

Greetings Club Member

Long before Fleming's James Bond ordered a martini or le Carré's George Smiley peered into the fog of Cold War betrayal, there was Graham Greene. A writer who'd lived the life of a spy. And not the glamorous kind — no tuxedos or fast cars — but in the shadowy intelligence world of wartime Sierra Leone.

Welcome to the second newsletter in my series on spies who wrote.

Greene joined the British Secret Intelligence Service in 1942 at age 37. From London he was sent to the African West coast to monitor French shipping and Vichy sympathisers. It brought him face-to-face with colonial politics, corruption and shifting allegiances. It also became the setting for *The Heart of the Matter*(1948).

Greene's Africa was an Africa of wartime ports, colonial officials, and lonely outposts. In ***Those Who Favour Fire***, I aim to capture that same sense of place: the heat, the tension, the knowledge that history isn't a series of abstract events but lived by characters forced to make choices often with far-reaching consequences (**[order a copy by clicking here and then go to Buy Now On Amazon](#)**)

Though Greene said he found espionage work 'tedious', he drew heavily from his time in the service and the atmosphere of secrecy and suspicion shaped much of his writing. His later novels, *The Quiet American* (set in Vietnam), and *The Human Factor* (espionage in London and Africa) focussed on the question: what happens when duty and conscience collide?

For him espionage became the setting for moral drama.

And he continued to explore personal conflicts throughout his prolific 67-year career (which included 25 novels and various short stories and plays). Nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature, he is one of the preeminent novelists of the 20th century.

That's it for now.

Next month we'll look at the most famous spy of them all.

In the meantime I'll leave you with a quote from Greene: 'Champagne, if you are seeking the truth, is better than a lie detector. It encourages a man to be expansive, even reckless, while lie detectors are only a challenge to tell lies successfully.'

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