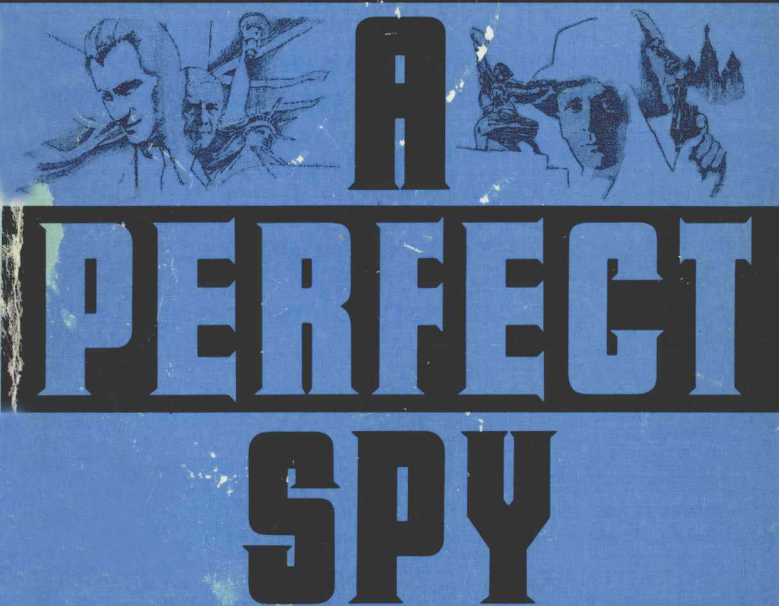


#1  
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

# JOHN LE CARRÉ

AUTHOR OF *THE RUSSIA HOUSE*



# A PERFECT SPY

John le Carré



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THE LOOKING GLASS WAR  
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THE SPY WHO CAME  
IN FROM THE COLD  
TINKER, TAILOR,  
SOLDIER, SPY

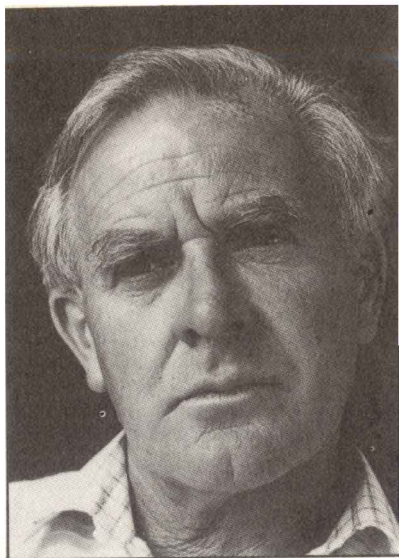


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**JOHN LE CARRÉ** is the pseudonym of David Cornwell. Born in 1931, he attended the universities of Berne and Oxford, taught at Eton, and later entered the British Foreign Service. His first two novels were *Call for the Dead* (1961) and *A Murder of Quality* (1962). His third novel, *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* (1963), was greeted with great enthusiasm and secured his worldwide reputation. John le Carré is also the author of *The Naive and Sentimental Lover*; *The Looking Glass War*; *A Small Town in Germany*; *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*; *The Honourable Schoolboy*; *Smiley's People*; *The Little Drummer Girl*; *A Perfect Spy*; and *The Russia House*.

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*—People*

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***RICK PYM is Magnus Pym's charismatic father. A charming, unprincipled con man who created a deadly, inescapable legacy of treachery and deception to pass along to his unsuspecting heir. . . .***

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"A TWILIGHT WORLD WHERE NOTHING IS AS IT SEEMS, WHERE EACH ENCOUNTER POSES A RIDDLE. . . . The novel unexpectedly resembles a court of law in which Pym puts himself, his family, intimates and colleagues on the witness stand. It's a dangerous psychoanalytical endgame, with the marvelously charming, worldly Pym playing both doctor and patient."

