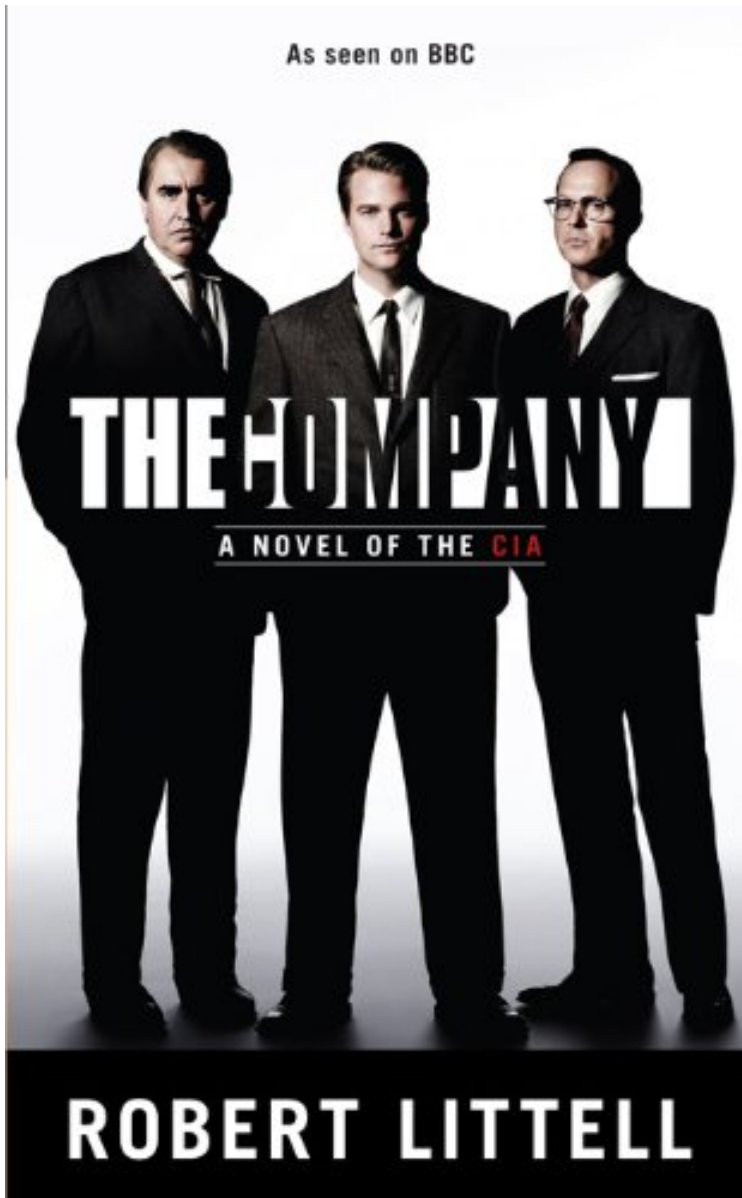


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The Company: A Novel of the CIA (English Edition)



Par Robert Littell

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurAn engrossing, multigenerational, wickedly nostalgic yet utterly entertaining and candid saga, bringing to life through a host of characters historical and imagined nearly fifty years of this secretive and powerful organization. Intelligent and ironic, Littell tells it like it was: CIA agents fighting not only the good fight against foreign enemies, but sometimes the bad fight too. The ends justify such means as CIA-organized assassinations, covert wars, kidnappings, and the toppling of legitimate governments. Behind

every manoeuvre and counter-manoeuve, however, one question remains, which spans the length of the book . . . Who is the mole within the CIA? An astonishing novel that captures the life-and-death struggle of an entire generation of CIA operatives during a long Cold War. The best American spy writer currently at work Daily Telegraph

