

The spy who came in from the cold



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

John le Carre: The Spy Who Came in from the Cold This book is a spy story, about bluffs between the British Secret Service and the German Democratic Republic. I found it very difficult to understand. The story occurs during the Cold War, in the 1950s and 1960s. The main character is Alec Leamas, a British agent in charge of East German espionage. He is recalled to the Circus, because there are no agents left. Control asks him to 'stay in the cold'. That means one last mission for him, his job is providing false information to the East German Communists.

During his job in the library he falls in love with his co-worker, a Jewish woman, Liz Gold. She is at the Communist Party in Britain. Leamas goes to jail because he assaults a civilian. He goes to Netherlands, then to East Germany, to the Intelligence Service. At the same time, George Smiley and Peter Guillam travel to Liz Gold's house, and have many questions about Alec. Leamas meets Fiedler, an East German spy, Mundt's lieutenant, who joined the Communists and remained an anti-Semite. Mundt ordains the torturing and arresting of Fiedler and Leamas.

That is a little complicated, because Fiedler reports Mundt at the same day. I also find it hard to understand the situation from different eyes. We can get to know many characters' thoughts. Sometimes I cannot decide which is the good side and the bad. It is very exciting and complicated, sometimes confusing. Fiedler discovers that Mundt is a double agent, and he was arrested before, but allowed to escape if he agreed to work. Liz Gold's apartment is paid by George Smiley and she promises Leamas to not look for him after his leaving.

Mundt gets to know these things, and that those things happened before the murdering. Liz is sent to the jail with Leamas, and they are taken in a car together. Many things become clear. Liz gets to know that the British Intelligence intended to kill Fiedler. The end of the story is outrageous. Personally I waited for a happy end after many complicated and confounded situations. Liz and Leamas wanted to break the wire on the Berlin Wall, to escape to West Berlin. Leamas climbs up to the Wall and when he touches Liz's hands, she is shot.

Smiley tells him to jump down from the West side, but he climbs back. He is shot dead as well. I think he realised that he was a fool, he was manipulated and he had that chance to flee, but it did not work, so he gave up. I have never read such a story before, I have a sense that I have to read it once more, because there are many things I did not clearly understand. It is so lifelike and realistic that I can imagine it has happened in reality during the Cold War.