



**Elaine Viets**

Author of *Final Sail*

## Board Stiff

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*Husband and wife PI team Helen Hawthorne and Phil Sagemont won't be sparing the sunscreen on their latest assignment, but they're about to find out murder is no day at the beach....*

### **Will the Real Paddleboard Killer Please Stand Up?**

There's a dark cloud over Sunny Jim's Safety First Parasailing and Stand-Up Paddleboarding business on Florida's Riggs Beach—especially after one of his clients is killed in a tragic paddleboarding mishap. Sunny Jim is sure it was no accident, and he hires Helen and Phil to find the murderer.

Between cutthroat competitors poaching his territory, the city threatening to revoke his license, a restaurant owner wanting his beach spot for a parking lot, and a wrongful death suit filed by the victim's husband, Sunny Jim may soon be up the creek without a paddle.

But he does have Helen and Phil on his side, and as the couple start to investigate, they discover dark undercurrents of corruption behind the cheerful facades of the beachfront businesses, as well as domestic secrets. But the sands of time are running out, and if they don't catch the killer soon, Sunny Jim won't be the only one to go under....

## **Board Stiff Details**

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Author : Elaine Viets

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## From Reader Review Board Stiff for online ebook

### **Erin says**

I had previously given up on this series, but picked this one up at the library since it was set on the beach, which is always my weakness... it's definitely the last one. While corruption is always very believable, the rest of the plot (from the return of helen's ex from the dead to her new husband freaking out over her hiding the fact that she was blackmailed from him) was not. I just stopped caring where the book went after the couple's little tiff.

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### **Darcy says**

The mystery in this one was average. I found myself hating Phil during the later portion of the book. I hated how he jumped to conclusions and was so judgmental. At one point I wanted Helen to find someplace new, especially when Margery started to chime in.

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### **Lynn Demsky says**

I was just disappointed in this Dead-End Job mystery --- was more fun before the main character remarried. Except for a couple chapters in this one, it was mostly the same old --- her dead buried husband turned up again, her and her new husband had a bad enough row that he kicked her out of his apartment (but she never gave hers up so she still had a place to live).

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### **Icewineanne says**

Hmmm.....lots of good reviews but for me this was just an average cozy. Nothing special but an "ok" time-waster. If you're looking for a challenging read, look elsewhere. That said, it's a pleasant beach book which I'm sure is what the author intends.

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### **Anne says**

Always fun to read

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### **Michele says**

This book was okay, pretty much same-old, same-old. I wish the characters would develope. Helen is self-centered as always. We hear seven million times how attractive Phil is.

The plot was okay, easily figured out.

I'm not sure where this series is going, but I hope some new ideas come forth soon. I stay with the books because I liked them in the beginning, but now, even the most loyal fans have got to be growing tired of the predictability.

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### **Ellen says**

"Board Stiff" is the 12th in the Dead End Jobs mystery series and I've read every one of them. The reasons why I've stayed with this series will become quite obvious once you too become addicted.

1. The characters are not boring or repetitive. The action is new with each book.
2. The characters work well together as their relationships evolve.
3. The author took care to have the main characters in a collaborative P.I. business so they would be sought out by others and not stuck in their own environment with murders taking place under their noses.
4. An necessary character of a zany and fun loving nature has wisely been included.

Characters:

Helen Hawthorne: Married to Phil and 1/2 of the Coronado Investigation team.

Phil Sagemont: Helen's husband and the other 1/2 of the Coronado Investigation team.

Margery Flax: owner of the Coronado Tropic apartments in Fort Lauderdale where Helen & Phil live. A 76 yo with the energy of a teenager and a mind still as sharp as a tack. Did I mention Margery loves the color purple?

Sunny Jim Sandusky, owner of Sunny Jim's Paddle Board Rentals on Riggs Beach, needs some investigative research done on who is trying to destroy his business. Jim seems to think it's Bill Board, the owner of another paddle board rental on Riggs Beach. Jim feels that Bill is trying to run off the competition so he can be solo in the paddle board business. But how far will he go to accomplish this?