Extrait Somewhere in Afghanistan, Sunday, October 23, 1983 Ibrahim's band, some sixty in all, traveled by night, sometimes on foot, sometimes on donkeys, occasionally in canvas-covered trucks driving without headlights not only as a matter of security, but because Afghans believed vehicles used less gasoline when they ran without headlights. Everywhere they went, peasants offered them shelter and shared the meager rations of food left to them after the passage of Russian commando units. Everyone recognized Ibrahim and he seemed to know dozens by name. The group would turn off the trail as soon as the first silver-gray streaks of light transformed the tops of the mountains high above them into murky silhouettes. Closely guarded by the mujaheddin, Anthony and Maria were led along narrow tracks marked by whitewashed stones. Scrambling up footpaths, they would reach one of the half-deserted, half-destroyed hamlets clinging to the sides of steep hills. Each hamlet had its mosque, surrounded by the stone houses that had not been destroyed in Russian air raids, and the rubble of those that had been hit. Inside common rooms fires blazed in soot-blackened chimneys. Calendars with photographs of the Kaaba at Mecca or the Golden Dome Mosque in Jerusalem were tacked to unpainted plastered walls next to the mihrab—the niche that marked the direction of Mecca. Pistachios and nabidh, a mildly alcoholic drink made of raisins or dates mixed with water and allowed to ferment in earthenware jugs, would be set out on linoleum-covered wooden tables. One morning, after a particularly arduous night-long march, a boy set a porcelain bowl filled with what looked like cooked intestines in front of Maria. She made a face and pushed it away. When Ibrahim taunted her, Maria—who had been raised in Beirut by her Lebanese-American father—retorted with an old Arab proverb, "Yom asal, yom basal"—"One day honey, one day onions." Ibrahim, a moody man who could explode in rage if he thought Islam was being mocked, spit out, "What do you Westerners know of onions? Here everyone has suffered, and deeply, at one time or another." Hoping to draw biographical details out of Ibrahim, Anthony asked, "Are you speaking from personal experience?" His eyes clouding over, Ibrahim stared out a window; clearly the story was distressing to him. "It was in the middle seventies," he recounted. "The Iranian SAVAK arrested me when I was transiting Tehran in the mistaken belief that I worked for Iraqi intelligence. This was before the start of the Iran-Iraq war when tension between the intelligence services ran high. The terrible part was that I did not know the answers to their questions so I was powerless to stop the torture, which lasted for three days and three nights. There are still moments when I feel the pliers biting into the nerves on my right arm and the pain shooting to my brain, and I must clamp my lips shut to keep from screaming." Beads of sweat materialized on Ibrahim's upper lip as he sipped nabidh from a tin cup. "I live with the memory of searing pain," he continued. Ibrahim retreated into himself for some time. Then, almost as if he were talking to himself, he picked up the thread of the story. "Believe me, I do not hold it against the Iranians. In their place I would have done the same. I have been in their place, here in Afghanistan, and I have done the same. When I convinced the SAVAK of my innocence they again became my comrades in the struggle against imperialism and secularism." A thin boy who had lost a leg to a mine hobbled in on one crude wooden crutch deftly balancing a straw tray filled with small cups of green tea. Ibrahim distributed the cups and sat down cross-legged on a frayed mat to drink one himself. From high above the hamlet came the whine of jet engines. A mujaheddin darted into the room and reported something to Ibrahim. He muttered an order and his men quickly extinguished all their gas lamps and candles, and the small fire in the chimney. From another valley came the dull thud of exploding bombs. In the darkness Ibrahim murmured a Koranic verse. From the corners of the room, some of the fighters joined in. On the evening of the tenth day of the journey, Ibrahim led his band and the two prisoners to the edge of a riverbed that cut through a valley. A rusted Soviet tank lay on its side, half submerged in the water. In twos and threes, the mujaheddin crossed the gushing torrent in a bamboo cage suspended from a thick wire and tugged across by hand. Maria clutched Anthony's arm as the two of them were pulled over the raging river. Once on the other side, Ibrahim set out in the pale light cast by a quarter moon, clawing up steep tracks filled with the droppings of mountain goats. After hours of relentless climbing they reached a narrow gorge at the entrance to a long canyon. Steep cliffs on either side had been dynamited so that the only way into and out of the canyon was on foot. Inside the gorge, the trail widened and the terrain flattened out. Hamlets of one-story stone houses lay half-hidden in the tangle of vines that grew over the slate roofs. Vintage anti-aircraft cannon covered with camouflage netting could be seen in the ruins of a mosque and the courtyard of a stable. In the pre-dawn murkiness men holding gas lamps emerged from doorways to wave scarfs at Ibrahim. The Pashtun

