

Penguin



Readers

A stylized illustration in a high-contrast, graphic style. It depicts a dark blue bicycle lying on its side in a snowy, light blue landscape. Several red blood splatters are scattered around the bicycle and on the snow. In the upper left, a pair of dark blue boots is visible, also with blood splatters nearby. The overall scene suggests a violent event in a cold environment.

John
le Carré
The Spy Who
Came in from
the Cold

Contents

Note about the story	4
Before-reading questions	5
Chapter One – Checkpoint	7
Chapter Two – The Circus	11
Chapter Three – Liz	18
Chapter Four – Ashe contacts Leamas	25
Chapter Five – Kiever	29
Chapter Six – The house by the sea	34
Chapter Seven – Bad news	39
Chapter Eight – Alec's friend	43
Chapter Nine – To the East	47
Chapter Ten – Details	50
Chapter Eleven – Two letters	54
Chapter Twelve – Arrest	58
Chapter Thirteen – Branch Meeting	62
Chapter Fourteen – The Tribunal	65
Chapter Fifteen – Confession	70
Chapter Sixteen – In from the cold	79
During-reading questions	86
After-reading questions	90
Exercises	91
Project work	100
Essay questions	102
Glossary	104

CHAPTER ONE

Checkpoint

The American gave Alec Leamas another cup of coffee and said, “Why don’t you go back home and sleep? We can phone you if he comes.”

Leamas did not answer. He just stared through the window of the West German **checkpoint**. The street near the hut was empty.

“You can’t wait forever, sir,” said the American. “Maybe he’ll come another time.”

“He’s coming,” said Leamas. “It’s nearly dark now.”

Leamas stood next to a policeman who was watching the East German checkpoint through **binoculars**.

“He’s waiting for the dark,” Leamas said. “I know he is.”

“But he’s nine hours late,” said the American.

Leamas became angry. “He’s an **agent** – one of *my* agents,” he said. “He doesn’t have a timetable. He’s in danger. He’s frightened. Mundt knows that Karl is **spying** for us, and Mundt’s chasing him. Karl knows he has one chance to escape – let him choose the best time.”

“How did Mundt know about Karl?” asked the American.

“Shut up!” replied Leamas, and then he added more quietly, “I don’t know.”

A bell rang suddenly inside the hut. They waited silently. High above the checkpoint, huge lamps came on, shining their yellow

light on everything. The policeman with the binoculars started to speak in German.

“The car has stopped at the first checkpoint,” he said. “There is one person in it – a woman. The East German **guards** are taking her to the hut to look at her documents. The document check is completed. The car is going to the second checkpoint.

“The woman is going inside the hut. The guards are checking inside the car. The woman is coming out, and the barrier pole has been raised. She is driving the car over the bridge, past the final East German guard and into West Berlin.”

Leamas went out of the hut into the icy winter night. The small crowd of people that was always near the checkpoint stood silently, lit by the huge lamps. The people changed, but the faces did not – they always looked helpless and confused.

The car had passed the hut and stopped further along the street. Leamas had recognized the woman. He walked over to the car and spoke through the window to her. “Where is he?”

“They came for him,” she replied, “but he escaped – he took our bicycle. He has some money and some false documents. He said that he will come over tonight at this crossing point.”

“Tonight?” said Leamas. “Are you sure?”

“Yes, he has to,” she replied. “All the other agents have been caught by Mundt.”

“All of them – Ländser, too – as well as Paul, Viereck and Salomon?”

“Yes.”



“How do you know?” he asked.

“Karl told me,” she replied. “He trusts me, and he tells me everything.”

Leamas did not reply. He was angry with his agent for talking to this woman about his work for the British secret service. He had met her once with Karl, who had brought her to a bar in West Berlin. Leamas had been angry that Karl had brought her to a meeting with him. “Stupid man,” thought Leamas. “Agents are all the same – you train them to lie, to trust nobody and to protect themselves. But they don’t listen.”

