



Crunch Time

Diane Mott Davidson

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“A cross between Mary Higgins Clark and Betty Crocker.”
—*Baltimore Sun*

“The Julia Child of mystery writers.”
—*Colorado Springs Gazette Telegraph*

No one cooks up a tastier stew of murder, mystery, and mayhem than *New York Times* bestselling author Diana Mott Davidson. *Entertainment Weekly* calls her “today’s foremost practitioner of the culinary whodunit.” And now it’s *Crunch Time*, as Davidson’s delightful series protagonist, caterer and amateur sleuth-extraordinaire Goldy Schulz, digs into a deadly smorgasbord that includes a heaping helping of murder, a double dose of arson...and nine adorable beagle puppies!

Crunch Time Details

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From Reader Review Crunch Time for online ebook

James says

Diane Mott Davidson's "Goldy Bear Culinary" mystery series is one of my early favorites, and I'm sad that the author isn't writing anymore. There were about 20 books in total, but this review is for #16, Crunch Time. This was the second or third cozy mystery series I took on, and only the second where I've been able to finish reading all books. (LJB's "Cat Who" series is the other one).

In this book, the crime action comes right to Goldy's home, which makes for even more fun. Friends are staying with Goldy after their house burns down, and Goldy knows they are keeping secrets. She pushes her way in and tries to figure out how to help them, keep her business running and ensure her own home and family aren't impacted. But of course, Goldy falls prey to the culprit at one point, too.

I enjoy this series because she is such a real character. And the supporting cast feel like people you'd love to be around. Humor, sarcasm, love... Goldy's husband and son are very real people.

As far as books in the series, this one falls somewhere in the middle. Not the best, not the worst. The recipes seem fairly easy to follow, if you like that sort of thing.

Some folks thought this was a bit long. I can see why, but it's still a fast read.

It's a fun series to read, but you probably only need to read a few throughout to get the gist... unless you can commit to all ~20. Then by all means...

About Me

For those new to me or my reviews... here's the scoop: I read A LOT. I write A LOT. And now I blog A LOT. First the book review goes on Goodreads, and then I send it on over to my WordPress blog at <https://thisismytruthnow.com>, where you'll also find TV & Film reviews, the revealing and introspective 365 Daily Challenge and lots of blogging about places I've visited all over the world. And you can find all my social media profiles to get the details on the who/what/when/where and my pictures. Leave a comment and let me know what you think. Vote in the poll and ratings. Thanks for stopping by. *Note:* All written content is my original creation and copyrighted to me, but the graphics and images were linked from other sites and belong to them. Many thanks to their original creators.

[poll daddy poll=9729544]

[poll daddy poll=9719251]

Susan Johnson says

I love Goldy Schulz and her supporting cast of husband Tom, son Archie, and best friend Marla. Goldy and

Tom's relationship reminds me of an episode of "I LOve Lucy" with Goldy getting into trouble and the Desi character, Tom, getting her out. In other words, just fun.

In this one though there are many troubles. One is that it is too long. Two, the plot is very confused with too many cases going on at once. There are puppy mills, stalking, stolen jewelry, an affair, a murder, unexpected wealth and trespassing all going on at once. It was confusing. The third problem is that I didn't like the characters. The story centers around Yolanda who is not likable. She whines, lies, and is generally unpleasant. She has a spat with a priest that makes no sense at all. Her Aunt Ferninanda is equally unpleasant. She takes out a cop's knees with a baton. The injury is serious enough to go to the hospital but everyone seems to laugh it off. Other absurdities occur with this character but I don't want to spoil it for you. I love this series and consider the author the best of the culinary authors but this book was just a mess.

Dawn Michelle says

May 16 - May 18, 2018 **DID NOT FINISH**

THIS was a truly horrible book. So much swearing. So much vulgarity. SO. MUCH. BOREDOM. Where was this story going? HOW many characters were we going to be introduced to? WHEN did cozies become almost 500 pages? HOW many subplots were we going to be exposed to and try and figure out? WHY WHY WHY is the person who narrates these allowed to be a narrator?

Horrible. Yuck.

I had forgotten that this was one of the reasons I had stopped reading these. Thankfully I have only one left and the whole series is complete. For better or worse. Its only because of my OCD that I need to finish this series and so I will. But this one was horrible and impossible to finish. I found I didn't even care who killed the poor man. Ergh.