headman of one hamlet buttoned a Soviet military tunic over his Afghan shirt, buckled on an artificial leg and hobbled over to shake hands with the mujaheddin as they passed in single file. "Your courage is a pearl," he intoned to each. Further up the trail, the group reached a mud-walled compound with a minaret rising from a mosque in the middle and a line of mud-brick houses planted with their backs against a sheer cliff. Smoke spiraled up from chimneys, almost as if Ibrahim and his warriors were expected. A young woman appeared at the doorway of one of the houses. When Ibrahim called to her, she lowered her eyes and bowed to him from the waist. Two small children peeked from behind her skirt. "We are arrived at Yathrib," Ibrahim informed his prisoners. Lighting a gas lamp, Ibrahim led Anthony and Maria up to an attic prison. "This will be your home until the Americans agree to deliver missiles in exchange for your freedom. Food, tea, drinking and washing water will be brought to you daily. The ceramic bowl behind the curtain in the corner is to be used as a toilet. You will lack for nothing." "Except freedom," Maria said scornfully. Ibrahim ignored the comment. "For one hour in the morning and another in the afternoon you will be permitted to walk in the compound. Guards will accompany you at a distance. If you hear the wail of a hand-cranked siren, it means Russian planes or helicopters have been spotted so you must take shelter. I wish you a good night's sleep." He looked hard at Anthony. "Tomorrow, God willing, we will begin your interrogation," he said softly. "Prepare yourself." With that Ibrahim backed down the ladder, lowering the trapdoor behind him. Anthony looked across the room at his companion. Her collarless shirt was soaked with sweat and plastered against her torso just enough for him to make out several very spare ribs. Maria removed her boots and stretched her feet straight out and, unbuttoning the top two buttons of her shirt, absently began to massage the swell of a breast. Shivering in her damp clothes, she shed for the first time the tough exterior that she had gone to great pains to project—the ballsy female journalist who could hold her own in a male-dominated profession. Out of the blue she said, "We're fooling ourselves if we think we're going to get out of this alive." Anthony watched the flame dancing at the end of the wick in the gas lamp. The truth was that the mention of an interrogation had shaken him. He remembered Ibrahim's account of being tortured by the Iranian intelligence service. In their place I would have done the same. I have been in their place, here in Afghanistan, and I have done the same. Anthony wondered how much pain he could stand before he cracked; before he admitted to being a CIA officer and told them what he knew about the Company's operations in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Glancing again at Maria, he saw how miserable she was and tried to raise her spirits. "Man is a victim of dope in the incurable form of hope," he recited. He smiled in embarrassment. "I had a lit teacher at Cornell who made us memorize Ogden Nash—he said it would come in handy when we were trying to impress girls." She smiled weakly. "Are you trying to impress me, Anthony?" He shrugged. She shrugged back. "If we ever get out of here—" "Not if. When. When we get out of here." "When we get out of here we'll start from scratch. You'll quote Ogden Nash and I'll be suitably impressed, and we'll see where it goes." As Ibrahim made his way across the compound toward the two prisoners the next morning, a beardless young man wearing a dirty white skullcap fell in behind him. He had a dagger wedged into the waistband of his trousers and an AK-47 with spare clips taped to the stock slung from a shoulder. A yellow canary, one of its legs attached to a short leash, perched on his forearm. Anthony had noticed the lean young man hovering near Ibrahim on the long trek across the mountains and had nicknamed him the Shadow. "Why do you need a bodyguard in your own village?" he asked him now. "He is not here to guard my body," Ibrahim replied, "He is here to make sure that it does not fall alive into the hands of my enemies." He gestured with a toss of his head. "Come with me." Maria and Anthony exchanged anxious looks. He tried to smile, then turned to follow Ibrahim and his Shadow toward the low building at the far end of the compound. Pushing through a narrow door, he found himself in a whitewashed room furnished with a long and narrow wooden table and two chairs. A 1979 Disneyland calendar was tacked to one wall. Three of Ibrahim's young fighters, scarves pulled across their faces so that only their eyes were visible, leaned impassively against the walls. Ibrahim's Shadow closed the door and stood with his back to it next to a pail filled with snow that had been brought down from the mountains earlier that morning. Ibrahim settled onto one of the chairs and motioned for Anthony to take the other one. "Do you have any distinguishing marks on your body?" he asked his prisoner. "That's a hell of a question." "Answer it. Do you have any tattoos or scars from accidents or operations or birth marks?" Anthony assumed Ibrahim wanted to be able to prove to the world that the diplomat named McAuliffe was really in his custody. "No tattoos. No scars. I have a birthmark—a dark welt in the form of a small cross on the little toe of my right foot." "Show me." Anthony stripped off his sock and Clark boot and held up his foot. Ibrahim leaned over the table to look at it. "That will serve nicely. We are going to amputate the toe and have it delivered to your American Central