Daniel & Ceci Odell have reserved 2 paddle boards for 10:00 am. When they arrive Daniel suddenly decides Ceci can go on her own and he will sit this one out. Sunny Jim has second thoughts about Ceci going it alone after just one lesson paddle boarding. Ceci insists and away she goes.

This story is not that simple. The murder(s) happen and the plot behind them thickens and just when you think it all may be solved another mystery from Helen's past comes back to haunt her. Helen gets a phone call from her sister Kathy. That phone call turns Helen's life upside down.

A must read for all lovers of cozy mysteries in a series. highly recommended.

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## OpenBookSociety.com says

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/bo...>

Brought to you by OBS Reviewer Jeanie

And you thought your job reeked. Or at least that you've had more than your share of positions that nobody should have to have. Maybe you are even a small business owner who has had a few challenges with the competition. You can definitely appreciate the situation that Sunny Jim, of Sunny Jim's Stand-Up Paddleboard Rental stand finds himself, when all is not sunny at Riggs Beach in Florida.

His business is quickly being ruined, board by paddle by board. Vandalism, possibly by a competitor, is costing many dollars and customers. He suspects that a political palm or two are being greased by something other than cocoa butter tanning lotions, so he hires the now-newlywed team of Helen Hawthorne and Phil Sagemont to discover who is trying to shut him down. Helen and Phil are PI's who have a bit of time on their hands, enough time for Phil to learn more about the paddleboard business. Helen seems to get the easier part of this job, basking in the sun and watching the shop, video camera in hand, hoping to document the customer-thieves from a safe distance as other sunbathers, at least the men, watch her.

Within a short time after beginning their "just a day at the beach", a tourist with very little instruction on paddleboards decided to go exactly where she was warned to not go. It was thought at first that she died from being caught in a riptide and was unable to get free enough to get air into her starving lungs. Unfortunately, however, it is discovered later that she didn't drown. She was murdered. And as a customer of Sunny Jim, it might be the last straw before his business is forced to close for good.

As if the job challenges weren't enough, a blackmailer who had been an unwelcome guest in the lives of Helen and her sister for quite some time contacted Kathy again, wanting more money. This time, quite a large sum. And Helen goes with back home with the hopes of settling with the blackmailer, once and for all. Then Phil's pride gets the better of him, and he might be ready to end their barely-newlywed-stage marriage and Coronado Investigations – if the killer and vandals don't get them, first. So many interesting suspects, so little time... And, such a wonderful relationship, so much on the line to save!

This novel is expertly written with characters who have been well-developed over the course of the series and who continue to grow and change with the circumstances. Honestly, I think my favorite was Margery Flax, the landlady and a woman who could be ... an aunt to Phil or Helen. She takes delight in helping others and in doing odd jobs for the PI's. Margery also has sufficient maturity and wisdom to have the respect of most of the younger adults at the apartment complex yet she has a youthful outlook and enjoys playing an "operative". The twists and ironies in the plot and subplot are unexpected and fascinating to this reader!

One thing I do miss from cozy mysteries with one main protagonist is the first-person perspective of the person whose point of view is primary. While Helen's point of view is prominent, seeing from more than one perspective may have kept me from forming as much of an attachment with Helen. That being said, it is purely subjective from my point of view and I would not want it to prevent the average cozy reader from enjoying this current offering in this highly successful series.

The most recent novel in the Dead End Job Mystery series is well-recommended by this reader for adults of all ages. Reading Board Stiff may give a dose of gratitude for those who have the 'working at the car wash blues' but can also make good, friendly wait staff or paddleboard rental clerks a bit reticent when sharing

with new – or repeat – customers! Fans of private investigator cozies that include a little bit of murder, romance, and an interesting array of suspects will enjoy this new Dead-End Job Mystery.

