



Detroit Shuffle

D.E. Johnson

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Will Anderson and Elizabeth Hume get caught up in the political turmoil over women's suffrage in *Detroit Shuffle*, the fourth book in D. E. Johnson's critically acclaimed 1910s Detroit series

Will Anderson inadvertently breaks up a key suffrage rally when he thwarts a gunman set on killing his lover, Elizabeth Hume. No one else saw the man, and Elizabeth believes he hallucinated the entire incident, a side effect of the radium "treatment" he received at Eloise Hospital. She asks him to sit on the sidelines while she and her companions try to get the women's suffrage amendment passed by Michigan voters.

Instead, Will sets out to protect Elizabeth and prove his sanity. Will's nemesis, Sapphira Xanakis, contacts him with news of a conspiracy to defeat the amendment, led by Andrew Murphy, head of the Michigan Licensed Beverage Association. Against his better judgment, Will believes she is trying to help. The man she directs him to dies under suspicious circumstances. An old acquaintance of Will's, who is working for the MLBA, is shot and killed in front of him. Still, no one believes Will, including his former ally, Detective Riordan, who not only is unwilling to help, but seems to have secrets of his own.

With new death threats against Elizabeth and the next rally only a few days away, Will has to unravel a complicated tapestry of blackmail, double-dealing, conspiracy, and murder—before the killer has his next chance to strike. Johnson's immaculate plotting and high-tension writing make for a spellbinding read set in early twentieth-century Detroit.

Detroit Shuffle Details

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Author : D.E. Johnson

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From Reader Review Detroit Shuffle for online ebook

Jo Fetsco says

Will Anderson is an amateur sleuth living in Detroit in 1912 and hoping to get engaged to Elizabeth Hume, a young woman fighting for the women's suffrage amendment to get passed by Michigan voters. The mystery starts when Will, who recently was hospitalized at Eloise Hospital for radium "treatment" and has "fits" and who many think is "insane", breaks up a suffragette rally by thwarting a gunman intent on killing Elizabeth. The mystery snowballs and Will has to unravel a complicated mess of blackmail, double-dealing, conspiracy, and murder to save several people. Good story although somewhat complicated at times; it has many twists and is suspenseful. The book is made more interesting in that it is set in 1912 Detroit and tells a lot of historical life of Detroit and the U.S. and Detroit's geography.

Paul Robinson says

The best in the Will Anderson series yet! Changes to the protagonist show a clearly developing arc - Will is no longer just the son of an early Detroit electric car manufacturer on the wrong side of the tracks, he's found his footing and navigates the back alleys and shady dealings of early Detroit with a lot more confidence.

Also, besides a crackerjack suffragette/Big Liquor/city hall main plot, there's development of all the characters in this book, and more than a smattering of unexpected humor, reminiscent of Dashiell Hammett's Thin Man series. If historical crime thrillers are your thing, I would highly recommend 'Detroit Shuffle'.

Kit says

enjoyable and novel. I would read more in this series. Some tinny seeming dialogue -- sometimes people do in fact contract "do not."

Ironical Dins says

I won a copy of this book from a Goodreads giveaway posted by the author.

There were a few things that first intrigued me about this book. First, I'm from the same area, and there are a lot of great possibilities for historical fiction about this area. Second, it was historical fiction, which I love. Finally, the summary of the book indicated it would focus on women's suffrage, which I thought would be interesting to read about since I've never really heard about this topic in the context of Detroit.

As I read the book, I found that the women's suffrage story was somewhat secondary- it doesn't delve into the details of the movement on its own, but it does talk about why it was threatening to some people in Detroit industries. What I liked most about this novel, however, is the attention to the details of everyday life in Detroit. You get a sense of what it was like to live in Detroit during the era just before prohibition, what the car culture was like then, industry in the city, etc. At certain points, it almost feels like a 20th century steampunk novel, but one that would appeal to people who don't normally like that genre (like me!).

This book is either the 2nd or 3rd in the series, but you don't need to read the previous ones to enjoy this book. I would read the other books in this series.

Jill says

Historical fiction set in Detroit in 1912 during a time of corruption. Will Anderson works for his father's electric car company and attempts to save his girlfriend, a active suffragette, from being killed, but he's suffering from his own ailments after being hospitalized in Eloise asylum and a radium "treatment," and no one believes him.