Intelligence Agency in Kabul." The blood drained from Anthony's lips. "You're making a bad mistake," he breathed. "I'm not CIA. I'm a diplomat=" Ibrahim's Shadow drew the razor-edged dagger from his waistband and approached the table. Two of the warriors came up behind the prisoner and pinned his arms against their stomachs. Anthony started to panic. "What happened to that famous Pashtun moral code you told us about?" he cried. Ibrahim said, "It is because of the moral code that we brought snow down from the heights. We do not have anesthetics so we will numb your toe with snow. That's how we amputate the limbs of wounded fighters. You will feel little pain." 8For God's sake, don't do this=" 8For God's sake, we must," Ibrahim said. The last of the warriors brought over the pail and jammed Anthony's bare foot into the snow. Ibrahim came around the table. "Believe me, when the thing is accomplished you will feel proud of it. I counsel you not to struggle against the inevitable—it will only make the amputation more difficult for us and for you." Anthony whispered hoarsely, "Don't hold me down." Ibrahim regarded his prisoner, then nodded at the two warriors pinning his arms. Very slowly, very carefully, they loosened their grip. Anthony filled his lungs with air. Tears brimmed in his eyes as he turned away and bit hard on his sleeve. When it was over Ibrahim himself pressed a cloth to the open wound to stop the bleeding. "El-hamdou lillah," he said. "You could be Muslim."