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*JACK BROTHERHOOD is Pym's superior, rival, mentor, friend. Like a modern-day Dr. Frankenstein, he is threatened with ruin at the hands of his own creation. . . .*

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"STIRRING, MAGICAL, GRAVELY JOYOUS."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"EVEN MORE THAN THE HERALDED KARLA TRILOGY, IT EXPOSES THE HUMAN PRICE ONE PAYS FOR LIVING 'ON SEVERAL PLANES AT ONCE.' Far more than a thriller, *A Perfect Spy* is a meditation on the problem of identity in a complex world."

—*Booklist*

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**A SMALL TOWN IN GERMANY**

**SMILEY'S PEOPLE**

**THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD**

**TINKER, TAILOR, SOLDIER, SPY**

*For R, who shared the journey, lent me his dog,  
and tossed me a few pieces of his life*

**A man who has two women loses his soul.  
But a man who has two houses loses his head.**

**Proverb**

In the small hours of a blustery October morning in a south Devon coastal town that seemed to have been deserted by its inhabitants, Magnus Pym got out of his elderly country taxi-cab and, having paid the driver and waited till he had left, struck out across the church square. His destination was a terrace of ill-lit Victorian boardinghouses with names like Bel-a-Vista, The Commodore and Eureka. In build he was powerful but stately, a representative of something. His stride was agile, his body forward-sloping in the best tradition of the Anglo-Saxon administrative class. In the same attitude, whether static or in motion, Englishmen have hoisted flags over distant colonies, discovered the sources of great rivers, stood on the decks of sinking ships. He had been travelling in one way or another for sixteen hours but he wore no overcoat or hat. He carried a fat black briefcase of the official kind and in the other hand a green Harrods bag. A strong sea wind lashed at his city suit, salt rain stung his eyes, balls of spume skimmed across his path. Pym ignored them. Reaching the porch of a house marked "No Vacancies" he pressed the bell and waited, first for the outside light to go on, then for the chains to be unfastened from inside. While he waited a church clock began striking five. As if in answer to its summons Pym turned on his heel and stared back at the square. At the graceless tower of the Baptist church posturing against the racing clouds. At the writhing monkey-puzzle trees, pride of the ornamental gardens. At the empty bandstand. At the bus shelter. At the dark patches of the side streets. At the doorways one by one.

"Why Mr. Canterbury, it's you," an old lady's voice objected sharply as the door opened behind him. "You bad man. You caught the night sleeper again, I can tell. Why ever didn't you telephone?"

"Hullo, Miss Dubber," said Pym. "How are you?"

"Never mind how I am, Mr. Canterbury. Come in at once. You'll catch your death."

But the ugly windswept square seemed to have locked Pym in its spell. "I thought Sea View was up for sale, Miss D," he remarked as she tried to pluck him into the house. "You told me Mr. Cook moved out when his wife died. Wouldn't set foot in the place, you said."

"Of course he wouldn't. He was allergic. Come in this instant, Mr. Canterbury, and wipe your feet before I make your tea."

"So what's a light doing in his upstairs bedroom window?" Pym asked as he allowed her to tug him up the steps.

Like many tyrants Miss Dubber was small. She was also old and powdery and lopsided, with a crooked back that rumpled her dressing-gown and made everything round her seem lopsided too.

"Mr. Cook has rented out the upper flat, Celia Venn has taken it to paint in. That's you all over." She slid a bolt. "Disappear for three months, come back in the middle of the night and worry about a light in someone's window." She slid another. "You'll never change, Mr. Canterbury. I don't know why I bother."

"Who on earth is Celia Venn?"

"Dr. Venn's daughter, silly. She wants to see the sea and paint it." Her voice changed abruptly. "Why Mr. Canterbury, how dare you? Take that off this instant."

With the last bolt in place Miss Dubber had straightened up as best she could and was preparing herself for a reluctant hug. But instead of her customary scowl, which nobody believed in for a moment, her poky little face had twisted in fright.

"Your horrid black tie, Mr. Canterbury. I won't have death in the house, I won't have you bring it. Who is it for?"

Pym was a handsome man, boyish but distinguished. In his early fifties he was in his prime, full of zeal and urgency in a place that knew none. But the best thing about him in Miss Dubber's view was his lovely smile that gave out so much warmth and truth and made her feel right.