Kim says

The book was at least 100 pages too long and the mystery too convoluted, but I can't help loving Goldy and Tom and their zany friends. Still good for a laugh and a quick escapist read.

Penny Watson says

I finally finished Crunch Time by Diane Mott Davidson. Her Goldy Bear Culinary Mystery Series is one I've enjoyed for many years. However, the quality of these books has been on a rollercoaster ride. Some of them are pretty good. Some of them are not. This was the worst I've read. There were way too many characters, too many storylines, and too many absolutely ridiculous events. Goldy's TSTL moments were out of control. No one thought it was weird having one of the main murder suspects stay at the primary investigator's house? Goldy's son almost kills a guy, is holding a bloody weapon, and Goldy pretty much ignores him and starts baking? Hee hee! There are no transitions here between the murder plot and the cooking. One moment, Goldy is bloody and unconscious, the next she's whipping up a coffee cake. The best part of this book? The recipes at the end. Natty and I are going to make the Crunch Time Cookies this week.

Grade: C- or less (cringe)

Dianne says

With the death of a friend and cop turned PI, and the torching of his home where Yolanda and Ferdinanda, ex-patriot Cubans have been finding refuge, here starts the downward spiral of this book. As Goldy tries to help a fellow chef and old friend and her wheelchair bound aunt, Goldy of course not thinking or caring about her husband and son, takes these two annoying women into her home and opens herself and her family up to all sorts of danger. Unfortunately, long time readers know that this is typical Goldy behavior. However, this time it just seems to be the icing on the cake. The synopsis that the Publisher has included that says this book has laughs. Well not so much.

For first time readers there is no need to read the others in this series to be able to follow this book. But then again I would say if you were a first time reader, you might want to stay away from this book, or get it from the library and save your cash and a tree.

This was the most chaotic and unbelievable book in this series to date. It had a confusing plot, distasteful and annoying whiny `too stupid to live' secondary characters and the red herring was so convoluted and unbelievable that it was laughable.

Spoiler Alert-----Spoiler Alert-----Spoiler Alert----->

For those who have been following this series but feel like it may be time to give up and move on---here is a spoiler to let you see if you may want to change your mind---Goldy and Tom decide to have a baby. Can this be the actual end of this series?

M.M. Silva says

Good Sunday morning! It's a chilly one in New England, and I hope this finds you safe and warm wherever your locale. I have been thinking and praying for my many friends in the states that have been devastated by Hurricane Sandy and hope that life returns to normal for all of you very soon.

My review this week is called Crunch Time, written by Diane Mott Davidson. Her main character is Goldy Schulz, who's a caterer by trade. You know how you've heard of the term "comfort food" for people who are sad or upset? Well, this book someone manages to make you nearly taste the comfort food via the pages. (Neat trick, eh?) It's not a cookbook--rather, it's a mystery--but Goldy does so much cooking, in order to help her think through the who-dunit, that sometimes you forget where the food stops and the story begins.

Like many of Davidson's other books, the gist of the story is that Colorado-based Goldy gets tangled up in a case that her husband, who's a sheriff, is working on and would prefer her to stay OUT of. When their neighbor is murdered and leaves Goldy and her hubby to shelter his tenants--one of Goldy's employees and her wheelchair-bound-aunt-from-Cuba who wields a very nasty baton--along with nine puppies, and a fellow law enforcement officer, let's just say things get interesting. Each of them is wrapped up in solving the murder for their own different reasons, and the mystery goes in many different directions before it's all neatly tied up at the end.

This book is fun, light reading and really gets your culinary senses fired up. (And I must admit that I felt completely inadequate in the kitchen after closing this read, but that's really not that hard to do). What's also very cool is that Davidson puts many of the recipes discussed in the story in the back of the book. Some of the ones from Crunch Time are as follows: Tex-Mex Ham and Cheese Casserole, Goldy's Garlic Lamb

Chops, Goldy's Guava Coffee Cake, and Breakfast Bread Pudding with Rum Sauce. Is your mouth watering? :-) Told ya! 'Til next week, happy reading...