Five days later, with Anthony hobbling on a makeshift crutch next to Maria during one of their morning walks, Ibrahim's prisoners witnessed the arrival of the gun merchant. A swarthy-skinned man with a long pointed beard, he wore opaque aviator's sunglasses and a Brooklyn Dodgers baseball cap with a handkerchief hanging off the back to protect his neck from the sun. He and two black Bedouins drove a line of mules charged with long wooden crates through the main gate and began unpacking their cargo onto woven mats. In short order they had set out rows of Chinese AK-47 assault rifles, American World War II bazookas, German Schmeisser MP-40s, as well as piles of green anti-tank mines with American designations stenciled on them. As the morning wore on, mujaheddin drifted up to the compound from the hamlets spread out below it and began to inspect the weapons. Some of the younger fighters looked as if they had stumbled into a candy store. Calling to his friends, a teenager wearing camouflage fatigues rammed a clip into an AK-47 and test fired a burst at some tin cans atop the back wall, causing the mules to bray in fright. Ibrahim, followed by his everpresent bodyguard, appeared from one of the stone houses set against the cliff to talk with the gun merchant. Tea was brought and they settled onto a mat to haggle over the prices, and the currency in which they would be paid. The two men came to an agreement and shook hands on it. Rising to his feet, the gun merchant noticed the two prisoners watching from a distance and apparently asked his host about them. Ibrahim looked across the compound, then said something that caused the gun merchant to turn his head in Anthony's direction and spit in the dirt. "I don't think Ibrahim's visitor likes us," Anthony told Maria. "He's a Falasha, judging from the look of him," Maria said. "I wonder what an Ethiopian Jew is doing so far from home." The delicate woman who spoke English with a thick Eastern European accent kept Eugene on the phone as long as she dared. He had to understand, she said, that his calls were moments of grace in an otherwise bleak existence. Aside from her friend, Silvester, she was utterly alone in the world. When the phone rang and Eugene's voice came over the line, well, it was as if the sun had appeared for a fraction of a second in a densely overcast sky and you had to squint to keep the light from hurting your eyes. Oh, dear, no, she didn't mind having to find another furnished apartment after every phone call. Over the years she had more or less become used to the routine. And she understood that, to protect Eugene, it was important for him never to reach her at the same number twice. Thank you for asking, yes, she was well enough, all things considered...What she meant by that was: considering her age and the dizzy spells and nausea that followed the radiation treatments and her miserable digestion and of course the tumor eating away at her colon, though the doctors swore to her that cancers progressed very slowly in old people...Oh, she remembered back to some hazy past when men would say she was exceptionally attractive, but she no longer recognized herself when she looked at the curling sepia photographs in the album—her hair had turned the color of cement, her eyes had receded into her skull, she had actually grown shorter. She didn't at all mind his asking; quite the contrary, Eugene was the only one to take a personal interest in her...Please don't misunderstand, she didn't expect medals but it would not have been out of place, considering the decades of loyal service, for someone to drop a tiny word of appreciation from time to time...Alas, yes, she supposed they must get down to business...She had been instructed to inform Eugene that his mentor required him to organize a face-to-face meeting with SASHA...the sooner, the better...He would discover why when he retrieved the material left in SILKWORM one seven...Oh, how she hoped against hope that he would take care of himself...Please don't hang down yet, there was one more thing. She knew it was out of the realm of possibility but she would have liked to meet him once, just once, only once; would have liked to kiss him on

