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# A Most Wanted Man



## Synopsis

Le Carre's fiercely compelling and relevant novel about spies in "The War on Terror" - acclaimed by Alan Furst in the cover review of The New York Times Book Review as "one of the best novels he's ever written" - is soon to be a major film. A half-starved young Russian man is smuggled into Hamburg in the dead of night with an improbable amount of cash secreted in a purse around his neck. He is a devout Muslim. Or is he? He says his name is Issa. Annabel, an idealistic young German civil rights lawyer, is determined to save Issa from deportation, even if the price is her career - and her safety. Searching for clues to his mysterious past, she confronts the incongruous sixty-year-old scion of a failing British bank - and a triangle of impossible loves is born. Meanwhile, scenting a sure kill in the "War on Terror," the rival spies of three nations converge upon the innocents. Thrilling, compassionate, peopled with characters the listener never wants to let go, *A Most Wanted Man* is a work of deep humanity with uncommon relevance to our times.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When boxer Melik Oktay and his mother, both Turkish Muslims living in Hamburg, take in a street person calling himself Issa at the start of this morally complex thriller from Le Carré (The Mission Song), they set off a chain of events implicating intelligence agencies from three countries. Issa, who claims to be a Muslim medical student, is, in fact, a wanted terrorist and the son of Grigori Karpov, a Red Army colonel whose considerable assets are concealed in a mysterious portfolio at a Hamburg bank. Tommy Brue, a stereotypical flawed everyman caught up in the machinations of

spies and counterspies, enters the plot when Issa's attorney seeks to claim these assets. The book works best in its depiction of the rivalries besetting even post-9/11 intelligence agencies that should be allies, but none of the characters is as memorable as George Smiley or Magnus Pym. Still, even a lesser le CarrÃ© effort is far above the common run of thrillers. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

While this novel may be le Carré's first take on espionage in Europe after the Cold War, critics could not be more divided over its quality. Alan Furst, himself one of the greats of the genre, opines that *A Most Wanted Man* might be one of the author's best, not for its content so much as for its technical brilliance. But other reviewers panned the work, arguing that le Carré's outrage over recent American intelligence practices distorts the plot and renders many of the characters as mere clichés. Perhaps the consensus is that *A Most Wanted Man* is an enjoyable le Carré novel (and therefore much better than most thrillers) but far from his best. Copyright 2008 Bookmarks Publishing LLC

Pretty fast paced for John Le Carré. Who is the most wanted man in Hamburg? Issa, a young Russian/Chechen illegal immigrant who may or may not be a jihadist? Or is it Dr. Abdullah, a moderate Muslim imam who is only five percent bad? All pursued by German, American, and British intelligence. The plot unrolls evenly - Issa has a claim to his father's inheritance, held by a private bank that would like to forget it exists. Meanwhile, Hamburg (and German intelligence) need to pay their bill for their role in 9/11 and it looks like Issa and Dr. Abdullah might be left holding the check. Can disgraced German spymaster Gunther Bachmann and his team of agents negotiate a win/win solution? I felt like the book was about 100 pages too short, leaving too many characters without enough background. Particularly the Gunther Bachmann character. And I have to say, about half way through, after the Americans come on the scene, it's evident things aren't going to end well for Issa or Dr. Abdullah. I read this in a few hours, almost unheard of for Le Carré, I find I have to reread some sections to figure out what's going on, but not here. I also liked the book better than the movie. PSH plays a great character, but most of the cast is under utilized and the portrayal of Issa is just comical.

In spite of being a long-time fan of John LeCarre, I was a little late coming to this book. It does not disappoint. It must have been the movie that prompted me to read this 2008 book. And in his usual convoluted style, LeCarre leads the reader through, around, and in between the use of the

international banking community to further one's venal motives that transcend patriotism and concern for one's fellow countrymen. The book should be required reading for all who wish to understand the motives for some of the callous and self-serving actions of so many of the world's leaders.

I have been a fan of Mr. LeCarre's carefully plotted and brilliantly written novel's for longer than I care to admit. "A Most Wanted Man" is his best work yet. On one level it is a thoroughly enjoyable thrill ride that had me rooting for the underdogs. At the same time it is a scathing look at the failure of Western intelligence in our post-9/11 world. It is also a post-modern morality tale that asks us as readers to ponder thus question: "is there such a thing as an acceptable level of evil?"

This book will make you despair of the world where shoot-from-the-hip American justice runs roughshod over refined and nuanced European intelligence services and gets it dead wrong, destroying a complex plan with long term implications for the macho thrill of vigilante justice which will do nothing except punish an innocent man, torture a modestly guilty man, and do nothing to crack the network of terrorists who have been allowed to escape by their blundering. It's infuriating and probably true to life. I love his interrogations. So smart!

This is John le Carre at the top of his game post world war II: Lamenting and cynical at the arrogance and inordinate condescension shown by the US CIA operatives gathering intelligence in Germany at the period. As usual, Le Carre draws on his background as a British intelligence agent and propels you into a world of deceit and betrayal. I think it's one of the author's better novels in this later period of his writing. A thriller in the best sense of the word. You care about the characters, the implications of the narrative and, of course, the writing is graceful and beautiful..

I've enjoyed le Carre in the past, but it's been awhile so my tastes have probably evolved. I was really looking forward to finishing this book; it was good enough to keep me interested, but his excruciating details about the preparation of simply arresting someone, test my credulity. le Carre loves to detail the conflicts of major characters and especially between spy agencies. In this book, all these come to naught, as he wraps up the whole thing in just a couple pages of devastation for the protagonists..

I bought this book after seeing the film. I usually do not read or review non-period pieces, but I

decided to give this book a try after someone recommended John LeCarre. I was not disappointed. Already knowing the ending took some steam out of the book, which is, in many respects, different from the movie. What I liked about the book: John LeCarre makes a clear point about the U.S. and other governments do in their ardent search for terrorists that can violate innocent people's rights. What I did not like: the final answer seemed a bit too pat. Perhaps that's all there is -- a bunch of people who have nothing to with terrorism rotting away in Guantanamo or some other unknown location. But I suspect it's a bit more complicated than that. At least I hope it is. The ending isn't very satisfying, but the book is a good, quick read.

I have enjoyed to the fullest everything I have ever read by John Le Carre. Great story, believable, thrilling. Nothing further needs to be said.

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