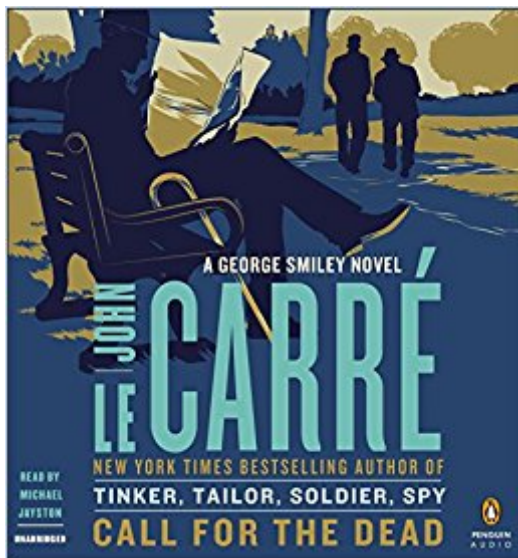


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# Call For The Dead: A George Smiley Novel (Penguin Audio Classics)



## Synopsis

Go back to Whitehall and look for more spies on your drawing boards. George Smiley is no one's idea of a spy—which is perhaps why he's such a natural. But Smiley apparently made a mistake. After a routine security interview, he concluded that the affable Samuel Fennan had nothing to hide. Why, then, did the man from the Foreign Office shoot himself in the head only hours later? Or did he? The heart-stopping tale of intrigue that launched both novelist and spy, *Call for the Dead* is an essential introduction to Le Carré's chillingly amoral universe.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A subtle and acute story of counterespionage marked by restraint, indirection, and intelligence."—The New York Times Book Review  
"Brilliant. Realistic. Constant suspense...excellent writing."—The Observer  
"Thrilling...makes most cloak-and-dagger stuff taste of cardboard."—Sunday Telegraph  
—Sunday Telegraph (UK)

"Intelligent, thrilling, surprising ... makes most cloak-and-dagger stuff taste of cardboard."-- Sunday Telegraph (London)With the incomparable opening chapter of *Call for the Dead*, titled "A Brief History of George Smiley," John Le Carré introduces his legendary spy and immediately ensnares you in the shadowy world Smiley inhabits. Pulled back from overseas duty during World War II, Smiley was redirected to face the threats of the Cold War. He had been asked to interview

Samuel Fennan of the Foreign Office after an anonymous letter accused Fennan of Communist Party membership. Smiley's report cleared him of the allegations, so he was stunned to learn that Fennan had died the day after the interview, leaving a suicide note that claimed his career had been ruined. Investigating circumstances that make no sense to him, Smiley gradually uncovers a spy ring and in so doing is led into a lethal duel of wits with the best of his war-time pupils. *Call for the Dead* marks the beginning of John Le Carré's brilliant literary career, just as it launches the life of one of the most memorable fictional characters of the twentieth century. John Le Carré is the author of *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold*; *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*; *Smiley's People*; *The Tailor of Panama*; *The Constant Gardener*; and many other best-selling titles, including this most recent novel, *Absolute Friends*. He lives in Cornwall, England. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

I wanted to read a John Le Carré book to see his style of writing, I saw the movie *Tinker, Tailor Soldier Spy* and enjoyed it. I found his first book to be good and want to read more.

John Le Carré just may be my new favorite author. Fast paced, action packed and salted with plenty of clues along the way for the mentally engaged reader, this first George Smiley novel is fun - plain and simple. Great introduction to Smiley the man; Smiley the spy; Smiley the jilted lover. "To Mendel there was only one criminal class, from pickpocket and sneak-thief to the big operator tampering with company law; they were outside the law and it was his distasteful but necessary vocation to remove them to safe keeping. This one happened to be German."

I think LeCarre is a fantastic writer. This is one of his early books. It's interesting to see the development of characters and the author's deliberate effort to explain the plot by various memos and outlines. I can always visualize the scenes and settings from his astute descriptions. Any lover of intricately plotted spy stories would love this.

Quintessentially LeCarre (David Cornwell) before he rose in my mind as preeminently one of if not the best author of espionage thrillers. *Call For The Dead* introduces one to George Smiley, who plays some role in many of LeCarre's books. It is here too that we are introduced to Peter Guillam who plays a significant role in *Tinker, Tailor...* We are also teased by the introduction of Ann, incongruously, George's wife. This being the first venture for LeCarre it moved rapidly yet still painted a clear view of what Smiley would grow to be. LeCarre moves rapidly through scenes

crisscrossing events so you are challenged to keep them in context - another one of the joys gotten when reading LeCarre. Having read most of his novels I found myself acquiring them for my Kindle collection and rereading him for nostalgic pleasure - something I find to be doing more and more with my favorite authors. I highly recommend reading this even if you have read the later ones dealing with Smiley. It brings a better understanding of George so you can develop him in your mind's eye and receive more pleasure from LeCarre's works.

Ah, it's a happy day when another Le Carre book hits the Kindle market. This is, if I'm correct, his first novel of any kind, and while it's hardly his best work, it is still a good read. And we get to meet a younger George Smiley, probably Le Carre's best known character. The plot of the book is classic murder/spy mystery. Someone suspected of wrongdoing is investigated. Same party shows up dead, apparently by suicide. But was it really a suicide? Who would benefit from this person being silenced? Would anyone be willing to kill for that silence? Is a trap being laid for the investigator himself? All of this is the meat and drink of almost everything Le Carre wrote and it's all here in infant form. If there is a knock on this book it would be that sometimes it seems it might have been published first in 1861, not 1961 as it actually was. Le Carre is hardly a formally experimental novelist when he is being adventurous. This book is a little more Agatha Christie than anything he wrote later. And he's not trying any adventure at all in this one. Questions are discussed over claret and mince at 'the club.' Manly men like Peter Guillam (seen in later novels much more fleshed out) do manly things in manly places. Female characters, often something to recommend Le Carre in his later books, seem a bit flimsy here. Still, it's a good read, and I have no problem recommending it. Maybe not the first book I'd recommend by Le Carre, but if you're gone through some of the classic spy fiction you'll enjoy this one both on its own merits and as a bit of Cornwall ephemera to remind you where the man started.

I thoroughly enjoyed the characters and the story. LeCture does an excellent job. I am looking forward to reading more of LeCarre.

LeCarre' @ his best. Don't miss this one if you are a George Smiley fan. He is at his wallflower in the background best in this one.

you can see the genesis of the Smiley character's thinking here as it relates to his job, personality and his worldview at large. a nice murder procedural that really lets Smiley dig in and show more of

his critical thinking. a fine introduction to Smiley by JLC that leaves you wanting more of the Smiley saga.

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