Seattle
Book Review

The Holdfast
By Christopher Mirabile
Slack Tide Press, $4.99, 484 pages, Format: Trade

Star Rating: 5 / 5

The Holdfast is the kind of mystery I'd hand to a friend who wants a good crime story but also wants to care about the people at the center of it.

Christopher Mirabile makes Silas Lopez easy to root for. He's a former ranch hand who has landed in Provincetown as police chief, and his plainspoken personality gives the book a distinct charm without making him feel like a caricature. His instincts are sharp, but he's also learning how to lead a new department, trust his team, and figure out where he belongs.

The mystery begins with the death of 77-year-old Constance Blanchard, which initially looks like an ordinary unattended death. Wren Bradford, who knew Connie well, questions that conclusion, and Silas listens.

The investigation grows from there, bringing in medical records, property transactions, zoning issues, reluctant witnesses, and a much larger threat than Silas expects. I appreciated that the case develops through actual detective work rather than one convenient revelation after another. There are clues to follow, questions that need answering, and enough moving pieces to keep the investigation interesting.

I feel the strongest part of The Holdfast is the human side of the story. Silas and Wren have a relationship that feels affectionate, playful, and increasingly serious. Their scenes together give the book breathing room between the darker parts of the investigation, whether they're sharing a meal, working around Wren's cottage, or dealing with family complications.

Wren's family dynamics are especially interesting. Her relationship with her father is complicated, and the book doesn't reduce him to a simple villain or pretend family conflicts can be fixed with one heartfelt conversation. Wren understands why he behaves as he does while also recognizing the damage it causes.

I also liked watching Silas grow into his role as chief. By the conclusion, his team has become more confident, his leadership style has taken shape, and he's built genuine connections in

Provincetown. The resolution gives the central mystery a satisfying payoff while also giving Silas something equally meaningful: a sense that this unfamiliar town has become home.

The Holdfast is a character-driven mystery with an engaging investigation, memorable personalities, humor, heart, and a satisfying resolution. If you enjoy mysteries where the case matters but the people matter just as much, I'd absolutely recommend this one.

Reviewed by David Stein

OUR STAR RATING SYSTEM

1 star: Reviewer wouldn't recommend this book at all.

2 stars: Reviewer wouldn't read it again. Needs work.

3 stars: Reviewer enjoyed the book.

4 stars: Reviewer liked and would recommend the book to friends/family.

5 stars: Reviewer considers the book to be something that everyone should read. Reviewer would definitely read it again.