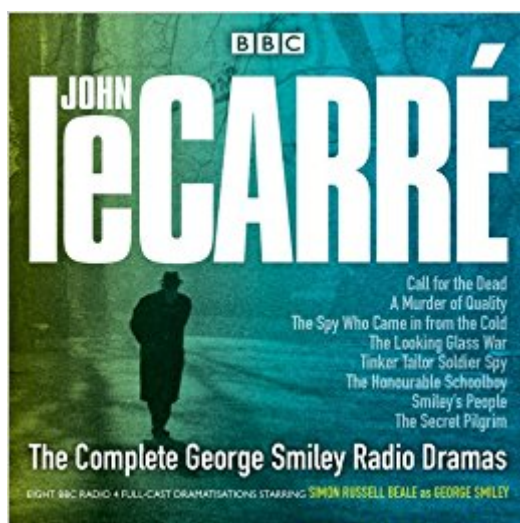


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# The Complete George Smiley Radio Dramas: BBC Radio 4 Full-Cast Dramatization



## Synopsis

The complete collection of acclaimed BBC Radio dramas based on John le Carré's bestselling novels, starring Simon Russell Beale as George Smiley. With a star cast including Kenneth Cranham, Eleanor Bron, Brian Cox, Ian MacDiarmid, Anna Chancellor, Hugh Bonneville, and Lindsay Duncan, these enthralling dramatizations 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; *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* introduces Alec Leamas, a British intelligence officer whose East Berlin network is in tatters; *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; *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; *Smiley's People* finds George Smiley called out of retirement to exorcise some Cold War ghosts from his clandestine past; *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. Duration: 20 hours approx

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A radio triumph . . . Simon Russell Beale's pitch-perfect master spy." —Financial Times

John Le Carr is a British author of espionage novels. During the 1950s and the 1960s he worked for the Security Service and the Secret Intelligence Service, and began writing novels under a pen name. His third novel, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, became an international best-seller, and it remains one of his best-known works. Following the success of this novel, he left MI6 to become a full-time author. Le Carr established himself as a writer of espionage fiction. In 2008, the *Times* ranked Le Carr 22nd on its list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945". In 2011, he won the Goethe Medal, a yearly prize given by the Goethe Institute.

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 Russell Beale 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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