the forehead the way she had kissed her son before the Nazi swines hauled him off to the death camp...Eugene would have to excuse her, she certainly hadn't intended to cry...He would! Why, they could meet in a drug store late at night and take tea together at the counter...Oh, dear child, if such a thing could be organized she would be eternally grateful...It could be a week or so before she found a suitable furnished apartment so he could ring back at this number...She would sit next to the phone waiting for him to call...Yes, yes, goodbye, my dear. They came to the rendezvous marked as O X X X X O O X O in the tic-tac-toe code from opposite directions and met just off the Mall between 9th and 10th Streets under the statue of Robert F. Kennedy. "There were people in the Company who broke out Champagne and celebrated when he was gunned down," SASHA recalled, gazing up at Bobby, who had been assassinated by a Palestinian in the kitchen of a Los Angeles hotel just after winning the 1968 California Democratic Presidential primary. "You knew him, didn't you?" Eugene asked. The two men turned their backs on the statue and on the woman who was setting out the skeletons of fish on newspaper for the wild cats in the neighborhood, and strolled down 10th street toward the Mall. "I don't think anybody knew him," SASHA said. "He seemed to step into different roles at different periods of his life. First he was Black Robert, Jack Kennedy's hatchet man. When JFK was assassinated he became the mournful patriarch of the Kennedy clan. When he finally threw his hat into the ring and ran for President, he turned into an ardent defender of the underprivileged." "From Black Robert to Saint Bobby," Eugene said. SASHA eyed his cutout. "What's your secret, Eugene? You don't seem to grow older." "It's the adrenalin that runs through your veins when you live the way we do," Eugene joked. "Every morning I wonder if I'll sleep in my bed that night or on a bunk in a cell." "As long as we're vigilant, as long as our tradecraft is meticulous, we'll be fine," SASHA assured him. "What Starik has to tell me must be pretty important for you take the trouble=" "You mean the risk." SASHA smiled faintly. "=for you to take the risk of personally meeting me." "It is." Eugene had deciphered the document he'd retrieved from SILKWORM one seven, and then spent a long time trying to figure out how to come at the subject with SASHA. "It's about your recent replies to Starik's query of September twenty-second=you left messages in dead drops at the end of September and the first week of October. Comrade Chairman Andropov is absolutely positive that he has analyzed the situation correctly. He was furious when Starik passed on your reports=he even went so far as to suggest that you had been turned by the CIA and were feeding Moscow Centre disinformation. That was the only explanation he could see for your failing to confirm that ABLE ARCHER 83 is covering an American first strike." SASHA burst out, "We're really in hot water if Andropov has become the Centre's senior intelligence analyst." "Don't get angry with me. I'm just the messenger. Look, Comrade Andropov is convinced the Americans are planning a preemptive first strike. With final preparations for KHOLSTOMER being put in place, it's only natural that Andropov and Starik want to pin down the date of the American attack=" SASHA stopped in his tracks. "There is no American preemptive strike in the works," he insisted. "The whole idea is pure nonsense. The reason I can't come up with the date is because there is none. If there were a preemptive strike on the drawing boards I'd know about it. Andropov is an alarmist." "Starik is only suggesting that you are too categoric. He asks if it isn't possible for you to report that you are unaware of any plans for a preemptive strike, as opposed to saying there are no such plans. After all, the Pentagon could be planning a strike and keeping the CIA in the dark=" SASHA resumed walking. "Look, it's simply not possible. The Russians have a mobile second-strike capacity on board railroad flatcars=twelve trains, each with four ICBMs, each ICBM with eight to twelve warheads, shuttling around the three hundred thousand miles of tracks. Without real-time satellite intelligence, the Pentagon couldn't hope to knock these out in a first strike. And the CIA provides the guys who interpret the satellite photographs." SASHA shook his head in frustration. "We have a representative on the committee that selects targets and updates the target list. We keep track of Soviet missile readiness; we estimate how many warheads they could launch at any given moment. Nobody has shown any out-of-the-ordinary interest in these estimates." An overweight man trotting along with two dogs on long leashes overtook them and then passed them. Eugene kept an eye on the occasional car whizzing down Pennsylvania Avenue behind them. "I don't know what to tell you," he finally said. "Starik obviously doesn't want you to make up stories to please the General Secretary. On the other hand, you could make his life easier=" "Do you realize what you're saying, Eugene? Jesus, we've come a long way together. And you're out here asking me to cook the intelligence estimates I send back." "Starik is asking you to be a bit more discreet when you file reports." "In another life," SASHA remarked, "I'm going to write a book about spying=I'm going to tell the fiction writers what it's really all about. In theory, you and I and the rezidentura have enormous advantages in spying against the Principal Adversary=Western societies, their governments, even their intelligence agencies are

more open than ours and easier to penetrate. But in practice, we have enormous disadvantages that even James Angleton, in his heyday, wasn't aware of. Our leaders act as their own intelligence analysts. And our agents in the field are afraid to tell their handlers anything that contradicts the preconceptions of the leaders; even if we tell the handlers, they certainly won't put their careers on the line by passing it up the chain of command. Stalin was positive the West was trying to promote a war between the Soviet Union and Hitler's

Germany, and any information that contradicted that—including half a hundred reports that Hitler was planning to attack Russia—was simply buried. Only reports that appeared to confirm Stalin's suspicions were passed on to him. At one point the Centre even concluded that Kim Philby had been turned because he failed to find evidence that Britain was plotting to turn Hitler against Stalin. Our problem is structural—the intelligence that gets passed up tends to reinforce misconceptions instead of correcting them." "So what do I tell Starik?" Eugene asked. "Tell him the truth. Tell him there isn't a shred of evidence to support the General

