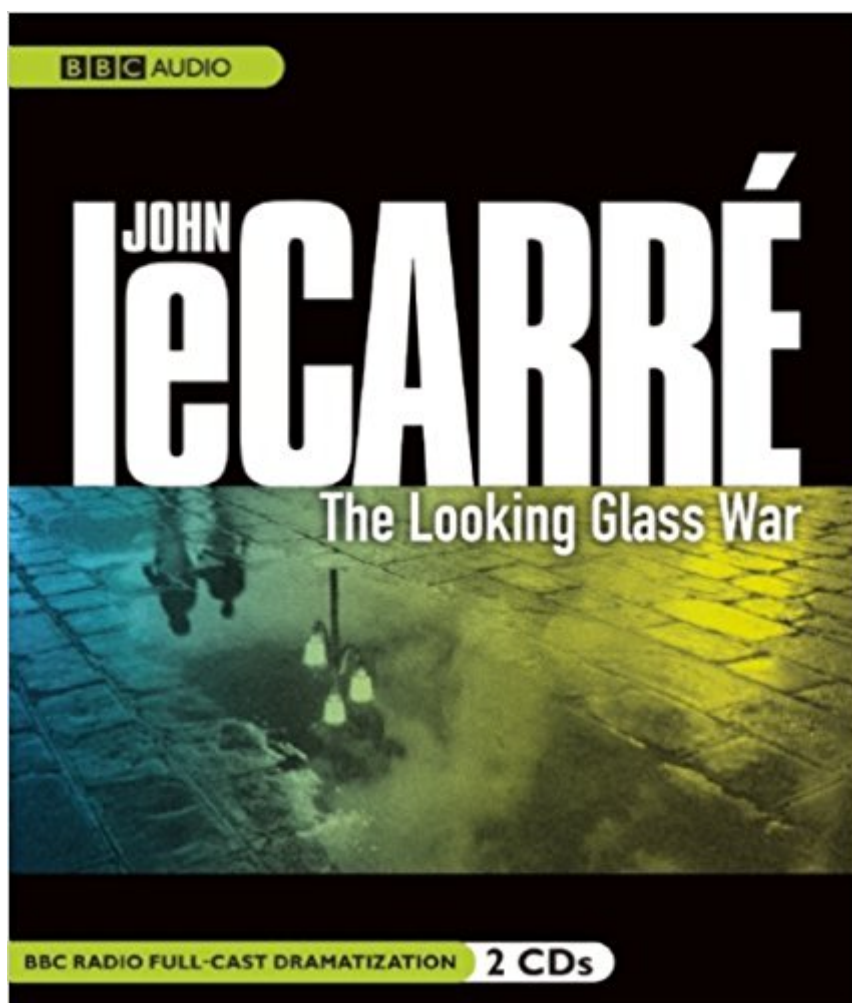


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# The Looking Glass War (BBC Radio Full-Cast Dramatization)



## Synopsis

Starring the award-winning Simon Russell Beale as George Smiley, and with a distinguished cast including Ian McDiarmid and Philip Jackson, this compelling dramatization perfectly captures the atmosphere of Le Carré's chilling novel of deception and betrayal. When word reaches The Department – an ailing section of British military intelligence – that Soviet missiles are being installed close to the West German border, it seems the perfect opportunity to show Control and Smiley, their rivals over at the Circus, that The Department still has value.

## Book Information

Audio CD

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> [Authors, A-Z](#) > ( [L](#) ) > [Le Carre, John](#) #7845 in [Books > Books on CD > Mystery & Thrillers](#)  
#11616 in [Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Unabridged](#)

## Customer Reviews

Le Carre's fourth George Smiley novel is handsomely dramatized in this BBC Audio production. Early in the 1960s the cold war is in full swing, and the Department, a holdover from the WWII section of British intelligence, forms an uneasy alliance with its rival agency, the Circus, when it is suspected that Soviet missiles may be in the process of being placed along the West German border. Death, lies, betrayal, secrets, secrets, and more secrets all add up to the kind of rich espionage story fans have come to expect from Le Carre. Though this production, by necessity of time, is forced to leave out much of the book on which it's based, the dramatization captures the essence of the material, and the actors expertly brings their characters to life and are supported with excellent production values. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Publishers Weekly A bitter, bleak, superlatively written novel. Financial Times (U.K.) A book of rare

and great power. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

One of his earlier novels, it uses a power struggle between two post-war intelligence agencies as its background. His depictions of this internecine combat ring true but there really aren't any memorable characters in this one - whether major ones like Smiley and Guillan, or the minor ones who sparkle like Esterhase and Connie Sachs. By the way, it's not really a Smiley novel - he's a very minor character whose only role is to clean up someone else's mess at the very end of the book.

Realistic spy novel

Another marvelous work of art by one of the most gifted writers of all time. John le Carre's novels simply leave me speechless. Well done!

This is one of LeCarre's lesser works. It's hard to nail down what he is trying to convey. The motivation of the characters is not very well defined. You jump from one character to another, so that it is hard to identify with anyone.

It's a classic, and I can see why.

This is NOT, repeat, NOT a "George Smiley" novel despite what it says on the cover -- Smiley was born out of this novel, but I was disappointed that his role in the novel is slim to none. Still, it's LeCarre, how disappointed can you be?

No James Bond. No infallible security service. Bureaucrats, fools, and misguided patriots playing power games. Each level lying to those below them and expediency the only test of right & wrong.

The Looking Glass War is billed as "A George Smiley Novel." It is the fourth installment in the series of John Le Carré books where Smiley plays a part, but his role here is very small. The main story concerns the U.K. "Department" (military intelligence) competing with its "Circus" (political intelligence) for glory. The Department ran agents against the Nazis during World War II but has since fallen in missions, personnel, and funding. The

Circus, on the other hand, seems to be gobbling up all those things. So, when the Department receives intelligence of a possible missile program in East German, it reactivates an old agent to confirm that program's existence. The program doesn't exist, the agent is captured but his fate left unknown, and Smiley is sent by Circus to communicate to the reorganization of the Department. While *The Looking Glass War* has some interesting bits about interdepartmental rivalry, the training of spies, and the perils of espionage to those who are carrying it out, on the whole, the novel failed to capture my imagination. I read it more out of duty than delight. Even Le Carré admits in his Introduction that it was received poorly by critics. After reading *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold*, this novel was a disappointment. Thankfully, Le Carré followed *The Looking Glass War* with *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, which I am currently reading, and that is a real page-turner. If you, like me, prefer to read series novels in order, I can honestly recommend that you skip this one and go directly from *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* to *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*. You won't be missing much.

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