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Fashion Is Spinach



Synopsis

I, Elizabeth Hawes, have sold, stolen, and designed clothes in Paris. I have reported on Paris fashions for newspapers and magazines and department stores., and I've worked with American buyers in Europe.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I had come across this book in the Fashion Institute Library, years ago, and was taken by its contemporary tone - Hawes wrote beautifully and I wanted to read the entire book but I wasn't a student there and didn't have borrowing privileges. Fast forward to years later, and the NYT Sunday Styles section when the book was mentioned, and the 'Net where I was able to download a copy immediately. The book is a must-read for an understanding of the American clothing business. It's also a fascinating look at what was going on in the States just before WWII in the lives of women. In a male-dominated industry even today, Hawes built a name for herself and succeeded where so many fail, year after year. Thanks again to the inter webs I was able to look at Hawes clothes: they are beautiful, edgy, and would work today. In addition to being a wonderful designer who understood her customer perfectly, Hawes writes like a dream: the prose, like her designs, is neither quaint nor dated. The one bone to pick I have with her thesis, was about the vast difference between the woman who could afford to have clothes made for her, and everybody else stuck with mass production: Hawes insisted quite rightly that the housewives, working women and those who had to buy department store clothing were poorly dressed and had almost no choice or quality. This discounts the fact that at that point, home sewing was very prevalent: I read a figure that 90% of

households had a sewing machine as of the 1920s. Even if a woman did not make her own clothes, she might purchase a department store dress and 'fix' it: if she didn't have the machine or the skill, her mother, sister, friend, or a neighborhood tailor or seamstress might fix the dress for a small sum. Home sewing is much less common today.

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