"Just an old Whitehall colleague, Miss D. No one to flap about. No one close."

"Everyone's close at my age, Mr. Canterbury. What was his name?"

"I hardly knew the fellow," said Pym emphatically, untying his tie and slipping it into his pocket. "And I'm certainly not going to tell you his name and have you hunting the obituaries, so there." His eye as he said this fell on the visitors' book, which lay open on the hall table beneath the orange nightlight that he had fitted to her ceiling on his last visit. "Any casualties at all, Miss D?" he asked as he scanned the list. "Runaway couples, mystery princesses? What happened to those two lover-boys who came at Easter?"

"They were not lover-boys," Miss Dubber corrected him severely as she hobbled towards the kitchen. "They took single rooms and in the evenings they watched football on the television. What was that you said, Mr. Canterbury?"

But Pym had not spoken. Sometimes his gushes of communication were like phone calls cut off by some inner censorship before they could be completed. He turned back a page and then another.

"I don't think I'll do casualties any more," Miss Dubber said through the open kitchen doorway as she lit the gas. "Sometimes when the doorbell goes I sit here with Toby and I say: 'You answer it, Toby.' He doesn't of course. A tortoiseshell cat can't answer a door. So we go on sitting here. We sit and we wait and we hear the footsteps go away again." She cast a sly glance at him. "You don't think our Mr. Canterbury is smitten, do you, Toby?" she enquired archly of her cat. "We're very *bright* this morning. Very *shiny*. Ten years younger, by the look of our coat, Mr. Canterbury is." Receiving no helpful response from the cat, she addressed herself to the canary. "Not that he'd ever tell us, would he, Dickie? We'd be the last to know. Tzuktzuk? Tzuktzuk?"

"John and Sylvia Illegible of Wimbledon," said Pym, still at the visitors' book.

"John makes computers, Sylvia programs them, and they're leaving tomorrow," she told him sulkily. For Miss Dubber hated to admit there was anyone in her world but beloved Mr. Canterbury. "Now what have you done to me this time?" she exclaimed angrily. "I won't have it. Take it back."

But Miss Dubber was not angry; she would have it, and Pym would not take it back: a thickly knitted cashmere shawl of white and gold, still in its Harrods box and swathed in its original Harrods tissue paper which she seemed to treasure

almost above their contents. For having taken out the shawl she first smoothed the paper and folded it along its creases before replacing it in the box, then put the box on the cupboard shelf where she kept her greatest treasures. Only then did she let him wrap the shawl round her shoulders and hug her in it, while she scolded him for his extravagance.

Pym drank tea with Miss Dubber, Pym appeased her, Pym ate a piece of her shortbread and praised it to the skies although she told him it was burned. Pym promised to mend the sink plug for her and unblock the waste-pipe and take a look at the cistern on the first floor while he was about it. Pym was swift and over-attentive and the brightness she had shrewdly remarked on did not leave him. He lifted Toby on to his lap and stroked him, a thing he had never done before, and which gave Toby no discernible pleasure. He received the latest news of Miss Dubber's ancient Aunt Al, when normally the mention of Aunt Al was enough to hurry him off to bed. He questioned her, as he always did, about the local goings-on since his last visit, and listened approvingly to the catalogue of Miss Dubber's complaints. And quite often, as he nodded her through her answers, he either smiled to himself for no clear reason or became drowsy and yawned behind his hand. Till suddenly he put down his teacup and stood up as if he had another train to catch.

"I'll be staying a decent length of time if it's all right with you, Miss D. I've a bit of heavy writing to do."

"That's what you always say. You were going to live here for ever last time. Then it's up first thing and back to Whitehall without your egg."

"Maybe as much as two weeks. I've taken some leave of absence so that I can work in peace."

Miss Dubber pretended to be appalled. "But whatever will happen to the country? How shall Toby and I stay safe, with no Mr. Canterbury at the helm to steer us?"

"So what are Miss D's plans?" he asked winningly, reaching for his briefcase, which by the effort he needed to lift it looked as heavy as a chunk of lead.