Secretary's belief that America is planning a preemptive nuclear strike against the Soviet Union." "If Andropov believes that, there's a good chance he may cancel KHOLSTOMER." "Would that be such a bad thing?" SASHA demanded. "If KHOLSTOMER succeeds hundreds of millions of ordinary people are going to lose their life's savings." After a while SASHA said, "A long time ago you told me what Starik said to you the day he recruited you. You remember?" Eugene nodded. "I could never forget. He said we were going to promote the genius and generosity of the human spirit. It's what keeps me going." SASHA stopped in his tracks again and turned to face his comrade in the struggle against imperialism and capitalism. "So tell me,

Eugene: what does KHOLSTOMER have to do with promoting the genius and generosity of the human spirit?" Eugene was silent for a moment. "I'll pass on to Starik what you said—ABLE ARCHER 83 is not masking an American preemptive strike." SASHA shivered in his overcoat and pulled the collar up around his neck. "It's damn cold out tonight," he said. "It is, isn't it?" Eugene agreed. "What about KHOLSTOMER? You're still supposed to monitor the Federal Reserve preparations to protect the dollar. What do we do about that?" "We think about it." Eugene smiled at his friend. "All right. We'll think about it." Tessa was

incoherent with excitement so Vanessa did most of the talking. Tessa's unit supervisor, a saturnine counterintelligence veteran appropriately named Moody, listened with beady concentration as she led him through the solution. It had been a matter, she explained impatiently, of plying back and forth between the lottery numbers, various telephone numbers and the serial number on a ten-dollar bill. Tessa could tell Mr.

Moody was perplexed. If you start with the area code 202, she said, and subtract that number from the lottery number broadcast with the first Lewis Carroll quotation on April 5, 1951, you break out a ten-dollar bill serial number that begins with a three and a zero. You see? I'm not sure, Moody admitted, but Vanessa, caught up in her own story, plunged on. Using a three and a zero, I was also able to break out the 202 area code from the other twenty-three lottery numbers broadcast by Radio Moscow after an Alice or Looking Glass quotation. There was no way under the sun this could be an accident. So far, so good, Moody—one of the last holdovers from the Angleton era—muttered, but it was evident from the squint of his eyes that he was struggling to keep up with the twins. Okay, Vanessa said. In 1950 the US Treasury printed up \$67,593,240 worth of ten-dollar bills with serial numbers that started with a three and a zero, followed by an eight and a nine. Moody jotted a three and a zero and an eight and a nine on a yellow pad. Vanessa said, Subtracting the 3089 from that first lottery number gave us a telephone number that began with 202 601, which was a common Washington phone number in the early 1950s. Tessa said, At which point we checked out the 9,999 possible phone numbers that went with the 202 601. What were you looking for? Moody wanted to know.

He was still mystified. Don't you see it? Vanessa asked. If Tessa's right, if the quotations from Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass alerted the Soviet agent to copy off the lottery number, and if the lottery number was a coded telephone number, the fact that they were changing it all the time meant that the cutout was moving all the time. Moody had to concede that that made sense; when the agent being contacted was important enough, counterintelligence knew of instances where KGB tradecraft required cutouts to relocate after each contact. So, Vanessa continued, what we were looking for was someone whose phone number began with 202 601, and who moved out soon after April 5th, 1951. Tessa said, It took us days to find anyone who even knew that old telephone records existed. We eventually found them buried in dusty boxes in a dusty basement. It turns out there were one hundred and twenty-seven phones that started with the number 202 601 that were taken out of service in the week following April 5th, 1951. After that it was child's play, Vanessa said. We subtracted each of the hundred and twenty-seven phone numbers from that first lottery number, which gave us a hundred and twenty-seven possible eight-digit serial numbers for the Soviet agent's ten-dollar bill. Then we went to the second time the Moscow quiz program used a Lewis

