



Holding Holly

Julie Brannagh

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Julie Brannagh's delightful Love and Football series returns in time for Christmas ...

Holly Reynolds has a secret. Make that two. The first involves upholding her grandmother's hobby of answering Dear Santa letters from dozens of local schoolchildren. The second ... well, he just came strolling in the door.

For the last two years, Holly has not been able to stop thinking about gorgeous Seattle Shark Derrick Collins. His on-field exploits induce nightmares in quarterbacks across the NFL, but she knows he has a heart of gold.

Derrick has never known a woman he wanted to bring home to meet his family, mostly because he keeps picking the wrong ones—until he runs into sweet, shy Holly Reynolds. Different from anyone he's ever known, Derrick realizes she might just be everything he needs.

When he discovers her holiday letter writing, he is determined to play Santa too. And as the pair team up to bring joy to one little boy very much in need, they discover the most precious Christmas gift of all: love.

Holding Holly Details

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Author : Julie Brannagh

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From Reader Review Holding Holly for online ebook

Deniz says

I had high hopes for this one. Seriously HIGH hopes. I've been meaning to read the series, I mean cute & fluffy with a hot sport dude? YUM! What could go wrong? Right?

As I was reading Holding Holly my hope was utterly shattered to pieces.
I mean UTTERLY.

Look if Brannagh would be a man, I'd be ranting on how misogynistic she was.
Cause honestly there was not a single decent female character in this novella. First they were total dizz-balls, then they were super-uber-naive and cliché. Really. EVERY single female character. Not just one.

Holly was beyond naive and shy, to the degree that she came across as a tad stupid. I know loads of shy gals, they don't behave like that. I know loads of naive chicks, they don't manage to be THAT naive.
The mother and grandmother of Derrick -OMG!! - so all they can do is fuss, fuss more, shop, shop even more, fuss a little more, then do crafty shit and add some more shopping and fussing to it.

Every single female weird or quirky. They all have an thing about clothing- I mean A THING. In fact every single female seems obsessed with shopping. Every female is at least at some point totally helpless without Mr. I am so awesome Derrick. See??!! Misogynistic.

Oh and to top that there is Derrick:

I really didn't care much for him. While on the one hand he claims to be shy, he is also a total show off- how does that work? A shy show off? HmMMM. Whatever.

He has a rather arrogant take on himself and looks down on others.

"He'd always loved a woman with some flesh on her bones. She probably thought her butt was too big, and that he didn't like the slight roll over the top of her jeans."

I rest my case. I won't even say the M-word again. I mean, you get my point.

The only redeeming quality he has. Is he is generous. Though that was stress a tad to much. Guess we gotta point out the good, when he is so full of crap?

The writing is alright, though I always was keenly aware that Brannagh was trying very hard to make this quirky. Sadly in my opinion, this is not quirky. It's at best over the top at worst silly.

The banter between Derrick and Holly was painful. Simply because mr. I-am-so-freakn-fab-its-painfull was condescending, was to involved in his awesomenss or was just an asshat.

*"Derrick, what am I going to get you for Christmas?"
He laid his fingertips over her mouth. "You don't have to buy me a thing."
" It's not fair."*

"Okay, then. You win. Bake me some cookies or something. I would love that more than anything."

"What kind?"

"The same kind everyone else wants: chocolate chip"

She couldn't help but laugh. "Got it", she said.

Ok, someone needs to explain to me... why is she laughing? What's so funny? And: *bake me some cookies or something...* I really couldn't care less but... *I would love that more than anything?* For real? Make up your mind, dude!

I just can't imagine someone actually does have a conversation like this. Well, to be honest if a guy would attempt to have a conversation like that with me... well, let's just say I would not be laughing, but spend my Christmas happily with my granny and send him off to his awesome lonesomeness. Another thing that kinda annoyed me was the money issue. It seems like every character was keenly aware of their final differences. I dunno. Do people really think like that? I don't compare my clothes and the content of my valet constantly with a person I've just met. I try and get to know the person. I dunno. Maybe it's just me.

The plot is quite cute, but the whole character building or lack thereof, ruined most of that. To be honest, I think in the end the low rating does hinge on the fact that I really didn't like neither Derrick nor Holly.

In fact I was going to rate it 1,5 Stars, but in the end, I did like the rest of the team. Brannagh managed in those few pages to bring across a camaraderie between the guys. I then I was wondering if maybe I should read a novel? Cause I still like the sporty hottie idea you know. Who knows, I might, one day.

This sadly did just not work for me.

