MAN WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD

by Rex Stout

Edgar Award winner, Rex Stout, creator of the Nero Wolfe detective series, wrote a novel about John le Carré, the British spy novelist, in 1968. The novel, "The Man Who Came In from the Cold," was published in 1963 and became an instant bestseller. It was later adapted into a successful film in 1965. The novel is a political thriller set during the Cold War, and tells the story of a British spy who is on the run from his superiors after his exposure of a Soviet spy ring. The novel was critically acclaimed and remains a classic of the espionage genre.

For more about John le Carré and his other works, see "Catch Up With" (see page 12).

Q: How was the novel "The Man Who Came In from the Cold" received by critics and readers?

A: The novel was well received by both critics and readers. It was a critical and commercial success, and is considered one of the best novels of the Cold War era. The novel's themes of espionage, political intrigue, and the dangers of surveillance have resonated with readers for decades, and it remains a popular choice for book clubs and literary discussions.

Q: What is the significance of the novel's title?

A: The title, "The Man Who Came In from the Cold," refers to the protagonist, George Smiley, who returns from a period of excommunication and returns to his former job as a spy. The title also suggests a sense of detachment and melancholy, reflecting Smiley's emotional distance from his past and his present circumstances.

Q: What are some of the key themes explored in the novel?

A: The novel explores themes of loyalty, betrayal, and survival in the midst of political intrigue. It also deals with the psychological toll of espionage work on the characters, and the moral ambiguity of the Cold War era. The novel's exploration of power and control, and the role of the state in shaping individual lives, remains relevant today.

Q: How does the novel's setting and atmosphere contribute to its impact as a work of literature?

A: The novel's setting, which includes locations such as London, Berlin, and the Middle East, contributes to its sense of authenticity and realism. The atmosphere of tension and danger is heightened by the novel's fast-paced narrative and its exploration of the dark underbelly of espionage. The novel's use of epistolary form, with letters and documents as key plot devices, also adds to its impact as a work of literature.

Q: What is the role of the novel's epistolary form in its effectiveness as a thriller?

A: The epistolary form of the novel, with its use of letters and documents, adds a layer of complexity and intrigue to the story. It allows for the gradual revelation of plot secrets, and the interplay between written and spoken words creates a sense of mystery and suspense. The epistolary form also serves to distance the reader from the narrative, adding to the novel's sense of detachment and melancholy.

Q: How does the novel's exploration of loyalty and betrayal contribute to its themes of power and control?

A: The novel's exploration of loyalty and betrayal highlights the complexities of the Cold War era, where allegiances were fluid and loyalties uncertain. The novel's portrayal of the character of George Smiley, who must navigate the treacherous world of espionage, speaks to the larger themes of power and control, and the ways in which these forces shape individual lives.

Q: What is the significance of the novel's ending?

A: The novel's ending, with its ambiguous resolution and haunting atmosphere, leaves the reader with a sense of reflection and contemplation. The novel's ending is open to interpretation, and invites the reader to consider the larger themes of power, control, and the costs of espionage work. The novel's ending also serves as a commentary on the enduring legacy of the Cold War era, and the ways in which its legacies continue to shape our world today.

Q: How does the novel's exploration of the psychological toll of espionage work contribute to its impact as a work of literature?

A: The novel's exploration of the psychological toll of espionage work highlights the emotional and psychological challenges faced by the characters, and the ways in which these challenges shape their lives and identities. The novel's exploration of the character of George Smiley, who must confront the emotional and psychological tolls of his work, serves to deepen the novel's themes of loyalty, betrayal, and the costs of power and control. The novel's exploration of these themes adds to its impact as a work of literature, and speaks to the larger issues of power and control in our world today.
The spy: bewitcher Tippy Walker—she’s down front, so glassing left, right, and top. Tippy, the delight of delights in The World of Henry Orient and just about the happiest hop-skip-and-jumper to land starrly on the motion picture screen, dearly loves a mystery, but even more a mystery-story writer. So, we took her where she could find the most—the Writers of America, gathering in New York, given by the Mystery Writers of America to celebrate its 19th anniversary. 550 canny clue connoisseurs make up M.W.A.’s membership—their slogan: “Crime does not pay—enough.” Hard to believe this year when crime novels and novels of detection stand high on best-seller lists. At the dinner, M.W.A. presented “Edgars,” statuettes of Edgar Allan Poe, to 1964 winners; gave scrolls to nominees; bestowed “Ravens” on writers in the “non-writing field.” Tippy was photographed with 22 doers of detective fiction, from left to right: David Loth, Crime Lab is his most recent; Herbert Brean, his Wilders Walk Away is a masterpiece; Clayton Rawson, Managing Ed. of Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine; Hilary Waugh, latest—The Missing Man; Lawrence Treat, Big Shot his best known; Edward D. Radin, M.W.A. President (he’s holding an Edgar), his Lizzie Borden: The Untold Story is definitive; James Reach, The Innocent One; Frederic Dannay, half of Ellery Queen; Cornelius Hirschberg, ’64 Edgar winner for best detective novel—Horrible Fine; Bart Sproul, Act of Anger: Hugh Pentecost, most recent is Only the Rich Die Young; Brett Halliday, Mike Shane’s his boy; Henry Klinger, holding scroll, is the author of Essence of Murder. Seated, from left to right: Harold Q. Masur, most recent Make a Killing; Stanton Forbes, The Terrors of the Earth; Dorothy Salisbury Davis, holds Raven, wrote Black Sheep, White Lamb; Rex Stout (see page 65); Hans Stefan Santesson, editor of the Saint Mystery Magazine and winner of the Edgar for the best mystery criticism; Phyllis A. Whitney, ’64 Edgar winner for best juvenile mystery novel, Mystery of the Hidden Hand. On floor, from left: Howard Haycraft, his The Art of the Mystery Story establishes him as the mystery’s ranking historian-critic; Gerald Frank, his The Deed is ’64 Edgar winner in the fact-crime category; Stephen Marlowe, his latest, Drumbeat—Berlin. As Tip remarked, peering through her telescope at these 22: “What a lot of gore!”—LEO LERMAN

New plot for knits, hinging on this device: innocent bits of crochet babying an otherwise knowing dress. Here (spied four times on Tippy), a jade-green slink, its scoop neck and armholes rimmed with crochet. By Youth Guild; double-knit wool, 5–15, $30. At Peck & Peck, all stores; Sakowitz, Houston; Frederick & Nelson, Seattle. The shoes, white grosgrain partnering green kidskin, by La Piuma; $17, at Gimbel’s, New York. Telescope, F.A.O. Schwarz