Susan (aka Just My Op) says

(fiction – cozy mystery) Don't get me wrong – I like cozy mysteries, I really do. Generally they are light reading without overly gory murders and with interesting and fun characters. I've read some of the other books in this series about Goldy Schulz, Colorado caterer and amateur sleuth, and have enjoyed them. This one just didn't appeal to me as much.

First of all was the length. I'm prepared to spend two to three hundred pages. This one, including recipes at the end, is 471 pages. Okay, I'm a big girl, I can deal with that. But shortly into the book, Goldy's husband, a member of the local sheriff's department, starts an interrogation I thought would never end. Way too much repetition. Maybe I can't deal after all – I almost gave up at this point.

Then there were rescued beagle puppies. Rescued puppies – how can I not like that? You know I'm a sucker for anything furry. In this story...well, I don't want to ruin anything, but the puppy positives didn't outweigh the negatives.

And Goldy herself...her employee drops and breaks \$1000 of a client's Limoges and Goldy makes it up to the hostess by serving the fruit and cheese trays. Really? Yolanda – what a wuss. Some of the characters came across as ridiculous rather than just quirky.

While I am whining, do I really have to read so many details about every time the weather changes, every tomato sliced, every dishwasher loaded? This could have been a very entertaining 250 page book. As it was, just too much mind candy for me.

Cathy says

While I still enjoy the author's writing style, it's just time to put the series to bed. There are only so many times one woman can meddle in police investigations in a lifetime, much less during one book, without it being ridiculous. It's just too silly! There's just no attempt to have any respect for the law anymore. This book felt frantic throughout and then wrapped up suddenly and disappointingly. I like Goldy and her friends and family, but there is no compelling reason to read about them over any other good cozy mystery; Davidson could easily move on to stories about someone else. If she wants to build on her fan base, make them about Julian building his vegan catering business in Denver, and then mention news about Goldy sometimes. I stopped buying these books a while ago. This was still a fun read for a library book, but I'd have been pretty frustrated if I'd paid hardback prices.

Erin says

I thought I loved this series. Until now. First, the book is way too long. My copy measured out at over 540 pages. Way too long for a cozy. Unfortunately, the reason for the length of the book is that it is SO convoluted. I had a terrible time following all the various plot-twists, sub-plots and characters. So many of

these characters were very unlikeable. Yolanda and her ridiculously named aunt Ferdinandia were irritating; I couldn't muster any sympathy for them at all. Liars, sneaky, stupid.

What happened to authors doing research or at least using common sense when writing. Have you ever seen a person in a wheelchair try to cook in a regular kitchen? It is IMPOSSIBLE. They cannot reach the counters, let alone any shelves. That's why in handicapped accessible houses the kitchen counters are LOW. But we are expected to believe that Auntie F is cooking up elaborate dishes all night every night.

Second, wives cannot, cannot, cannot change their will to disinherit their husbands without the permission of the husband themselves. Not possible, ever, at all.

Third, the Cuban revolution was 55 years ago. But Auntie F. still has her established habits from that period of time, I guess. What age is she, exactly?

This book is ludicrous, a complete waste of time. Do not recommend.

Ivonne Rovira says

What with a ridiculously implausible plot, Goldy Schulz's incredibly ill-considered interference, and author Diane Mott Davidson's apparent inability to distinguish between Santería and second sight, I simply could not force myself to finish *Crunch Time* -- despite being a longtime Goldy Schulz fan. Only the recipes, delectable as always, saved this monstrosity from a one-star rating.

CC says

Yep, another mystery from Colorado caterer Goldy Shultz. These books are so silly that I never care who did it in the end -- that's not why I read them. I think it's the voice that Diane Mott Davidson is able to create -- both homey and on point with the tiny details of how real people live, that makes me pick up another installment every so often.

Goldy is continually surrounded by the wealthy, but exists to serve them, not be them. It's a point of view that always remains intact and fresh, and I appreciate the books for that very reason.

Also, I do love the cooking talk. The what-to-have-for-breakfast and what-to-cook-for-dinner, and the fact that her events still have to go on. The frenzy is believable. And some of the eye-rolling people are spot-on. Her annoyance at Charlene Newgate (a woman raising her grandson from Arch's private school) cracked me up -- the woman always saying how hard she has it and slipping in snide remarks as if Goldy has it easy. It was well done. As was the weather -- that first snow in Colorado and how it changes the air and the attitudes. Very true.

