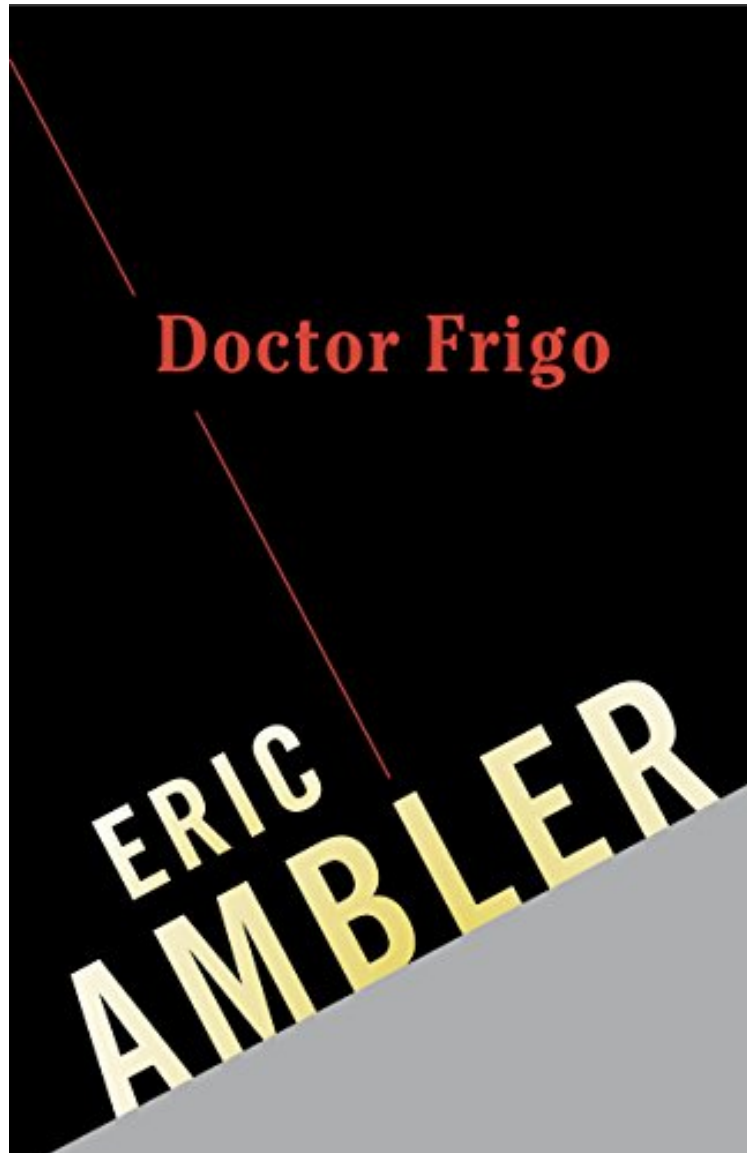


## Doctor Frigo

*Von Eric Ambler*

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**Von Eric Ambler : Doctor Frigo** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Doctor Frigo:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The Intrigue of Power!Von Donald MitchellTo read or not to read the great espionage novels of Eric Ambler? That is the question most people ignore because they are not familiar with Mr. Ambler and his particularly talent.Mr. Ambler has always had this problem. As Alfred Hitchcock noted in his introduction to Intrigue (an omnibus volume containing

