Spy Fiction

For several decades Spy/Espionage Fiction was the leading sub genre of Adventure Fiction. The end of the Cold War brought about its decline in the early 1990s. Recently, the James Bond books by John Gardner and Raymond Benson have contributed to a resurgence of the popularity of the genre. Other writers, such as John LeCarre, have kept the genre alive by transferring the scene of spying operations from the Cold War to industrial espionage, Third World or Middle Eastern conflicts, or terrorist conspiracies.

The Spy genre is characterized by most of the attributes of adventure novels - action, heroic exploits by larger-than life protagonists, strong plots – however, the essential characteristic of a spy book is that it has the main protagonist as a spy. Often the character is a disillusioned antihero; then, his or her own struggle to see his place in the plot becomes the driving force of the book. Unlike pure adventure stories, spy stories often have a subtle plot that may not finish with the clear-cut triumph of good over evil.

There are many individual novels and spy series including the romantic international intrigue by Helen MacInnes, male fantasy adventure by Robert Ludlum, historical war fiction by Jack Higgins or Frederick Forsyth, and all include plot twists and quirks to tease the reader's brain.


The many fans of Ian Fleming's original series of books featuring 007, James Bond will be thrilled to find The Man With The Red Tattoo, one of several books by Raymond Benson continuing the Bond story. The story is a compelling one of a maniacal Japanese crime lord bent on punishing the decadent West for destroying traditional Japanese culture. The plan is a bizarre act of biological terrorism to be carried out against heads of state of the world. This Bond story has all the usual components looked for by fans, including the stunningly beautiful and gifted female partner, diabolical plot, evil villain, exotic setting and fiendishly clever gadgets. Lovers of the original stories may be disappointed by Bond himself, who lacks the usual suavity and wit, but this should not prevent them from enjoying a thoroughly good traditional yarn with a contemporary twist.


After many years abroad, a Cuban spy returns home to find his country in economic collapse and his children ambivalent towards him. When his children set sail for Florida on a makeshift raft, he follows them to make sure their journey is safe. Then finds himself in the United States struggling to stay one step ahead of a CIA official who harbors a grudge against him.

Frederick Forsyth. Icon. 1996.

Set in Russia in 1999, a country on the threshold of anarchy, the interim president is powerless. His nation is wracked by famine and inflation, crime and corruption, and hordes of unemployed roaming the streets. For Igor Komarov, one-time army sergeant who's risen to leadership of the right-wing UPF party, the chaos is made to order. Waiting for the presidential election of January, 2000, his striking voice rings out over the airwaves promising law and order, posterity, and restoring the greatness of Russia. A stolen document smuggled to the west sends nightmarish chills to those who remember Hitler and Mein Kampf. A group of elder statesman from the west send Jason Monk, ex-CIA agent runner to Moscow. His mission: Stop Komarov and prepare the way for an icon worthy of the Russian people. But he has a personal mission as well: settle the score with Grishin (Komarov's head of security) who has tortured and killed four of his agents. But to do this, he must first stay alive!


Ex-CIA agent Michael Osbourne returns to duty with the Agency to help protect his father-in-law, former Sen. Douglas Cannon, newly appointed as U.S. Ambassador to London. Terrorism occurs as factions are at odds over the peace process in Northern Ireland.

Acrobat is a CIA workgroup made up of five young people. After investigating espionage among those above them in the CIA, they end up on the run, not knowing that it is one of the members of their own group that has betrayed them.