



Dead Guy's Stuff

Sharon Fiffer

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Fresh on the heels of *Killer Stuff*, Sharon Fiffer's auspicious debut, antique "picker" Jane Wheel is making a career out of going through old stuff; it seems she can't get enough of the piles of vintage clothing, kitchen utensils, Bakelite buttons and post cards she finds at estate sales across the Chicago area. What this saloon keepers' daughter loves, though, is not the items themselves but the stories they tell about the lives of their owners.

So needless to say Jane's delighted when a Saturday morning estate sale turns up a serendipitous find: a whole room packed full of 1950's saloon ephemera. As luck would have it, she's been planning to redecorate her parents' pub, still run and recently purchased outright by her folks. Piles of Bakelite darts and dice, countless advertisements from long-defunct liquor suppliers, and, most exciting of all, a bunch of old bar games, employed by untold patrons intent on whiling away the tedious moments in between the sips of so long ago. She makes a deal to buy the whole room, and can't wait to get the stuff back to her hometown.

As she's cataloging her find, however, Jane makes a gruesome discovery. Packed between the glassware and bowling trophies and old photographs she's already fallen in love with, she uncovers one highly personal, unusual and creepy collectible that she is sure the saloon keeper would have preferred to have kept to himself. It sure sparks her curiosity about the saloon owners, and when Jane gets curious nothing's going to stop her. Employing her friends Detective Bruce Oh and fellow junkhound Tim Lowry, as well as her erstwhile husband Charley, Jane sets out to lay bare the secrets of long ago, secrets that even people close to her would rather be kept quiet forever. Packed with as much intrigue and suspense as a long-buried chest in your grandmother's attic, *Dead Guy's Stuff* is a fantastic sophomore effort from acclaimed promising cozy writer Sharon Fiffer.

Dead Guy's Stuff Details

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Author : Sharon Fiffer

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From Reader Review Dead Guy's Stuff for online ebook

Laura says

This series of books is lots of fun..expecially if you enjoy estate sales and the crazy things you find there. I don't shop estate sales, but I get to enjoy the excitement of "the find" along with Janet Wheel.

Ricki says

The more books I read in Sharon Fiffer's "Stuff" series, the more I get hooked on these books! Dead Guy's Stuff is a smart, funny and satisfying must read. Fiffer's weaving of family, career and murder is impeccable and lots of fun. The story's twists and turns fills the jampacked book with surprises and revelations about life that tickle the reader's funny bone while at the same time evoking the deep "Aha" that makes reading a story so satisfying. I can't wait to start the next book so I can learn more secrets about Jane Wheel and everyone whose life she touches.

Mary Cokenour says

The main character, Jane Wheel, is so angst ridden that I found her to be a total bore; and she is totally obsessed with Bakelite (considering the author mentions it almost on every page; ok, every other page). Got halfway through and finally skipped to the end to find out who killed Gus Duncan and why; not that I cared much by then.

Definitely not a keeper, but going to the used book store; so to whomever buys it, sorry I made you suffer.

Jasmine Giacomo says

Jane Wheel gave up her day job, and now spends her time picking. When she stumbles across a basement room full of tavern paraphernalia from thirty years back, she takes it all...including a man's finger, floating in a jar of formaldehyde. Believing somehow that the finger has a mysterious secret, Jane pushes into the past, discovering a web of secrets and lies that comes far too close to home.

I really enjoyed this book, but for the longest time I couldn't put my finger on why. Sure, the main character spends her time engaged in activities I've recently come to enjoy watching on shows like American Pickers and Auction Kings. But that wasn't it. Then, finally, it dawned on me: absolutely none of the characters in this book are typical 8-to-5 people. They're those who serve them, or those who prey on them, or those who simply live alongside them. But none of these characters are the "average" American. There aren't even any retired old ladies (in the sleuth department, anyway). It was such a fresh approach to the genre that it made reading all the more enjoyable.

That said, I did find Jane a little inconsistent. Sometimes, she'd figure out a clue in an snap, worthy of Adrian Monk. Other times, she'd be baffled for pages and pages on what seemed a simple deduction.

Her husband Charley and son Nick made for an interesting family dynamic, though they didn't spend a lot of time standing out in this book. The fact that Charley and Jane start the book as separated but living in the same house was intriguing, and Charley sounded like an awesome guy. I wished there were more of him in this book.

Jane's mother, Nellie, featured in this novel, but I found myself torn between not getting her at all and laughing at her unrealistic actions. (view spoiler) Hilarious! But it felt that Nellie had barged in on the plot with a short story of her own, so that what happened to her wouldn't be "too scary".

The plot started off slowly, with nothing but Jane's concerns about the severed finger driving it forward. The middle section provided a good balance of entertainment and suspense, though unrelated to the finger yet. By the time the finger had been proven to be relevant, I admit the plot had leaped to a new level that I wasn't entirely enjoying. That's because its focus had left Kankakee, where everything else had been happening. It felt as if the author was shooin' in bad guys from afar because she couldn't find a way to make them be local. Which is neither here nor there, to have local bad guys. It was the way that they were the only bit of the plot that felt out of place, that felt off.

