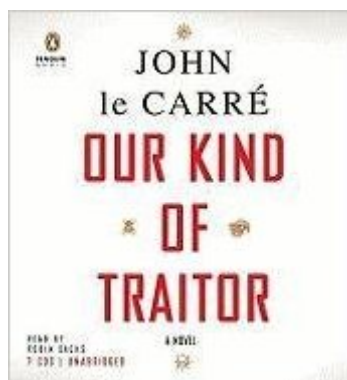


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Our Kind Of Traitor: A Novel



Synopsis

Unabridged, 7 CDs, 9 hours Chosen as a Best Book of the Year by the *Washington Post*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Kirkus Reviews* In this exquisitely told novel, John le Carré shows us once again his acute understanding of the world we live in and where power really lies. In the wake of the collapse of Lehman Brothers and with Britain on the brink of economic ruin, a young English couple takes a vacation in Antigua. There they meet Dima, a Russian who styles himself the world's Number One money-launderer and who wants, among other things, a game of tennis. Back in London, the couple is subjected to an interrogation by the British Secret service who also need their help. Their acquiescence will lead them on a precarious journey through Paris to a safe house in Switzerland, helpless pawns in a game of nations that reveals the unholy alliances between the Russian mafia, the City of London, the government and the competing factions of the British Secret Service.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 3.1 out of 5 stars See all reviews (305 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,095,392 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #5 in Books > Books on CD >

Authors, A-Z > (L) > Le Carre, John #1845 in Books > Books on CD > Mystery & Thrillers

#2657 in Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Unabridged

Customer Reviews

Two or three summers ago a top British politician called Peter Mandelson (PM) was spotted on a luxury yacht owned by a Russian aluminium tycoon called Oleg Deripaska and PM was not the only British notable on board. JLC's 22nd novel is a brilliantly-plotted, -researched and -written novel about love, honour and betrayal. OKT is primarily an assault on Britain's ruling strata. And only secondly about the Kremlin's campaign to control Russian organized crime much as they subdued the oligarchs a decade earlier: "Share with us, or else!" The oligarchs complied, fled abroad or were jailed. Dealing with Russia's crime syndicates is harder. They are age-old brotherhoods of

"honourable criminals" ("vory") living by strict codes whereby talking to, let alone dealing with the State is a sin punishable by death. But in this novel this Russian version of "omertà" is breached somewhere, somehow: Russia's seven richest and best-organized crime syndicates make a deal with the Kremlin. But there is one major obstacle. His name is Dima, which is short for Dimitri, an honourable criminal since the age of 14, who survived 15 years in ice-cold Kolyma, and has since worked his way up to become the world's best money launderer on behalf of himself and the Seven Brotherhoods. Now he is doomed because he knows too much and is not willing to sell out, deal with the State. He is a blunt, bearlike, forceful, emotional, desperate Russian with only days or weeks to live once he has signed over his private business empire to the Seven Brotherhoods and disclosed where he hid their tens of billions of loot, when the book starts.

John le Carre is one of those authors that everybody tells me I should read, and whom I really want to read. But his towering body of work is... a little intimidating. So I decided to start with "Our Kind of Traitor," his latest thriller. And it's a solid place to start -- new characters that don't require previous books to understand, heart-pounding suspense, and a genteel British gloss. It's an intelligent and gripping story, but at times le Carre seems to just lose his enthusiasm. Young Oxford don Perry and his lawyer girlfriend Gail are on vacation in Antigua when they encounter Dima, a Russian millionaire with a large, grim family, a hearty love of the English, and a lavish hand with money. It turns out that he's a professional money-launderer in trouble with a mobster called The Prince. He's willing to spill everything he knows, as long as he and his family are kept safe. Enter Hector Meredith, an aging spy who runs his own little sub-agency, and who is Dima's best chance of not getting killed. But Perry and Gail "have wandered by sheer accident into a richly planted minefield," and under Hector's guidance they soon find themselves whisked on an international adventure... "Our Kind of Traitor" is a brilliant novel that's been hobbled. The first few chapters are mostly told in flashback, which saps some of the tension from the story. And the last few chapters feel as if John le Carre got tired of the story he was telling, so he slapped together an ending and pasted it on the end. So as you can guess, the best part is the middle. Le Carre's prose is smooth, genteel and distinctly British, but fractured with some gritty looks at the underbelly of civilization.

You can read John le Carré as the author of spy thrillers --- not just today's gold standard, but the best there ever was --- and enjoy his books as escapist fiction. Or you can read them --- the last few, in any event --- as slightly fictionalized but absolutely authoritative news stories you won't read anywhere else because traditional media sources don't dare to report the truth or are part of an elite

conspiracy to keep us from getting the truth. How should you read him? As it happens, le Carré gives us --- well, he gives reviewers like me --- a little help. Inside copies of his new book he includes a reprint of a December 13, 2009 piece from The Guardian. The headline: "Drug money saved banks in global crisis, claims UN advisor." The subhead: "Drugs and crime chief says \$352 billion in criminal proceeds was effectively laundered by financial institutions." The inescapable conclusion: Our most respected bankers will take money from anyone --- even drug lords --- in order to prop up their failing institutions. Translation: The fix is in. But I don't want to spoil "Our Kind of Traitor" for you. Forget I've told you even this much. You can't? Trust me. You will. Once you start caring about the people, the last thing on your mind will be How It Ends. Anyway, there's no mention of money laundering in the beginning. Peregrine Makepeace --- literally: a foreigner who makes peace --- is vacationing on Antigua with Gail Perkins, his extremely attractive live-in girlfriend. Perry was, until recently, a tutor in English Literature at Oxford; Gail is a barrister with a future.

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