Jennifer Wenzel says

Julie Brannagh's Love & Football Series. Holly Reynolds living in the town of Noel taking care of her Grandmother. Holly has had a long time crush on the gorgeous Seattle Shark Derrick Collins. Who's built a larger-than-life persona for himself on the football field. But has a heart of gold and only had eyes for Holly. As their relationship blossoms Derrick discovers Holly's Christmas secret. This is where the true story of Christmas begins. This is a charming Christmas Novella that is sure to warm your heart. A perfect read for this holiday season.

Sammie says

Loved the story. It was so good I wish it had been a full-length book!

Izy says

Rating~ 2 stars.

Short review:

I was really enjoying this book upto the point where Holly and Derrick come home after the date. After that point the story just fizzled out, fell flat really. I don't even know why because this has all the making of a cute and sweet short story which I really like yet it didn't work with me. Maybe it was because there wasn't much happening or maybe because after their date not much of their conversation were shown on page.

ARC generously provided by the publisher via Edelwesis in exchange for an honest review.

Misty (Red's Romance Review's) says

Holding Holly is a sexy little literary romp that is sure to put readers in the holiday spirit! I thoroughly enjoyed this one, it came equipped with plenty of laughs, a load of heart, and lots of Ms. Brannagh's trademark toe curling romance sprinkled in here and there! Highly recommend this one, it is sure to leave your heart happy!!

Isadora Moraes says

3.25

Carol says

3.5 super sweet holiday story

Janeiowa says

Another great addition to the Seattle Sharks football series! This time, it's Derek Collins, and a gal, Holly, who works a couple jobs to pay her nursing school tuition. The setting is before Christmas and in Noel, WA, in the mountains east of Seattle.

Karen says

You will enjoy this sweet Christmas novella with lots of fun, great characters, and romance and you will love NFL star Derrick and sweet Holly. This is a feel good story filled with warmth and heart as well as a sense of small town community. The lead characters bring Christmas happiness to a special unselfish little boy while they fall in love during the magic of the Christmas season. I have never read a story by Ms Brannagh before, but I will be looking to pick up stories on her backlist.

? Kimberly says

Espresso review of Holding Holly

Holly is home in Noel to help her grandmother while school is out for the holiday. Between working at the local coffee shop and helping to answer letters to Santa, she is quite busy. Brannagh introduces the friends to lover's troupe when Seattle Shark Derrick Collins brings his favorite ladies shopping in Noel. His favorite ladies happen to be his Mom and grandmother. While they are buying out the fabric store, he steps in for coffee and recognizes the shy girl behind the counter. Holly works the coffee shop at the stadium while in school. Both are shy and drawn to other. It was sweet, and we learn they both have been curious about the other. The tale that unfolds has sweet dates, good will towards men, and all the gooeyness of a Hallmark Channel movie.

Holding Holly was a nice introduction to the author and series for me, and we meet some of the other characters in the series but this held its own as a sweet quick holiday read. This review was originally posted at Caffeinated Book Reviewer

Amber says

this is my favorite book from this series I loved the whole secret santa letters it just made my heart happy to read this one a truly fantastic series :)

Jennifer says

This review was originally posted to Jen in Bookland

Holding Holly was a lackluster holiday read. I expected a cute, fun read where the two main characters come together with the help of some holiday magic and yeah. It was just...missing...missing that fun holiday thing I love so much.

Holly is working in Noel for the holidays and helping her grandmother write return letter from Santa. She finds one where the kid sounds like his circumstances are not very good and she wants to try and help him out. Only she doesn't know how to find him or his family. She also has had a crush on Derrick forever, but she is so shy and quiet she has never really talked to him.

Derrick is a NFL player and he and his family go to Noel one day during the holiday season. When he goes to find some coffee he meets Holly. Holly who he has seen around and always thought was cute. Holly who he wants to get to know better now that he has had a chance to talk to her.

The two of them...I don't know. I don't really know why I didn't enjoy this story. I think the way it was written just didn't jive with me. That is the technical term I believe. Yeah. It was...I didn't see the two of them liking each other let alone falling in love. Plus I didn't understand why the letters were sooooo secret. I get not wanting people to know, but if this guy is going to be your boyfriend and wants to help why is that a problem? I don't know. I didn't understand Holly and her anger at stupid things. It was just like everything didn't work for me. I am usually more forgiving with holiday reads, but I couldn't get into this one. It seemed to suddenly end with they lived happily ever after.

Lea says

This is a sweet holiday romance, pretty clean. Football, a Letters to Santa mystery and a sweet love story. A little rushed or it would be 5 stars. Quick read, took about an hour.

Erin says

So tame omg

Ann Lorz says

I so enjoyed this story. It's the perfect holiday treat. I love both Derrick and Holly. You can tell a lot about a person by the way they treat their family. The perfect holiday read.