Carroll quote, and subtracted each of the hundred and twenty-seven possible serial numbers from it, giving us a hundred and twenty-seven new phone numbers. Then we waltzed back to the phone records and traced one of these phone numbers to an apartment rented by the same person who had been on the first 202 601 list. Tessa came around the desk and crouched next to the unit supervisor's wooden swivel chair. The serial number on the agent's ten-dollar bill is 30892006, Mr. Moody. Five days after Radio Moscow broadcast the second coded lottery number, which is to say five days after the Soviet agent in America phoned that number, this person relocated again. Vanessa said, We tested the serial number on all the lottery numbers broadcast by Radio Moscow when an Alice or a Looking Glass quote turned up in the quiz. Every time we subtracted the eight-digit serial number from the winning lottery number, it led to a Washington-area phone number in an apartment rented by the same woman. In every case the woman relocated within a week or so of the Moscow Radio broadcast. So the cutout's a woman! Moody exclaimed. A Polish woman by the name of Tessa retrieved an index card from the pocket of her jacket Aida Tannenbaum. We got our hands on her naturalization papers. She is an Auschwitz survivor, a Jewish refugee from Poland who emigrated to America after World War II and became an American citizen in 1951. She was born in 1914, which makes her sixty-nine years old. She never seems to have held a job and it's not clear where she gets money to pay the rent. Vanessa said, She's changed apartments twenty-six times in the past thirty-two years. Her most recent address—which we traced when we broke out the most recent lottery signal from Moscow Radio—is on 16th Street near Antioch College. If she sticks to the pattern she'll move out in the next two or three days. Mr. Moody was beginning to put it all together. She moves out a week or so after she's contacted by the Soviet agent in America, he said. Right, Tessa said. Vanessa said, When she moves, all we have to do is get the phone company to tell us when someone named Aida Tannenbaum applies for a new phone number—Tessa finished the thought for her: Or wait for the Moscow quiz program to come up with an Alice or a Looking Glass quotation, then subtract the serial number from the lottery number—Moody was shaking his head from side to side in wonderment. And we'll have her new phone number—the one that the Soviet agent will call. Right. That's it. It looks to me, Moody said, as if you girls have made a fantastic breakthrough. I must formally instruct both of you not to share this information with anybody. By anybody I mean anybody, without exception. As soon as the twins were gone, Moody—who, like his old mentor Angleton, was reputed to have a photographic memory—opened a four-drawer steel file cabinet and rummaged through the folders until he came to an extremely thick one marked "Kukushkin." Moody had been a member of the crack four-man team that Angleton had assigned to work through the Kukushkin serials. Now, skimming the pages of the dossier, he searched anxiously for the passage he remembered. After a time he began to wonder whether he had imagined it. And then, suddenly, his eye fell on the paragraph he'd been looking for. At one point Kukushkin—who turned out to be a dispatched agent but who had delivered a certain amount of true information in order to establish his bona fides—had reported that the cutout who serviced SASHA was away from Washington on home leave; the summons back to Russia had been passed on to the cutout by a woman who freelanced for the Washington rezidentura. A woman who freelanced for the rezidentura! In other words, SASHA was so important that one cutout wasn't sufficient; the KGB had built in a circuit breaker between the rezidentura and the cutout who serviced SASHA. Could it be this circuit breaker that the Kritzky twins had stumbled across? He would get the FBI to tap Aida Tannenbaum's phone on 16th Street on the off-chance the cutout who serviced SASHA called again before she moved on to another apartment, at which point they would tap the new number. Barely able to conceal his excitement, Moody picked up an intra-office telephone and dialed a number on the seventh floor. "This is Moody in counterintelligence," he said. "Can you put me through to Mr. Ebbitt...Mr. Ebbitt, this is Moody in counterintelligence. I know it's somewhat unusual, but I'm calling you directly because I have a something that requires your immediate attention..." --from *The Company: A Novel of the CIA* by Robert Littell, Copyright April 2002, The Overlook Press, a member of Penguin Putnam, Inc., used by permission." *Revue de presse*"Compulsive reading from start to finish" *The Boston Globe*"Hugely entertaining...a serious look at how our nation exercises power...popular fiction at its finest." *The Washington Post Book World*"As it happens, this longest spy novel ever written turns out to be one of the best." *Chicago Tribune*"Reads like a breeze...guaranteed to suck you right back into the Alice-in-Wonderland world of spy vs. spy." *Newsweek*"If Robert Littell didn't invent the American spy novel, he should have." Tom Clancy