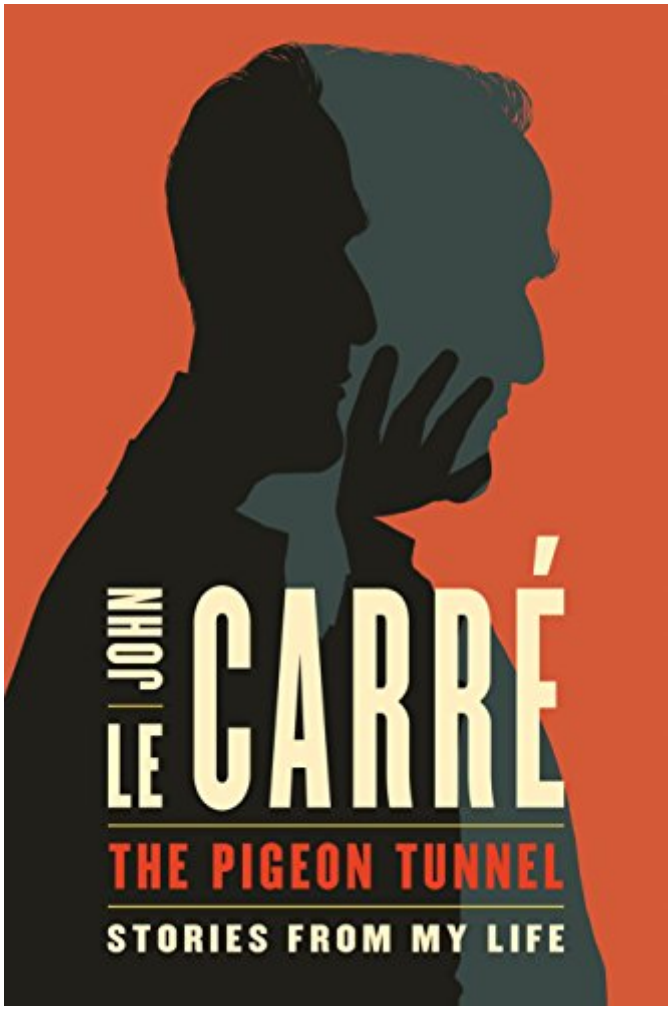
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The Pigeon Tunnel: Stories From My Life



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Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å“Recounted with the storytelling ÃƒÂ©lan of a master raconteur Ã¢â ¬â • by turns dramatic and funny, charming, tart and melancholy.Ã¢â ¬Â• -Michiko Kakutani,Ã Â The New York TimesThe New York Times bestselling memoir from John le CarrÃƒÂ©, the legendary author of Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy;Ã Â The Spy Who Came in from the Cold; andÃ Â The Night Manager, now an Emmy-nominated television series starring Tom Hiddleston and Hugh Laurie.Ã Â John le CarrÃƒÂ©Ã¢â ¬â„¢s new novel, A Legacy of Spies,Ã Â will be available from Viking in Fall 2017.From his years serving in British Intelligence during the Cold War, to a career as a writer that took him from war-torn Cambodia to Beirut on the cusp of the 1982 Israeli invasion to Russia before and after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, le CarrÃƒÂ©Ã Â has always written from the heart of modern times.Ã Â In this, his first memoir,Ã Â le CarrÃƒÂ© is as funny as he is incisive, reading into the events he witnesses the same moral ambiguity with which he imbues his novels. Whether he’s writing about the parrot at a Beirut hotel that could perfectly mimic machine gun fire or the opening bars of BeethovenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Fifth; visiting RwandaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s museums of the unburied dead in the aftermath of the genocide; celebrating New YearÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Eve 1982 with Yasser Arafat and his high command; interviewing a German woman terrorist in her desert prison in the Negev; listening to the wisdoms of the great physicist, dissident, and Nobel Prize winner Andrei Sakharov; meeting with two former heads of the KGB; watching Alec Guinness prepare for his role as George Smiley in the legendary BBC TV adaptations ofÃ Â Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, SpyÃ Â and SmileyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s People; or describing the female aid worker who inspired the main character inÃ Â The Constant Gardener, le CarrÃƒÂ© endows each happening with vividness and humor, now making us laugh out loud, now inviting us to think anew about events and people we believed we understood. Best of all, le CarrÃƒÂ© gives us a glimpse of a writerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s journey over more than six decades, and his own hunt for the human spark that has given so much life and heart to his fictional characters.

Book Information

File Size: 1010 KB

Print Length: 310 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 0735220778

Publisher: Viking (September 6, 2016)

Publication Date: September 6, 2016

Language: English

ASIN: B01D9H1RXO

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #17,156 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #5 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Intelligence & Espionage #24 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Intelligence & Espionage #26 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Authors

Customer Reviews

I’m not sure anyone under fifty, even LeCarre fans, will appreciate this amazing collection of vignettes. Two things stand out: first, this man has been a true witness to the makings of modern history and second, his life has been an adventure to match any he describes herein.While much of his success (in life in general) has been the result of putting a powerful intellect to work in a way that we all benefit, it is also due to his curiosity and willingness to go see for himself, no matter where his current quest may take him. He constantly refers to himself as a novelist and that he is, but he is also a first rate journalist whose historical reportage is nonpareil.Personally, I found this book answered many of the questions that I would have while reading his novels. Whether inadvertently (doubtful) or intentionally, this book provides many aha! keys to his collected works.If you like LeCarre, this quick read will make your day!