He pulled a key from his pocket and gave it to the woman. “You’ll need somewhere to stay,” he said. “Go to Albrecht-Dürer Strasse, number 28A. I’ll phone you when he comes.”

He went back to the silent hut. The American was not there. “He’s gone home,” said the policeman. Leamas told the

policeman that they were waiting for a man on a bicycle, and then he went to the window and waited. In front of him was the road, and to either side there was the Wall. It was a dirty, ugly thing built from big blocks of rough concrete, with barbed wire on top and in front of it.

“Sir! Look!” the policeman suddenly whispered. “It’s a man with a bicycle.”

Leamas recognized the man who was pushing the bicycle. It was Karl. “He’s done it,” thought Leamas. “He’s got through the first checkpoint. There’s just the second one now.” Karl calmly **leaned** his bicycle against the Customs hut and disappeared inside. At last, he reappeared, got on his bike and an East German policeman raised the red-and-white barrier pole. He was through, he was coming towards them. He had done it.

At that moment, Karl seemed to hear a sound and know that there was danger. He looked over his shoulder and began to move faster. An East German guard was on the bridge, watching Karl as he came towards him. Suddenly, the **searchlights** came on, shining on Karl. Then there was the sound of shouting and a **siren**. The East German guard dropped to his knees and lifted his **gun**. The first shot seemed to push Karl forwards, and the second shot seemed to pull him back. But he was still moving, still on the bicycle, passing the guard who was still shooting at him. Then he fell from the bike to the ground. Leamas hoped that Karl Riemeck was dead so that the East German secret service could not hurt him when they **interrogated** him.

CHAPTER TWO

The Circus

The plane took off, and Leamas looked out of the window as West Berlin disappeared beneath him. Mundt had won. Leamas was leaving Berlin without any agents in East Germany. There had not been any agents when he arrived in Germany, and he had **recruited** them all himself. Now he was leaving in the same way as he had started. And this was all because of Hans-Dieter Mundt, the **Head of Operations** in the East German secret service. Mundt's agents had killed all of the agents that Leamas had recruited. Leamas knew that he had failed, and it was the end of his **career**.

The air hostess brought Leamas a whisky. She thought he was an interesting-looking man, with his grey hair and brown eyes in a handsome, bony face. She thought he was around fifty, and this was about right. She thought he was single, which was half-true. Long ago there had been a wife. Somewhere there were teenage children who were given money by their father, paid from a bank in London. He looked like a man who could make trouble, a man who was not quite a gentleman.

The taxi stopped outside a grey **government** building in Cambridge Circus. Leamas nodded to the man on the reception desk at the Circus, the British Overseas Intelligence agency, and

went to the head of the agency's office. Control shook hands with Leamas. "You must be tired," he said. "Please sit down."

Leamas sat down opposite a small electric fire. Control was smaller than Leamas remembered, but he still wore his old black jacket.

Today it was cold, and Control was wearing a brown sweater under the jacket. Control behaved in the way that he always behaved – like a gentleman who knew he had to be polite. But Leamas knew Control was not really interested in him. Control took a packet of cigarettes from his desk and gave one to Leamas. Then he sat down opposite him. There was a **pause**, and then finally Leamas said, "Riemeck's dead."

"Yes, I know," replied Control. "I suppose it was that woman who **betrayed** him."

"**I suppose so.**" Leamas did not know how Control knew about the woman.

"Mundt had him shot," Control added. "And how did you feel? When Riemeck was shot, I mean?"

Leamas **shrugged**. "I was **bloody** angry," he said.

Control looked at him through half-closed eyes. "Didn't you feel more than that? Weren't you upset?" he asked, thoughtfully.

"Yes, of course I was upset," said Leamas.

"Did you like Riemeck?" asked Control.

Leamas shrugged. "I suppose so," he said.

"How did you spend the night after he was shot?" asked Control. "What did you do?"