

Verdict: THE BISHOP BURNED THE LADY is a well written and entertaining book, and one which readers who like the quirks of aging gracefully tucked into their detective narratives will especially enjoy.

Rating: four stars – “IndieReader Approved”

Andi is a local cop hitting middle age and feeling it. Ed is her psychiatrist boyfriend, who is looking into retirement and settling down, the latter part something that Andi isn't too sure about. But their personal drama has to be placed on the back burner when Andi starts investigating an arson in the woods that seems to be connected to murder, sex trafficking and a shadowy cult that has been in the region for more than 100 years. When the investigation seems to be compromised, Andi finds herself under suspicion of conspiring with the cult, adding urgency to an already urgent investigation.

The first thing a reader might notice about THE BISHOP BURNED THE LADY is how smoothly it's written. Perhaps this shouldn't be a surprise. This is the third book in the “Monastery Valley” series, so writer Bill Percy knows how to paint pleasant descriptions of the setting and depictions of the cast. The dialogue especially is fairly organic, which leads the characters to be distinctive. The only complaint here is that a few of them are one-dimensional, but for the most part those characters are confined to the background. How readers take these characters will probably depend on what they are looking for in the book—grotesques like the unhelpfully aloof hermit Cassius Delbo or creature comforts like the Ladies' Fishing Society.

The mystery is sufficiently intriguing, but be warned: THE BISHOP, despite its delightfully Raymond Chandler-esque title, is not particularly pulpy. However, mystery fans who prefer their whodunits in a cozier form than the old school hard-boiled will be pleased by the book's attention to the home lives of its main characters, particularly the interplay between Andi, Ed and Ed's adopted daughter Grace, as they navigate the bumps and scrapes of life transitions—be they aging, slowing down at work or entering adulthood and parenthood. More than its mystery, THE BISHOP's strengths lie in its central characters figuring things out.

THE BISHOP BURNED THE LADY is a well written and entertaining book, and one which readers who like the quirks of aging gracefully tucked into their detective narratives will especially enjoy.

~Colin Newton for IndieReader

Link: <https://indiereader.com/2018/04/bishop-burned-lady/>