Joan says

This is not one of Johnston's best books. The plot is too convoluted. The good cop is questionable in this book. Will and Elizabeth are finally back together, but Will thinks that Elizabeth is in danger. Even though she has body guards to protect her as she tries to get the amendment for women's vote. The backers of the women's vote including Jane Adams come to Detroit to try to get the amendment to pass. The best parts of Johnson's books are always to view into old Detroit.

TJ says

I highly recommend taking the time to read this set of books. Johnson's character building and historical research really shine throughout the entire series. I usually struggle more in connecting to male characters, but Will Anderson pulled me in from the very beginning. If you're a fan of mystery, historical fiction, or Michigan fiction this entire series is a must read.

I received my copy from a goodreads giveaway.

Liz Crowe says

Back to Basics for Will & Elizabeth, October 16, 2014
By Elizabeth J. Tarry-crowe "Beer WenchA2" (Ann Arbor MI)

Verified Purchase(What's this?)

This review is from: Detroit Shuffle (Detroit Mysteries) (Kindle Edition)

This most recent book in Mr. Johnson's "Detroit Mysteries" series gets back to what I loved about his original book (The Detroit Electric Scheme). It's a story of one man's struggle to cope with how the world around him is changing, many times so rapidly he has a hard time keeping up (and his little adventure in the asylum didn't help see: radiation poisoning). Will Anderson really only wants one thing: for the woman he's loved (and thinks he "ruined") for years to be safe, and to love him back. Of course, Elizabeth is neck deep in the women's suffrage movement in this book so her "safety" is questionable.

Yes, this is a thriller novel set in early 1900's Detroit which makes it chock full of corruption angles--this one relative to the MLA (Michigan Liquor Association) which, as a former marketing director for a successful microbrewery in Michigan myself, had a humorous irony to it. Yes there are police and bad chases with guns and some death.

But what I love most about this series is the core humanity in the main character. I'm not a huge fan of 1st person novels, and the concept of a thriller written that way did not appeal to me on the surface but Will is an endearing, earnest, if somewhat lazy at times, guy. And the way this book is written truly makes you feel him, and to understand his priorities. He does come across a little spoiled at times, but I believe that is something the author does on purpose in order to juxtapose his various dire circumstances (in jail, in the nut house, broke 'cause Daddy fired from a job he hated anyway as engineer at the electric car company) against the life he could be leading--and simply chooses not to.

this is a must read series!

Laura Lee says

Someone hire Will Anderson! He makes a great detective, even tho he seems stuck behind a desk, doing jobs he's just not cut out to do. Detroit in 1910s. Fun atmosphere, detailed writing. Will, telling his own story, seems mixed up in all things bad. Luckily, he has a classy rich girlfriend, who sometimes keeps him out of trouble. Fast paced, good mystery and I enjoyed it very much. Will read other books in the series.

Michelle McGill-Vargas says

If this was the last of D.E. Johnson's Will Anderson series, it was a fitting end. I have enjoyed this character's evolution through the series and was glad he was able to redeem himself through Elizabeth, and eventually his old friend, Wesley McRae. There were lots of plot twists and an abundance of humor in this latest installment of these Detroit mysteries. Everything that was set up in the previous books resurface in this one. While people and incidents from the earlier books are mentioned, one doesn't necessarily have to have read them before reading this one.

The best parts of the book were the break-in at Eloise and the whole "Bug Check!" ruse. Will's interaction with Francis and Robert, as well as their reactions to him and each other, are laugh out loud funny. It was good to see that they played an important part in bringing this mystery full circle in the end. They very nearly stole the second act. I'm glad Johnson left the book open-ended. We may not be seeing the end of Will and Elizabeth.

Anne Harm says

I really liked this book! It'd been awhile since I read a mystery, but this was the selection for the WDET book club (NPR station in Detroit) -- so I began in earnest. (In fact I'd voted for it, based on the on-air author interview and reading a little about it.) I got into the story pretty quickly and looked forward to visiting, during my next reading session. I still ask myself what I may have missed, and want to go over it again,

because the layers of meaning and significance are clearly apparent. The main character turns out to be a good sport, though the reader is not entirely sure about that until the end. Most of the main characters have real depth, and I appreciated the chance to get to know them as they interacted with each other and the plot thickened. D.E. Johnson provides believable witness of a fairly brief period of time, illuminating all the strengths and weakness, flair and foible, strategy and random occurrence present in human experience.

