

Spymaster, spymaster, spin me a tale

Suspended Sentences

by Jim Napier

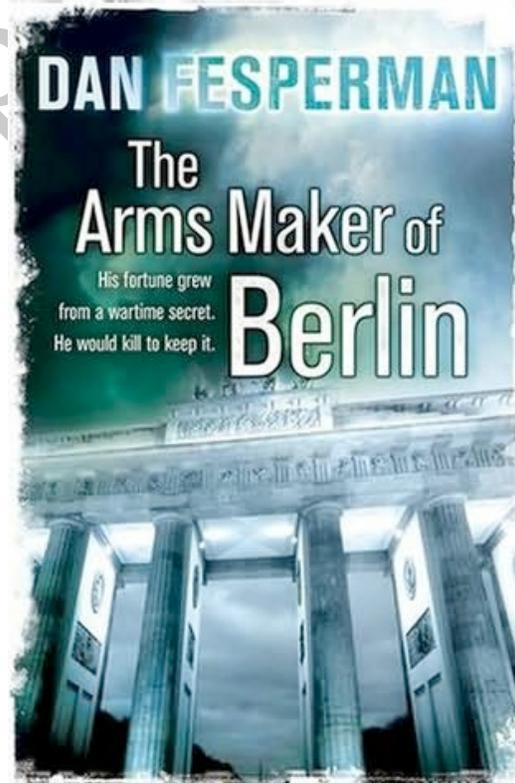
[Excerpt]

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.

**Dan Fesperman,
The Arms Maker of Berlin
(Knopf, 2009)**

Award-winning crime novelist Dan Fesperman draws on his experience as a journalist stationed in hotspots around the world to paint a vivid tale that reaches back into the early 1940s. When history professor Nat Turnbull learns that his mentor, Gordon Wolfe, has been arrested for possession of stolen archives from the Second World War, he is intrigued, both personally and pro-

fessionally. Key documents are missing, and Turnbull believes Gordon knows where they are. But before he can speak to him Gordon dies in jail. Turnbull tries to follow clues left by his former friend, racing against others who want the papers, and at least one man who wants them never to be found. An engrossing tale that reads effortlessly, in a style reminiscent of the best of Ken Follet and Robert Ludlum.



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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