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A Murder Of Quality (George Smiley)



Synopsis

George Smiley was simply doing a favor for Miss Ailsa Brimley, an old friend and editor of a small newspaper. Miss Brimley had received a letter from a worried reader: I m not mad. And I know my husband is trying to kill me. But the letter had arrived too late: its scribe, the wife of an assistant master at the distinguished Carne School, was already dead. So George Smiley went to Carne to listen, ask questions, and think and to uncover, layer by layer, the complex network of skeletons and hatreds that comprised that little English institution."

Book Information

Series: George Smiley (Book 2)

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Customer Reviews

Le Carre is simply the world's greatest fictional spymaster. --Newsweek
John le Carre belongs in the select company of the best spy and detective writers. In all of his books, le Carre shows how endowed he is with the art of storytelling. --Times (London) --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

John le Carré was born in 1931 and attended the universities of Bern and Oxford. He taught at Eton and served briefly in British Intelligence during the Cold War. His third novel, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, secured him a world wide reputation, which was consolidated by the acclaim for his trilogy *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, *The Honourable Schoolboy* and *Smiley's People*. His recent novels include *The Constant Gardener*, *Absolute Friends*, *The Mission Song*, *A Most Wanted Man*, and *Our Kind of Traitor*. He divides his time between London and Cornwall. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Readable, but George should return to his normal job as spy. He seemed out of place as a private detective solving a murder, even one of quality.

Rich English, talks about countryside lifestyle, social distinction; with a punch of murder and systematic investigation. The book could only be written by a seasoned investigator.

It is a detective novel unlike other novels of Smiley series. It is excellent, though may not be as exciting as a spy novel

This is the second George Smiley novel (after *Call of the Dead*) and one can see that LeCarre is still trying to figure out the character. John le Carre worked for a short while as teacher at Eton, one of the great English public (that is private as opposed to royal) schools. It is clear that he found many of the traditions and notions to be wanting and that the quality of the education far from the stated ideals. Smiley is asked to look into an odd death at an English public school, "one of the great schools", Carne - possibly a play on words for "meat"? It isn't a spy thriller. It has some of the same plotting elements. Smiley is asked to help out to clear up a problem by an old friend. He has to move among his social class (public school academics). For contemporary readers some of the details may seem puzzling - it is postwar England in the 1950's - as shown by a reference to Hungarian refugees (~1956). Cars are not ubiquitous. The economy is tight and many men and women live lives of quiet desperation. One has to speculate if some of the characters are drawn from personal experience - did le Carre ever know a woman so venal as to be deserving (as he intimates) the horrible manner of her death? An interesting book - completists will want to read this to see how George Smiley evolves. He is a bit more plodding and doesn't seem to exhibit the "cunning of satan" but does seem already to have the "conscience of a virgin". For those searching for the international espionage gritty thrillers - better to start with *Call of the Dead* and then skip ahead to the great *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* and the very good *The Looking Glass War* to see Smiley come into clear focus. That will clear the palate for the Karla Trilogy (*Tinker, Tailor, Soldier Spy*, *The Honourable Schoolboy*, and *Smiley's People*).

I enjoyed the non-spy murder mystery for a change. Lots of intrigue and mystery solving. An excellent read! Smiley solving crimes without the intelligence story background.

Not the best Smiley novel, but a satisfying and useful prelude for anyone who has been caught up in the later works.

Well-written with well drawn characters. We'll describes the foibles and foolishness of British class distinctions amidst a good crime mystery.

OK, not great. Stilted old British.

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