In *Crunch Time*, Goldy's assistant Yolanda and her aunt Ferdinanda are rendered homeless when the investigator they were staying with is found shot. They move in with Goldy, while her husband Tom is on the case. And, of course, all sorts of strange things are happening, with Goldy being threatened at every turn as she pieces it all together.

The editing for this novel was an improvement over her recent books. However, there were WAY too many characters, and WAY too many subplots. I couldn't keep track of everyone (their backstories, their

connections to other characters), and three-fourths of the way through the book, stopped trying. That's not a good sign.

Did like the twist at the end between her and Tom, which may make me pick up the next book.

Michelle Robinson says

Disappointing.

Goldy is always meddling in things that are not her business. I am used to that.

This book aggravated me because she seemed to be willing to place her son and the rest of her family in jeopardy by having women, living in her home, that had been burned out of their two previous homes. I don't care how much she loved her friend, a mother, a parent would think of the safety of their child and of the home where the child lives. Common sense tells me that there HAD TO BE another way to place these two women in a secure place without putting her family in danger. I felt her choices were foolish and irresponsible.

Davidson would like for the reader to think of Goldy as smart and sluthing, it seems, to me, that she is more meddlesome and arrogant. She does not ever respect what her husband has to say it does not seem that she is in concert with him, or the police, in trying to solve crimes. Instead, she seems to feel that she is competition with the police and needs to solve the crimes all alone.

There are so many people involved in this mystery that it feels that a scorecard is needed just to keep up with them all.

Yolanda behaves so poorly (I understand she is supposed to be frightened but, come on, she is hateful and mean to people.

Yolanda's aunt is so ridiculous she is caricature of a real person. Some people may be offended by the way she behaves.

I thought her hitting the policeman and then she and her niece crowing about it, was way over the top. I cannot tell you how much I disliked Yolanda or her ridiculous aunt. Yolanda behaves horribly and Goldy makes excuses for her and her aunt at every turn. We would not appreciate children behaving in the petty and silly manner that these two behave.

I've rolled my eyes while reading Goldy mysteries before but this was almost a wallbanger.

Benjamin Thomas says

I'll start by saying I have read every one of the series to this point and have enjoyed most of them very much. Mostly that's because I have grown to really know the main characters and I like to see them grow and change. But starting with book #13, Dark Tort, they seem to have lost something. I had hopes after #15, Fatally Flaky, once again returned to form with a decent mystery plot but now with this 16th entry in the series, I am afraid for the future of the entire series.

So what's wrong with this one? Where should I start? There is just way too much going on here. Too many

characters, too many subplots, too many attempts to throw the reader off course. I suppose with a cozy mystery, the reader expects to suspend their disbelief somewhat and just go with it. But Goldy just ignores any and all precautions as she goes about gathering clues to solve the murders. That happens in most of the books due to her personality but here she really defies logic in gathering evidence. There is no way a prosecuting attorney could ever bring the bad guy to justice because virtually 100% of the evidence would be inadmissible. Goldy commits all sorts of crimes to gather that evidence as well, including multiple B&Es, false statements to the police (even her own husband) and yet she gets offended when the police don't share facts with her. What was once an endearing quality of Goldy's personality (which is what really drives these books) has now become simply annoying and making me, as a reader, have less and less sympathy for her.

The plot is so convoluted it seems Ms Davidson was making it up as she went along. There are so many subplots here, with minor characters making one or two sentence appearances, that it is hard to follow. The long-term characters, those that have appeared throughout the series, make zero strides forward. Goldy's son, Arch, for example, is 16 years old now but she still treats him like he was 11, actually dismissing him from the room when the word "sex" is uttered out loud. The mystery itself is weak, the surrounding plot was weak, and I was looking forward to the last page so I could get on to another book. That just ain't a good sign.

If it wasn't for the setting (Colorado), and hopes for further growth in characterization, I would give up on this series. I still may because there are just so many good books out there to spend my time with.

Ms Davidson is a talented writer as evidenced by her past work. Perhaps it's time to move on to a new series.

Gail says

Guilty pleasure. Thoroughly enjoyed this as much as the earlier books by DMD. A bit disappointed that the recipes were not as central to the story...but that is minor given the fun of reading the series.