There was one word-choice I questioned, as to whether it was truly of the period (1913). On page 37, in introducing Elizabeth's home and family situation, the author uses the word 'dementia', and that stood out to me as fairly modern. Now I want to check into that, but I recall in the early '90s during my first lesson with this disease, they called it 'early onset senility'. I don't think I became familiar with the term 'dementia' until the early 2000s, or perhaps a bit before. Of course there is the word 'demented' to look into, as well.

But this is a minor point -- and it's probably the contrast with all the other (excellent) word-choices, that I noticed it. Such a treat to be reminded of some of my father's ways of expressing things, in fact! Altogether a good experience, reading this book -- I would definitely be interested in reading other titles by this author...

Elli says

Detroit Shuffle by D.E. Johnson. D.E. Johnson is quite an author. His book, the fourth in the series, is set in the early 1900's Detroit. A lot of places are familiar to me having lived in a suburb of Detroit for a number of years. His twists and turns and events as he tries to find a killer before they kill his intended who is active in suffragette movement. It's action filled and has some humor, too. Some of the characters are not really very well drawn, and for me, the romance is a bit "too too," and the fiancé, Elizabeth is just a little too perfect. But it was an enjoyable read and I intend to read more of this author's books.

Rob Sligh says

Detroit Shuffle is D.E. Johnson's fourth in a series set in early 20th century Detroit. It's a riveting adventure with plot twists and turns that makes us feel like we are right there in the Motor City during the lead-up to the infamous 1912 election to decide women's suffrage in Michigan. His protagonist, amateur sleuth Will Anderson is the wayward son of the Detroit Electric car company owner. As he sets out to protect his long-time girlfriend and suffragette Elizabeth Hume, Will runs headlong into a tangled web of murder and intrigue. Well worth the read.

Jack says

The fourth and final novel in Johnson's Detroit series (so far).

Half way through this book I had developed a decidedly unfavorable impression.

That was unfortunate because the plot revolved around Michigan's 1912 vote on woman's suffrage. It seems someone is out to kill Elizabeth Hume, the girlfriend of our protagonist Will Anderson. She's leading the crusade in Detroit. That's cool. Bring it on!

Will, of course, with what seems to be dozens of guns and knives hidden on his person, is out to save her, even if she doesn't believe she's in danger.

People get shot. Will gets beaten up (again?? How many times has that been in four books??) Bodies turn up in the Detroit River.

We get to the point where Will is trying to get proof that liquor association is behind the plot to do Miss Hume in. (Woman's suffrage = prohibition = no more booze)

And then comes the middle of the book. AND EVERYTHING SLOWS DOWN.
What was the author Johnson thinking?

No spoilers here - just let me say I think Johnson spent too much time - too many pages - on this one subplot.

I finally got to the last third of the book and things started to pick up and by the end of the book I was very pleased,

What do I make of Will? There were times I wanted to reach out and smack him "What the hell were you thinking you dope?" He had a ton of faults and I was mad at him for some of the really stupid things he'd do. Which in hind-sight leads me to conclude that Johnson did a really good job developing this character.

So my take is we got a good writer, some good stories, A+ for the historical setting and all of the hundreds of little things that were part of life in Detroit just before WWI.

Mystery was good - the historical side was outstanding. I learned a lot.

Colleen Estep says

"Detroit Shuffle" is a great look at 1912 Detroit. The beautiful Elizabeth Hume is fighting for equal rights for women, and this does not endear her to the powers that be that run the city. Someone wants to kill Elizabeth and stop the movement from gaining women the right to vote. All Will Anderson wants to do is keep the woman he has loved since their school days safe. The bad thing is that neither Elizabeth or the police believe there is a threat. In fact, everyone believes that Will is imagining things. He had been unjustly locked up at the Eloise Hospital for the insane and given radium treatments to cure him. He barely escapes with his life.

Will's father, the owner of a car manufacturing plant finally has enough of his son and fires him. Will is on his own and nearly penniless, but determined to save his Elizabeth. His only help is Robert and Francis, his friends from Eloise who really did need the help of the hospital.

This book will keep you on edge, and turning pages to see if Will and his crew are able to save Elizabeth. D.E.Johnson is a fantastic tale teller and you are caught up in the story from page one. Many thanks to the author and Goodreads for the opportunity to read "Detroit Shuffle". If you like turn of the century thrillers, you will love this book.