"Plans?" Miss Dubber echoed, smiling rather beautifully in her mystification. "I don't make plans at my age, Mr. Canterbury. I let God make them. He's better at them than I am, isn't he, Toby? More reliable."

"What about that cruise you're always talking about? It's time you gave yourself a treat, Miss D."

"Don't be daft. That was years ago. I've lost the urge."

"I'll still pay."

"I know you will, bless you."

"I'll do the phoning if you want. We'll go to the travel agent together. I looked one out for you as a matter of fact. There's the *Orient Explorer* leaves Southampton just a week away. They've got a cancellation. I asked."

"Are you trying to get rid of me, Mr. Canterbury?"

Pym took a moment to laugh. "God and me together couldn't dislodge you, Miss D," he said.

From the hall Miss Dubber watched him up the narrow stairs, admiring the youthful springiness of his tread despite the heavy briefcase. He's going to a high-level conference. A weighty one too. She listened to him step lightly along the corridor to room 8 overlooking the square, which was her longest let ever, in her whole long life. His loss has not affected him, she decided in relief as she heard him unlock the door and close it softly behind him. Just some old colleague from the Ministry, no one close. She wanted nothing to disturb him. He was to remain the same perfect gentleman who had appeared on her doorstep years ago, looking for what he had called a sanctuary without a telephone even though she had a perfectly good one in the kitchen. And had paid her in advance six-monthly ever since, cash-cash, no receipts. And had built the little stone wall beside the garden path for her, all in an afternoon to surprise her on her birthday, bullied the mason and the bricklayer. And had put the slates back on the roof with his own hands after the storm in March. And had sent her flowers and fruit and chocolates and souvenirs from amazing foreign places without properly explaining what he did there. And had helped her with the breakfasts when she had too many casuals, and listened to her about her nephew who had all the schemes for making money that never came to anything: the latest was starting up a bingo hall in Exeter but first he needed the capital for his overdraft. And received no mail or visitors and played no instrument except the wireless in foreign, and never used the telephone except for local tradesmen. And never told her anything about himself except that he lived in London and worked in Whitehall but trav-



elled a lot, and that his name was Canterbury like the city. Children, wives, parents, sweethearts—not a soul on earth had he ever called his own, except his one Miss D.

“He could have a knighthood by now for all we know,” she told Toby aloud as she held the shawl to her nose and inhaled its woolly smell. “He could be Prime Minister and we’d only ever hear it from the television.”

Very faintly Miss Dubber heard above the rattle of the wind the sound of singing. A man’s voice, tuneless but agreeable. First she thought it was “Greensleeves” from the garden, then she thought it was “Jerusalem” from the square, and she was halfway to the window to yell out. Only then did she realise it was Mr. Canterbury from upstairs, and this amazed her so much that when she opened her door to rebuke him, she paused instead to listen. The singing stopped of its own accord. Miss Dubber smiled. Now *he’s* listening to *me*, she thought. That’s my Mr. Canterbury all over.

In Vienna three hours earlier, Mary Pym, wife of Magnus, stood at her bedroom window and stared out upon a world which, in contrast to the one elected by her husband, was a marvel of serenity. She had neither closed the curtains nor switched on the light. She was dressed to receive, as her mother would have said, and she had been standing at the window in her blue twin-set for an hour, waiting for the car, waiting for the doorbell, waiting for the soft turn of her husband’s key in the latch. And now in her mind it was an unfair race between Magnus and Jack Brotherhood which of them she would receive first. An early autumn snow still covered the hilltop, a full moon rode above it, filling the room with black and white bars. In elegant villas up and down the avenue, the last camp fires of diplomatic entertainment were going out one by one. Frau Minister Meierhof had been having a Force Reduction Talks dance with a four-piece band. Mary should have been there. The van Leymans had had a buffet dinner for old Prague hands, both sexes welcome and no *placement*. She should have gone, they both should, and swept up the stragglers for a scotch-and-soda afterwards, vodka for Magnus. And put on the gramophone, and danced till now or later—the swinging diplomatic Pym, so popular—just the way they had entertained so famously in Washington