Centre's bloody imprimatur. As he works to unearth his friend's fatal secrets, Smiley heads inexorably toward one final reckoning with Karla - his "dark grail". In Smiley's People, master storyteller John le Carré brings his acclaimed Karla trilogy to its unforgettable, spellbinding conclusion.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mr. Le Carre is an absolute master at drawing the reader fully into his story and its parallel evolving plots. I particularly love the way he builds each of his characters so vividly and to a point where they are thoroughly real and lifelike, with all human traits, weaknesses and strengths. I would highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a good "thinking person's" thriller. I personally rate books based on how well they captivate me and draw me into the story. For that reason, I give this 5 stars. My only criticism (if it's a criticism at all) is that I would like to have seen more in the series of "Smiley vs Karla" but do fully understand when an author wishes to quit a story line while he's ahead. Well done and Thank you Mr. Cornwell. Sincerely looking forward to many more tales from you.

I have read this book several times and each and every time, I discover something new. Le Carre's style is simply outstanding, truly a master of the English language, painting vivid characters, scenes, and sceneries with words. I recommend reading the three books in the Smiley series, to fully appreciate the man's journey through life, fighting his personal demons by discharging his duty towards his country, with the truth as his guide.

This was a detective story not spy vs. spy. With the detective being my favorite spy, George Smiley. This old spy can gather evidence and deduce the unknown with the best of them. Great detectives want to know the whole story, not just the perpetrators. Could lead to a rare bonus in the end ???Also, I am now a fan of Toby Esterhase. Always thought he was just an untrustworthy little creep but the little creep gets to show some skill here. Plus, he has some classic quotes. This guy could sell ice cubes to eskimos while robbing your igloo at the same time. The characters are not complex, you already know half of them and the others are easy to envision, but how did this all come to be and why ? You get to start from scratch with George Smiley and figure it out. Fun !

I used to own "The Quest for Karla" omnibus of which this work is the last book. It was destroyed by too many readings. So I purchased the kindle edition since I find it uncomfortable now that am older to hold a book opened. I have all John Le Carré's books either on the shelf or in my Kindle. I could say that "Smiley's People" is one of the 7 or 8 top preferred although I also re-read with similar anticipation and pleasure such titles as "The Night Manager", "Single and Single" or "The Tailor of Panama". It is perhaps the atmosphere that touches me more closely in "A Small Town in Germany" or in "Smiley's people". This particular book is a thoroughly satisfying end of the trilogy. As different from the "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy" as from "The Honourable Schoolboy" (which, IMHO is a superb, complex work which might require multiple readings) it is also a "Spy novel" but as usual with Le Carré, it is so much more than that. Many of the protagonists of the 2 previous tomes re-appear and, for the curtain call, even Anne's lighter. In typical Le Carré style, the story progresses through a succession of scenes tour à tour macabre, frightening, sad, suspenseful, humorous or rejoicing, observed through the humane vision of a master. True to the genre Le Carré also gives us some good spy tradecraft. He is my favorite author by far although my compatriots - their government rather - are sometimes in his sight. (with good reason probably) Everybody gets the same treatment anyway. Certainly his hero has no illusion about himself no matter what his nemesis Karla thinks about "the last illusion of the illusionless man". Although Le

CarrÃ© describes terrible situations, life goes on (for most of the participants anyway) with its little habits and comforts and funny moments that he presents with much humor and compassion.

Over the course of Smiley's People (and the two previous novels in the "Karla" trilogy), author Le CarrÃ© pits his non-action hero against an equally strong-willed and cunning enemy Karla. You'll have to flash back to cold war days, when it was the "west" versus the Soviet Empire. In particular, Britain served most nobly on the front line of this war, exceeding the incapable French and split-in-half Germans. George Smiley exemplifies all that is British in his ability to ponder the possibilities and circumstances as he pries deep into the enemy's heart to bring him to the other side of the dividing line. This is where Le CarrÃ© shines, in depicting the minutia without bogging down. One gets a sense of the tension and tedium of "spy" operations. There is much less flashy gun battles, car chases, and beautiful women (as there would be in a Bond novel); plenty more intellectual exploration. While I find Le CarrÃ©'s take on some of the politics a bit droll, he embodies his characters with a sense of duty and purpose lacking in the superficial stories of the current crop in this field. George Smiley may have some doubts, but he follows through, which is the most important thing. One does not shirk one's responsibilities, especially be they to country. When facing an enemy as clever and equally committed as Karla, Smiley must use all his wits to achieve success. Again, this is the strongest part of the book, peeling away the layers of the onion to figure out exactly what is going on and how it will play on both sides of the iron curtain. This is the second time I've read this book, and I'll probably read it several more times because there is that much content worth enjoying.

This is a great book. To get a preview of Smiley then read Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy. Both are great books. The third in the trilogy is The Honorable Schoolboy. It too is a good book but the first two are much better.

Perhaps the best of the series. Introspective and sadly brilliant. This novel should remove all doubt about the true emptiness of the life in the Intelligence Service.

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