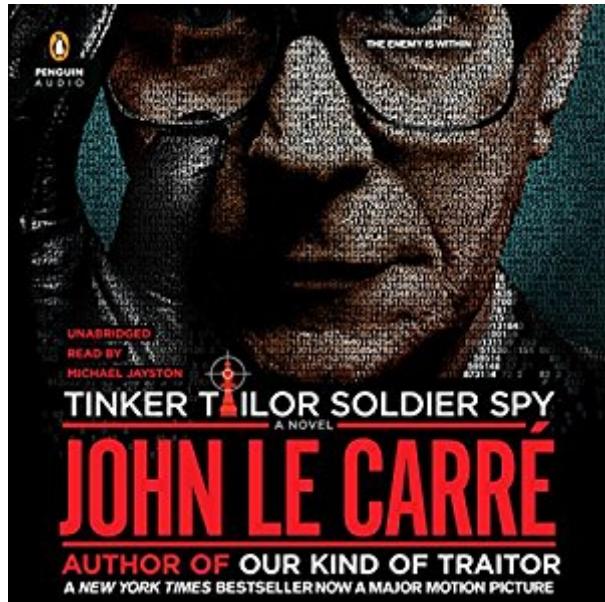


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# Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy: A George Smiley Novel



## Synopsis

The inspiration for the major motion picture *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, starring Gary Oldman and Colin Firth. The first novel in John le Carré's celebrated Karla trilogy, *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* is a heart-stopping tale of international intrigue. The man he knew as "Control" is dead, and the young Turks who forced him out now run the Circus. But George Smiley isn't quite ready for retirement - especially when a pretty, would-be defector surfaces with a shocking accusation: a Soviet mole has penetrated the highest level of British Intelligence. Relying only on his wits and a small, loyal cadre, Smiley recognizes the hand of Karla - his Moscow Centre nemesis - and sets a trap to catch the traitor. The feature film adaptation of *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* is directed by Tomas Alfredson (*Let the Right One In*) and features a cast that includes Gary Oldman as Smiley, Academy Award-winner Colin Firth (*The King's Speech*), and Tom Hardy (*Inception*).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"*Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*" has been called the best espionage novel ever written. John Le Carré's cynical and spellbinding spy thrillers are so unique because they are based on a wide knowledge of international espionage. Le Carré, (pen name for David John Moore Cornwell), acquired this knowledge firsthand during his years as an operations agent for the British M15. Kim Philby, the infamous mole, actually gave Le Carré's name to the Soviets long before he defected. The author's professional experience and his tremendous talent as a master storyteller and superb writer make this book one of the best novels I have read in the genre. "*Tinker, Tailor...*" is the first in what has come to be called Le Carré's "Karla (or Smiley) Trilogy", in which English spy George Smiley is

pitted against the Soviet spymaster Karla. Written during the Cold War, it is a portrait of that time, with its paranoid and morally ambiguous view of global politics. A botched espionage operation in Czechoslovakia causes "Control," (Head of British Intelligence), and his associates to be discredited. "Control," already ill and aging quickly, dies soon after this debacle. George Smiley, his able lieutenant, is retired in disgrace. The two are succeeded by four "young turks," all highly ambitious men from Intelligence who had been trained by "Control" and Smiley. Months later, a maverick Far Eastern agent turns up in London with a story suggesting there is a mole (a deeply concealed double agent) in the Circus (Intelligence HQ). Smiley is called out of retirement to investigate the possibility that a Soviet mole has penetrated the very top levels of the British Secret Service. The "Tinker, Tailor...

Here's one attempt at a book review of *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, which I consider is a classic in its own way. The arrival of a schoolmaster at a remote English boarding school is the unlikely beginning of a master spy-story. If the reader has perused the dust jacket, he is left wondering where the connection is. A bit boring in the beginning, the start of the novel is far from spectacular. Characters unfold almost as an aside. Connections are not evident. When the hero of the novel, George Smiley makes his entrance it is almost as an afterthought. Far unlike Ian Flemming with his techno-laden James Bond licensed to kill, Le Carre's George Smiley is a prosaic, pedantic, lugubrious, painstaking, ordinary mortal with an orderly mind. He is a hero like no other. Not for him the flashy glamour of the spy world popularized by Alistair McLean, Ian Flemming, and others of their ilk. Smiley's heroism lies in this mediocre methodic brilliance. And in his prodigious memory. Cast away from the "circus", he is called in from retirement to trap a mole high up in the secret service. His fall from grace is more a reflection of the times than his inherent worth. As the bureaucratic battles yield new order in the ranks of service, Smiley, of the old order, is viewed with suspicion and forced into retirement. But much as the irrepressible James Bond could not be done away by his numerous enemies, Smiley's brilliance cannot be dispensed with by the Service. At a time when no one in the service can be trusted, when it is painfully obvious that one amongst the trusted four is a mole, Smiley is called in for his analysis. Nowhere is it stated that Smiley is brilliant. Nor does he appear to have any special skills.

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