



**Title:** Safe Houses

**Author:** Dan Fesperman

**Description:**

On one extraordinary day of the Cold War in 1979, Helen Abell stumbles upon two dark but very different secrets in the course of her duties as manager of a CIA safe house in Berlin. Either of them, if made public, could damage the careers of high-ranking people with powerful ambitions. But Helen and two female colleagues decide that the price of silence might be costlier still, so they covertly begin working together to reveal the truth even as they risk their lives and careers. Thirty-five years later, in a small town on the Maryland Eastern Shore, Helen, by then a farm wife who never speaks of her past, is murdered along with her husband by their developmentally disabled son. Her adult daughter, Anna, is determined to find out why, even if it means enlisting the help of a quiet young investigator who may be hiding as much about his background as her mother. As these two complex storylines begin to interweave across time, an overriding question emerges: If Helen has taken both secrets to her grave, why are powerful people still working feverishly behind the scenes to clean up in the wake of her death, and how many more lives will be put at risk

**Reviews**

**[The New York Times:](#)**

The narrative choreography demanded by Fespermans split timelines is expertly handled, and the dilemma faced by Helen, in particular whether to be a good employee or a good citizen illustrates the kind of weight that the spy novel, in the right hands, is capable of bearing.

**[The Wall Street Journal:](#)**

Filled with intriguing twists and hairsbreadth escapes...exhilarating.

***The Associated Press:***

In Safe Houses, author Dan Fesperman superbly melds a character-strong espionage thriller with a suspenseful mystery that also aligns with the #MeToo movement...a superior thriller both on the international and domestic front.

**[The Chicago Tribune:](#)**

Like the best espionage novels, "Safe Houses" brilliantly traces the distance between high moral ground and low. Part of the fun of the book is reading it for a second time and seeing how the narrative seeds of the first part enrich and deepen what occurs in part two.

***Library Journal:***

Fesperman (Lie in the Dark) delivers a breathtaking, intricate international spy novel unnervingly on point for the #MeToo moment.

***Kirkus (starred review):***

Unlike some spy novels, this one never bogs down in gamesmanship, spy talk, or cheap reveals. It strives to be truthful. Prolific spy novelist Fesperman delivers another winner, this one as fiendishly clever as it is richly entertaining.

**Publishers Weekly:**

Anna is shocked to discover that her mom was once a spy; the reader won't be surprised to learn that Mattick isn't quite what he appears to be or that there are deep, dark secrets within the CIA. Aficionados of quality spy fiction will be rewarded.

**Booklist (starred review):**

This is a masterfully constructed example of classic le Carré-style espionage fiction, the all-enveloping perfidy burrowing its way into inner lives and leaving the survivors only tentatively able to move forward.

**The News & Observer:**

A new Dan Fesperman has a guaranteed spot in the bedside-to-be-read pile. He always delivers a high level of storytelling and wordsmithing. Fesperman's story of women at a workplace disadvantage is on point for the age of #MeToo, and a good reminder of the ground we have gained not all that long ago, really and now must try to hold.

**Criminal Element:**

Safe Houses showcases a lean, muscular prose that is able to deliver plot points as cleanly and quickly as a switchblade's twist. Each dive into the old Cold War culture is fresh, with enough description and realism to enthrall me with the historically fascinating past while avoiding the bogging of encyclopedic descriptions. Fesperman's exhaustive research shines through with crisp dialogue and believable characters. He kept me guessing all the way to the end and finished with another nice twist of his narrative switchblade. I'm definitely a new fan; read Safe Houses and you will be too (if you aren't already).

**The Seattle Review of Books:**

A cool and engaging spy thriller, Safe Houses by Dan Fesperman (Knopf) plays a long game, veering between recent-day America and 1979 Europe. Excellent page-turner, with incredible integrity at its heart.

**The Real Book Spy:**

Fesperman's strong prose meets a cast of beautifully developed characters, all of whom have various secrets and a multitude of layers, in this seriously twisty thriller... Safe Houses is one heck of a ride and a must-read for spy fans everywhere.

**The Big Thrill:**

If you're looking for a truly gripping work of suspense, you should check out Dan Fesperman's SAFE HOUSES, a spy novel wrapped around a murder mystery set in Cold War-era Berlin.

**HelloGiggles:**

Speaking of strong female leads, Safe Houses has three of them, banding together against men who abuse their power. You won't be able to put this one down.

**Lee Child, author of the "Jack Reacher" series:**

Wonderful. Fesperman raises the bar sky-high with this one. Smart, sophisticated, suspenseful, and intensely human. One of the great espionage novels of our time.

**Peter Blauner, author of SUNRISE HIGHWAY and SLOW MOTION RIOT:**

A bullet-train thriller and an intriguing labyrinth of a mystery, Dan Fesperman's SAFE

HOUSES will make your time between stations disappear.

***William Christie, author of A SINGLE SPY:***

What a terrific book. The intricate plot commands your attention and repays it beautifully. A particular delight for me was a meticulously researched Berlin that may evolve with the years but remains forever haunted. From the very first chapter you know that this is a spy novel that will not end without a reckoning of the human cost of secrets and the inevitable corruption of institutions that use security to remain accountable only to themselves.

***Chris Pavone, author of THE EXPATS:***

A terrific book about work and love, mothers and daughters, loyalty and betrayal, combining the gripping immediacy of a present-day murder mystery with the high-stakes sexy intrigue of a Cold War espionage thriller.