Journey into Fear, A Coffin for Dimitrios, Cause for Alarm and Background to Danger), "Perhaps this was the volume that brought Mr. Ambler to the attention of the public that make best-sellers. They had been singularly inattentive until its appearance -- I suppose only God knows why." He goes on to say, "They had not even heeded the critics, who had said, from the very first, that Mr. Ambler had given new life and fresh viewpoint to the art of the spy novel -- an art supposedly threadbare and certainly cliché-infested." So what's new and different about Eric Ambler's writing? His heroes are ordinary people with whom almost any reader can identify, which puts you in the middle of a turmoil of emotions. His bad guys are characteristic of those who did the type of dirty deeds described in the book. His angels on the sidelines are equally realistic to the historical context. The backgrounds, histories and plot lines are finely nuanced into the actual evolution of the areas and events described during that time. In a way, these books are like historical fiction, except they describe deceit and betrayal rather than love and affection. From a distance of many years, we read these books today as a way to step back into the darkest days of the past and relive them vividly. You can almost see and feel a dark hand raised to strike you in the back as you read one of his book's later pages. In a way, these stories are like a more realistic version of what Dashiell Hammett wrote as applied to European, Middle Eastern and Central American political intrigue and espionage. Since Mr. Ambler wrote, the thrillers have gotten much bigger in scope . . . and moved beyond reality. Usually, the future of the human race is at stake. The heroes make Superman look like a wimp in terms of their prowess and knowledge. There's usually a love interest who exceeds your vision of the ideal woman. Fast-paced violence and killing dominate most pages. There are lots of toys to describe and use in imaginative ways. The villains combine the worst faults of the 45 most undesirable people in world history and have gained enormous wealth and power while being totally crazy. The plot twists and turns like cruise missile every few seconds in unexpected directions. If you want a book like that, please do not read Mr. Ambler's work. You won't like it. If you want to taste, touch, smell, see and hear evil from close range and move through fear to defeat it, Mr. Ambler's your man. Doctor Frigo was first published in 1974 by Antheneum, and is one of Mr. Ambler's most psychologically nuanced works. In Doctor Frigo we have the contrast between the reserved, self-contained man living in exile and his connection to the popular movement in a Central American country where his father was assassinated. The book opens with Doctor Frigo's musings about his father, Clemente Castillo Borja, and the assassination. "The gunmen were blown to pieces long before there was even a chance of their being caught and questioned." "Police records had both men down as, 'Wanted for armed robbery. No known political connections.'" The truth of the motives behind those bare facts is much more complicated, as the story evidences. Doctor Frigo's nickname comes from his reputation as being a cold fish, seemingly uninterested in his father's fate and political heritage. Is that the case, or is it merely window-dressing? With a new group planning to come to power, they feel that they need to find out. As a result, Ernesto Castillo (Doctor Frigo's real name) finds himself invited to join a new political effort aimed at that same country. Will he stay as Doctor Frigo? Will he become his father's son? Will he play a mere role as a puppet? Who is he, really? Doctor Frigo finds out as he moves out of the quiet hallways of the hospital into the maelstrom of political intrigue. The book raises a very nice question of what would happen if we tried to walk in the steps of a person who had had wide influence. Could we handle the role? Who are we? As you read the book, you should also think about someone you admire and how you could play a constructive role similar to theirs in a way that feels comfortable to you. Be inspired to do more!

**Kurzbeschreibung** Dr. Frigo is a change of scene for acclaimed spy thriller writer Eric Ambler, moving from the European theater to an equally intriguing Caribbean political stage. Dr. Ernesto Castillo has shunned politics and shut himself off from the world since his father, a Central American leader, was assassinated years ago. In fact his cool, detached demeanor has earned him the nickname Dr. Frigo. The doctor is more than content to live quietly on a small island, keeping busy with his practice and his mistress . . . but now his late father's political party comes calling. Its rising leader, Manuel Villegas, hopes to put Dr. Castillo to work as his physician and as a rallying figure for the elder Castillo's supporters, who are still numerous and necessary to help Villegas win power in a planned coup. Ignoring the advice of his mistress, whose marriage to a French intelligence officer made her an expert player of political games, the doctor unwisely stumbles his way forward, risking his profession and then his life. **Pressestimmen** What pleasurable admiration one derives from the fact that in an age, and an area, where most writers become burnt-out cases, Eric Ambler - who after his classic beginnings and less remarkable middle years and books - is now getting better and best. Burnt-out cases is a deliberately chosen term since this new novel takes place in Graham Greene-land - one of those desolate little Central American coffee republics where even the palm trees are "like tired, untidy women." Here Dr. Frigo (which means frozen meat) assumes an uncommitted, spectator stance after the assassination of his father (was he a real liberator or just an opportunist?) twelve years before, ignoring his mother's treason theory and her desire to have Ernesto (his given name) as an avenger. But he just goes about his doctoring and has an affair with one of the most charming creatures met in a long time - Elizabeth, an artist, also a Hapsburg of direct descent six times removed from the Empress Maria-Theresa of Austria, Elizabeth who makes unsettling insinuations and only too direct historical

referrals to the Hapsburg past which might be pertinent now. Particularly since Ernesto is asked, forcibly, to attend Villegas, his father's successor and candidate for a new takeover backed by international off-shore oil interests. But apparently there is something very wrong with his patient, more than his "abdominal inconveniences" - there's his slurred speech which when finally diagnosed makes the whole matter one of the greatest confidentiality. And Ernesto is obliged to continue at the failing arm's length of his patient all through the grand deception, the chaotic coup (even if a *fait accompli* before it was started) and assassination. Thus we have a parapolitical thriller in which Ambler is only too aware of the pragmatic complexity of a submerged part of the world where the returns are great for a few - but then no "government can do things for people without doing things to them." Ambler's entertainment - and surely it is more than that - is urbane, amusing, cautionary and threateningly urgent at all times - in a word, masterful. (Kirkus s)

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