\*OBS would like to thank the publisher for supplying a free copy of this title in exchange for an honest review as part of their on-going blog tour\*

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### **Monica Mason says**

Even though this is the first I've read in the series; it was a fantastic read and I didn't feel out of the loop about backstory and history. Great characters. I really felt like they could be real. Two plots keep me interested. Looking forward to reading more in the series.

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### **Lindajwink says**

I'm annoyed that I stayed up late to finish reading this lame mystery, but I wanted to see where it went. It was improbable, implausible and overall ridiculous with coincidences such as one of the murder suspects, who was on vacation in Florida where the murder occurred, was from St. Louis in the exact same neighborhood as the heroine's sister lives. Someone was willing to commit murder for \$5,000? It was supposed to look accidental, but the victim was stabbed besides drowned? Insulting to one's intelligence. And there's plenty more of this type of stupidity, these are the most obvious.  
I liked the beach setting as I'm familiar with that area, but that's where the interesting part ended and the rest was pretty preposterous - from people giving out revealing info for no reason, to a husband who was ready to leave his wife for keeping a secret from him, an improbable ridiculous one at that!

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### **Laarin says**

Easy read. Glad they finally tied up the story line with her ex-husband. Was really ready for that to end.

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### **Kathy Warren says**

I love the Dead-End Job series. Helen is now married to Phil and both have their own detective agency. This lively plot and board humor is a great tea mystery. Perfect read for the summer and beach.

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### **Sue says**

Fluffy detective story set mostly in a south Florida beach town with a foray back to St. Louis to pull together old secret history of detective Helen Hawthorne. A quick read, maybe a good summer vacation book?

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## **LORI CASWELL says**

Phil is working undercover at Sunny Jim's Safety First Parasailing and Stand-Up Paddleboarding business on Florida's Riggs Beach while Helen plays the tourist with her trusty video camera. They have been hired to figure out who was trying to put Jim out of business when stakes get raised considerably. A client was killed and Jim knows it was no accident.

There are no shortage of suspects, a cutthroat competitor wants Jim's prime beach location, the nearby restaurant owner wants the space to enlarge his parking lot, and the victim's husband seems pretty shady himself and more so after he files a wrongful death suit.

But Phil and Helen uncover much more as they investigate. Dirty politicians, dirty cops and many secrets seem to be the norm at this beach. Helen and Phil need to catch the culprit before the tide turns and they all get washed away.

### Dollycas's Thoughts

One of my favorite series. Viets tops herself this one with a big surprise. I had a little inkling at the end of Final Sail but never imagined that it would play out the way it did.

Valerie Cannata finds herself right in the middle of the investigation and my favorite lady in purple, Margery, plays a key role as well. That Margery is one wise woman who never fails to put a smile on my face.

The time we had more than just one character to hate. Daniel was a terrible husband, Cy was a terrible boss, Frank was on the take and Randy was out for revenge. The author has readers paddling at a fast pace to uncover the killer.

A smart mystery that is fun and very entertaining. I recommend reading the series in order because each builds to the next. Helen's evolution from the beginning of the series until now is remarkable. All the books would make great Summer Reads!!!

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## **Jeannie and Louis Rigod says**

This twelfth novel in this entertaining and compelling murder mystery series, left me anything but bored stiff.

Private Investigator and married couple, Helen Hawthorne and Phil Sagemont have been delivered a plum summer beach job...find out who is sabotaging Sunny Jim's Safety First Parasailing and Stand Up Paddleboarding business on Florida's Riggs Beach. This idyllic job quickly transforms into a murder investigation when a client is killed riding one of Jim's Paddleboards.

Helen and Phil soon discover that there are many layers of crime and corruption within the sunny sands of the the city. Time works against the duo as they try to salvage Jim's business and keep their lives.

As with all married couples, Helen and Phil also find their marriage challenged in a terrifying sub-plot.

The smooth writing style of Ms. Viets makes this suspenseful and complex tale a page-turner. You can feel the tropical breezes upon your skin and smell the surf as you turn each page. Not to mention the spice of St. Louis pork steak barbecue. What a delightful summer read. Hurry up and pre-order your copy so that you can head for the sand!

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