



Shop Till You Drop

Elaine Viets

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From Anthony and Agatha Award-winning author Elaine Viets—the thrilling mystery series about one woman trying to make a living... while other people are making a killing.

Helen Hawthorne had a high-finance job, a beautiful home—and a good-for-nothing husband she caught in the act with their neighbor. But when she tried to divorce the bum, the judge decided that Helen had to pay—and Helen decided the only way to keep her dignity would be to defy the courts, refuse to pay, and run for it.

Now hiding out in Fort Lauderdale, Helen is working as a lowly sales clerk at a high-fashion boutique. But keeping out of trouble proves difficult when she discovers the manager is running her own side business stealing from the store and selling drugs to customers.

Helen's discomfort is short lived when the felonious fashionista suddenly goes on vacation—and turns up dead in the water. In desperate need of cash, Helen decides to try and find out who killed the woman for an offered reward.

But she soon uncovers even more nefarious goings-on that put her new career—and her new life—in mortal danger...

Shop Till You Drop Details

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Author : Elaine Viets

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From Reader Review Shop Till You Drop for online ebook

Terri says

Met this author at a recent writers conference. So far, very much enjoying the book. A nice, humorous, light read and it's my first time reading her work.

Really enjoyed this book. A cute, humorous, fast read. Enjoyable mystery and I'll be reading the others in this series.

Diane Morasco says

Shop till You Drop is one of the best, laugh your butt off mystery books out there. Helen Hawthorne is one of the most impressive characters to come along in the saturated amateur sleuth genre. Elaine Viets has made her Dead-End Job mysteries must read. No matter what is going on.

I was going through of one of my moody reading spells where you just couldn't find the right book to read & every unread book on your shelf just wasn't calling you. Shop till You Drop was shouting to be read.

Well, I read it ~ in one sitting. I believe one of the reasons I think the Stephanie Plum series is a total snore fest is Elaine Viets. She is one of the reasons I am so darn spoiled by excellent writing, laugh-out-loud amusing adventures & characters so vile or so endearing you just want them to be real.

Elaine Viets' Dead-End Job Mysteries are addicting... like grapes, peanuts, potato chips or M&M's... one just will not do.

Ms. Viets creates such vivacious characters, I was tempted to go for a stroll along Las Olas Boulevard & ring the bell @ Julianna's. I just wanted to see Christina up close.

Helen Hawthorne is one of the most riotous, sensational & vivid characters you'll ever encounter. The cast of secondary characters are delectable, whimsical & priceless.

Elaine's plotting is ingenious & her wicked sense of humor is reason enough to pick up Shop till You Drop.

This is definitely a series lovers of the cozy genre should scoop up & readers in search of incredible story telling should rush out to grab Shop till You Drop. Hurry go grab it. Heck, who am I kidding, order all of the books now. The only thing you will regret is waiting an entire year for the next hilarious mystery adventure w/ Helen & company.

Missi Stockwell says

The Dead-End Job Mystery series by Elaine Viets has been around since 2003 and there are 15 books in this

series to date. I may be getting around to them late but I can assure you that I will be reading ALL of them !!

Shop Till You Drop is the first book in this series and it was so fun and easy to read. You will instantly love Helen Hawthorne, the main character, as well as feel sorry for her. She had a great life in St. Louis...she had a husband, a nice house and a 6 figure paying job. Until she caught her husband cheating on her and she went crazy. And to make matters worse, the judge sided with her lazy, cheating husband and wanted her to continue to pay the man a percentage of her future earnings.... So she up and leaves and ends up in Fort Lauderdale working under the table, just making ends meet and staying under the radar so her ex will never get another dime from her !!!

Well the job she has seems to be a pretty good job. She's working at a high-end clothing store where customers have to ring a doorbell to obtain access into the store !!! Helen's boss Christina is the manager and she knows the in's and out's of all the "popular" girls. Not only does she know the in's and out's but she knows some pretty heavy secrets....secrets that get her killed !! Leaving Helen to fend for herself and try to figure things out.

How can you not like a story where the main character is "running from the law", living in a little apartment complex with some interesting tenants, working with the police while trying to keep her past a secret, and trying to find out how Christina could afford the lifestyle she was living on the salary she was receiving as well as solve her murder.

Oh and Helen knows that she can't work at Juliana's for much longer and trying to find another job where she can get paid under the table is not that easy. You cannot help but love her determination to keep her whereabouts from her ex-husband and the courts but feel sorry for her for having to live the way she is.

I fell in love with Shop Till You Drop for so many reasons and cannot wait to read the next book in this series.....Murder Between the Covers. I know that it will be just as great because I know where her next dead-end job is going to be and I LOVE IT !!!!

Jackie says

I thought this book had a good plot and mystery. I'm glad it's a series as I'll be able to connect more with the main characters. I grew to like Hellen as well as the landlady, Peggy and Pete the parrot, and detective Grace.

While I liked the characters, I'd have liked some more character development. The writing style seemed too under-developed for the subject matter and main character's age. Also, there were some predictable moments in the story.

Overall, *Shop Till You Drop* was a good mystery and a good start to a series however, it left me wishing for more.