And once again,(view spoiler) What is it with these books? I don't remember this annoying trend in cozies when I started reading them a couple decades back. (view spoiler) over and over again! What. The. Heck. I didn't know there was such a large demographic of retired, vigilante women in this country.

I enjoyed all aspects of the fund raiser house. To have it tie into the plot as well was just bonus.

The writing was enjoyable to read and flowed smoothly. There were, unfortunately, far too many errors for my enjoyment, however, and of a disturbing variety. If I were proofing a book that would represent the publishing company I worked for, and it had a single error, I'd be absolutely mortified. Come on, people. This is your job, and you're making the author look bad.

Lastly, I was puzzled by the choice to write in a fully omniscient POV. The scenes wandered from one character's view and thoughts to another's with the flick of a paragraph. Some included three different people, one after the other and back again. Others just led from character A to character B. I had no trouble following, but I did have trouble settling down and identifying with any of the characters because the interruptions of each other's thoughts postponed a true feeling of knowing any one of them on their own separate terms. It was a little like reading about three amoebae rather than eight separate characters. It was a minor annoyance, but one that never went away.

Roberta says

Again I really enjoyed the small town setting, Jane's side kick, Tim, and semi-retired Detective Oh, as well as all the insider information on estate sales, antiques and collectibles.

I thought that how Jane made the offer for the entire contents of a room at the estate sale was a little unrealistic but that might be chalked up to Jane being still somewhat a beginner in the picker game.

On the down side, there were a few too many characters who were not always distinct enough to keep them sorted out and it was distracting when point-of-view jumped around. Jane's immature relationship with her

husband that we had to put up with in book #1 is still unresolved.

My personal pet peeve: Acknowledgements were in front. I assume that it's the publisher's fault, not the author's choice, but it's like everyone coming out on stage to take a bow before the audience has seen the performance.

Kim says

This was a fun easy read book. Nice twist on murder mystery without being too in depth or gory, definitely worth a read.

Linda says

Excellent light read - love all this series.

Jill says

even better than the first in the series - this "Stuff" mystery kept me up late reading as I tried to solve the mystery. I loved getting lost in all of the descriptions of decorating, picking and collecting that sleuth Jane Wheeler gets distracted by as she solves the crime.

Vickie says

I liked this one quite a lot. It's told from varying viewpoints rather than just the main character which tends to be the norm. I could identify with the main character's love of collectibles and antiques. She loves the hunt and discovery of items at garage and estate sales. She's still trying to discern why she loves what she collects, but she's getting there. Her family is reasonably understanding for the most part.

Jane has a good eye for detail which helps her investigate the deaths that occur throughout the book. She's a bit quirky, but a very appealing character. I could see being friends with her.

The mystery and investigating are well done, I like the setting and the characters. I look forward to finding more of this series to read.

Definite recommend

Dale says

funny and a lot about collectibles- Jane Wheel buys a whole room of local tavern collectibles the Shangri-la Punch board bakelite darts old photos and discovers a connection between the Shangri-la and her parents tavenf the E-Z Inn. Time and Jane are also involved in a decorating home show as a fund raiser for their high school

Jennifer A.M. says

This is the 2nd in the "stuff" series by Sharon Fieffer. The mystery is a little bit more well laid out, but still not a big twisty shocker by any means. It really instills a love of old stuff and great finds from rummage sales. While reading this I was wondering in the back of my mind if there were any great sales I could go to. The protagonist, Jane Wheel, is a bakelite fan as am I, and she describes things with such tenderness it makes you feel bad about throwing anything away. This book is great for those who find a story in the things people get rid of and want to rescue that little piece of history. The plot moves along pretty quickly and the characters are endearing. Fun little chick lit mystery.

Tessyohnka says

When my family did a "local flavor" gift exchange for Christmas, my niece, Rebecca, who lives in Kankakee, cleverly gave me this book, set at least, in part, in Kankakee and a Monicals gift card. Though murder mystery is not a genre that I normally choose, I enjoyed the references to Kankakee, and found myself wishing that fewer names had been changed to protect the innocent. The book certainly appeals to a specific cross section of murder mystery readers -- those who enjoy picking for valuable vintage in what others consider junk. Just how many times does the word Bakelite appear in most books?

Carolyn says

Fun escapist mystery for anyone who is addicted to rummage and estate sales.

Susan says

Collectibles picker Jane Wheel finds a treasure trove of bar memorabilia at a house sale. Just what she needs to help redecorate her family bar in Kankakee, Jane thinks. But when she gets her stuff home, she finds her parents--kindly Don and one-of-a-kind Nellie--worried about their hated ex-landlord. When the man is found dead, the police are sure it's a simple natural death, but Jane is not sure. A second death in one of his rental houses raises the stakes. There are thugs after something unnamed that the dead man hid, and they'll stop at very little to find it. Jane's old friend Tim wants her to be his partner in the antiques business, while her new friend, newly retired police detective Bruce Oh, would like her to join his consulting business.

Brandon brown says

i rvelly wanna read this book it seems like its a good book sop im rweady and prepared to read this book!!!!~!./..... but if anyone see this message tekll me where o xcan find this book at!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!????????????? but right now im at my oschool library trying to find aa goo d book so that i can readq!!!