He is a master story teller in his fiction. His characters are developed and often flawed as are real people. This book lets you see where much of his inspiration came from and definitely reveals many sides of a great author through his own life. His willingness to to do in depth often dangerous research to write his novels surprised me and showed his true mettle as a great novelist. His personal story is captivating and he never rationalizes his own faults. It is an honest autobiography told through anecdotal stories that often relate back to the characters in his books.

I have enjoyed all of John Le Carre novels and it was great to read about his life and what lead him to write some of his stories. The book read well from the beginning and it became lost towards the

end when he was telling the sad story of his father. It was apparent to the reader that this was hard for him to write and the reader suffers through the end of the book. If you like Le Carre's novels, it is worth the read.

The book is only for John le Carr`e books lover, not any book lover. ie Carr`e writes about the people he met, some of them highly placed and important, but many others, from different walks of life who inspired him as well as the favourable, and not so favourable forces he faced, events and experiences that helped him mould the many characters, he so brilliantly created. Except a good deal about his father, and a little about his mother, he does not talk much about his personal life and family, even about himself. For example, you may never know what he eats for breakfast; if you see, what I mean.

John le CarrÃƒÂ© has described himself as a liar: ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Born to lying, bred to it, trained to it by an industry that lies for a living, practiced in it as a novelist.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•lÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢m a huge fan. But those lines about lying? Too clever by half.Fiction is how we tell stories we couldnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t accept as non-fiction, because a reader would say thereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s just no way that life happens like that. For example, who is more honorable, the king of Russian money-launderers or a London banker? The correct answer, based on evidence from the 2008 banking crisis, might well be the Russian. YouÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢d never buy that. But in ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Our Kind of Traitor?ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• No problem.In ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The Pigeon Tunnel: Stories from My Life,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• le CarrÃƒÂ© drops the veil and delivers true stories ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • a set of reminiscences that are pointed and concise and, in that way, better than a memoir. If youÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢re not a reader of the novels, this may not be of great interest. If you like spy stories and believe le CarrÃƒÂ© is the Shakespeare of that genre, this book is a major event.Consider the stories he tells:Beirut, 1982, just before the Israeli invasion, with a parrot at a hotel that could that could deliver the start of BeethovenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s FifthRussia, just before the Berlin Wall fallsAlec Guinness prepares to play George SmileyRwanda, and its museum of the deadYasser Arafat on New Year s Eve, 1982A meeting with Nobel Prize winner Andrei Sakharov, and his enigmatic smileThe best of the stories are the ones you least expect: accounts of his parents.His mother left the family when he was 5 and didnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t resurface until he was 21: "I advanced down No 1 platform at Ipswich railway station for our great reunion after 16 hugless years, I could not work out for the life of me where to grab hold of her. She was as tall as I remembered, but all elbow and no huggable contours....From

the day of our reunion until she died, the frozen child in me showed not the smallest sign of thawing out. He [Ronnie, his father] was always there, which I canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t say for my mother because to this day I have no idea what sort of person she was.... It was Ronnie who did the hugging, never Olive. She was the mother who had no smell whereas Ronnie smelled of fine cigars and pear-droppy hair oil from Taylor of Old Bond Street, the court hairdressers."Which is not to say his father was a prize: "RonnieÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s life was spent walking on the thinnest, slipperiest layer of ice you can imagine. He saw no paradox between being on the wanted list for fraud and sporting a grey topper in the ownerÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s enclosure at Ascot."It follows that le CarrÃƒÂ© is hard on himself: "Is there really a big difference, I wonder, between the man who sits at his desk and dreams up scams on the blank page (me), and the man who puts on a clean shirt every morning and, with nothing in his pocket but imagination, sallies forth to con his victim (Ronnie)?"A rhetorical question. ThereÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s a huge difference ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • a shelf of great books.

If you are a Le Carre fan you will love this. Lots of insights about how he goes about his writing, where some of his characters come from and the oversized influence of his con-man father, written with all due depth, with heart and surprising humor.

Some of the personal and real adventures/recollections behind novels that are now considered a standard for the genre.These discontinuous essays have elements of autobiography and background reportage that are the seeds growing into the master’s engrossing tales of espionage and unsavory global dealings replete and contrite with moral ambiguity. They are most interesting (to me) for their insights in how the author parlayed a relatively short period of intelligence work along with some "father issues" (among others) into a body of work in which his characters, in motives, actions and outcomes seem quite more real than any actual world of spies.

Joy to read and enlightening background to his novels.. Like a great wine, every new taste reveals a deeper complexity.I am now re reading all Mr Cornwell’s books from A Call for the Dead and A Murder of Quality, to the very last one. Highly recommended.

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