Chelsea says

Read it again on February 3, 2014. Fun read again. :-D. Great cozy mystery with likable and real characters.

Tex says

A slightly more gritty cozy mystery, the first in the series, that brings Helen in as a fugitive from the Midwest who has to work in dead-end jobs so her ex-husband can't find her. It's a cute way to have a character in various situations while getting to know them. In this, Helen is working in a high end Las Olas boutique and comes across blackmail, drug-running, and MURDER. (teehee)

More like 3.5 stars but rounded up because the start to the series was fun and I didn't hate the characters (although they were decidedly characteratures).

Ellie says

Meet Helen Hawthorne, star of Elaine Viets' Shop Till You Drop. Helen on the run after an incident with a cheating husband and a crowbar and has left affluent (though dowdy) St. Louis for an impoverished life in chic (but sleazy) Ft. Lauderdale. Working off the books for cash, she is an assistant in a high end boutique. But anorexia and kleptomania are the mildest problems she sees. There are drug sales, hit men, and the murder of a co-worker to contend with as well.

This book is a breathlessly fast read and lots of fun for lovers of cozies. I'm off to find myself the next in the series asap.

Carol says

Read this as I had heard Elaine Viets talk about all the jobs she has held and how this inspires this series of dead end jobs.

Light mystery, non-gory killing and some humor. Just what you'd expect from this low key, if not a cozy, at least, less violent entry into the mystery world.

I started with *as it is the first in the series featuring Helen Hawthorne. Will I read another? Perhaps, but will pick the job, rather than going in sequence. For me, a non-fiction journey with the author and the jobs she has held would probably be more satisfying.*

Becky says

Though I've read most of the books in the Elaine Viets series "Josie Marcus, Mystery Shopper," this is the first I've read in the "Dead-End Job" series. It's a bit darker than the Josie Marcus series, with characters with mob connections, as well as brief mentions of darker crimes. However, the main character, Helen, is likable and relatable. Based on her wacky connections and her terrible job, I'm curious to see what's in store for her in future installments of this series.

Stina says

#37 for 2011

Meh. I didn't hate this book, but mainly because it didn't try hard enough for me to actually work up any serious expectations. It wasn't bad, but it wasn't all that good, either. Not good enough for three stars, anyway. Just shy of mediocre, I suppose. Lots of contrived and/or predictable elements. Characters that are either made of cardboard or internally inconsistent. And I do hate it when the author's petty personal biases are so transparent. Ms Viets obviously has an ax to grind when it comes to Canadian men, and this does not interest me as a mystery reader.

I have the next few books in the series, so I expect I will read the next one and see if there is any improvement. But if book #2 weren't set in a bookstore, I would probably just give up now.

David Caldwell says

I was lucky enough to get to meet this author while attending a bookstore manager's meeting.

This is a nice cozy style mystery. Helen has a good job but then her life goes haywire. She finds herself running from her past as she travels from town to town and taking dead end jobs. Naturally she is trying to keep a low profile so when she stumbles across some funny business and a murder at her salesclerk job, she tries to quickly solve the murder before anyone takes too close of a look at her and the past from which she is running.

These mysteries will strike a cord with anybody who has ever been stuck in a job that is deemed a dead-end.

Heather L says

Not being a fashionista, I never intended to read this series, and would not have picked up this book had the author not been selected as a featured author of the month in the Cozy Mysteries group. Those who love fashion may appreciate this series, but I personally do not feel compelled to seek out the next book.

Jonathan says

Really 3.5 stars, but I rounded up.

I have heard people simply raving over and over again about how good this series is, so when I saw this book at a rummage store about a year ago, I picked it up and bought it. Until now, however, I never got around to reading it. Shop Till You Drop was a funny, fast-paced start to a longstanding series that's a favorite with many cozy readers.

Helen was a MC down on her luck. Unlike most cozy mystery main characters, we don't know much about Helen's past when we first start the book, finding out only a few vague details. However, the pieces of her extremely interesting past are soon put together. I loved Margery, Tara, and the rest of the supporting characters, and I hope we see them again in the next book.

The setting was actually wonderful. Most of the story took place in a wonderful older apartment complex and Juliana's, an extremely upscale clothing store, and Ms. Viets did a wonderful job of describing both. The mystery, however, left a lot to be desired. There was no real climax at the end, and I didn't like the way the mystery was set up; you knew who the killer was for quite awhile and you just had to find the evidence. It was disappointing.

Overall a solid book. I'll read the next one.

Bonnie says

This book was pretty good read. The characters were well developed. I would read more of this series. Think it kept you guessing on what would happen. And was well written, and didn't have too much in was just right.

I gave it a B or 3 stars.

Leslie aka StoreyBook Reviews says

This is the first book in the series by Elaine Viets about Helen Hawthorne who is lying low and taking jobs where she can be paid cash under the table so that her ex husband can't find her. They divorced but the judge said he was entitled to half of her income since he "supported" her....yeah right, typical male judge!

I read this series out of order and while I don't think it hurt anything it would be better to read in order. So this is the first book, enjoy!
