

Spymaster, spymaster, spin me a tale

Suspended Sentences

by Jim Napier

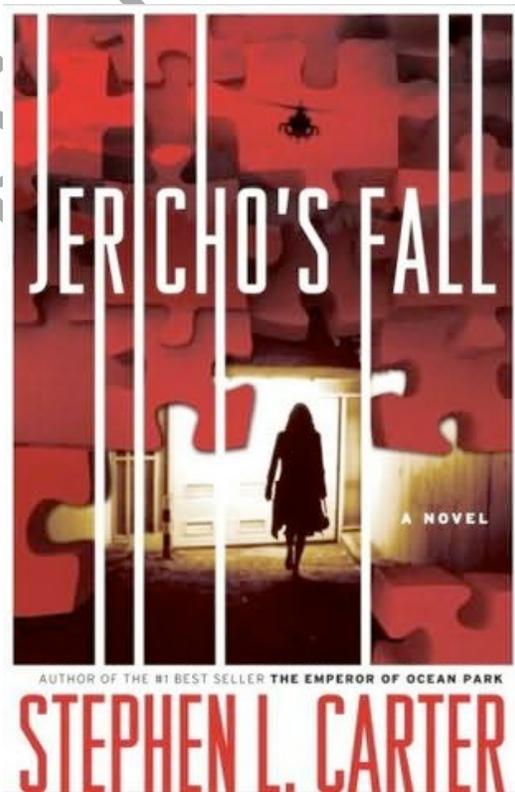
[Excerpt]

Move over, Bond: there's a new breed of spy in town, and they don't depend on good looks and gadgets to outwit their adversaries. When the former Soviet Union fell in 1989, it was widely assumed that spy fiction would fall with it. But to paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of its death have been widely exaggerated. Welcome to the world of post-Cold War espionage, where the plot might turn on financial terrorism, or the internal chaos in Russia after the collapse of Communism. Add to the mix religious fanatics in the Middle East and secrets that have lay hidden since the Second World War, and you have fertile ground for a new generation of spy thrillers. The genre, it seems, is alive and well, and the diversity of first-rate writing coming out these days proves that everything old can be new again.

Stephen L. Carter, *Jericho's Fall* (Knopf, 2009)

A professor of Law at Yale University, the tweedy, bearded Stephen Carter is perhaps an unlikely candidate for thriller novelist. But ever since his debut novel, *The Emperor of Ocean Park*, spent eleven weeks on the New York Times bestseller list, Carter has been attracting critical attention with his literate and insightful tales. In his latest work Jericho Ainsley, a former head of the CIA, is dying, and summons his former

lover to his bedside to reveal a secret. It concerns financial fraud on a global scale, official secrecy, and espionage, and both governments and private corporations are anxious to get the information that Ainsley didn't want to take to his grave. Very much a tale for our times, told eloquently and convincingly.



Although spy thrillers are often overworked, each of these tales is an exception to the general rule: informed by their authors' first-hand experiences and literary talent, they combine race-against-time and thrill-a-minute plots

with nuanced characters and a strong sense of place to provide the reader with compelling reads, with thoughtful insights on contemporary events thrown in for good measure.

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