



# The Russia House

*John LeCarre*

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## **The Russia House** John LeCarre

From Publishers Weekly The master of the spy novel has discovered perestroika , and the genre may never be the same again . Le Carre's latest is both brilliantly up-to-date and cheeringly hopeful in a way readers of the Smiley books could never have anticipated. Barley Blair is a down-at-heels, jazz-loving London publisher who impresses a dissident Soviet physicist during a drunken evening at a Moscow Book Fair. When the physicist attempts to have Barley publish his insider's study of the chaotic state of Soviet defense, British intelligence steps in. Barley, after extensive vetting by both MI5 and the CIA, is made the go-between for further invaluable information, and in the process becomes involved with the physicist's former lover, Katya. The portraits of American and British intelligence agents are, as always, wonderfully acute, and the plot is a dazzling creation. Le Carre's Russia is funny and touching by turns but always convincing, and the love affair between Barley and Katya, subtly understated, is by far the warmest the author has created. But the singing quality of The Russia House , written at the height of le Carre's powers, is its pervading sense of the increasing waste and irrelevance of ongoing cold-war machinations: "That is . . . the tragedy of great nations. So much talent bursting to be used, so much goodness longing to come out. Yet all so miserably spoken for that sometimes we could scarcely believe it was America speaking to us at all." 350,000 first printing; BOMC main selection. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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