



Mercy

By Jodi Picoult

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Police chief of a small Massachusetts town, Cameron McDonald makes the toughest arrest of his life when his own cousin Jamie comes to him and confesses outright that he has killed his terminally ill wife out of mercy.

Now, a heated murder trial plunges the town into upheaval, and drives a wedge into a contented marriage: Cameron, aiding the prosecution in their case against Jamie, is suddenly at odds with his devoted wife, Allie -- seduced by the idea of a man so in love with his wife that he'd grant all her wishes, even her wish to end her life. And when an inexplicable attraction leads to a shocking betrayal, Allie faces the hardest questions of the heart: when does love cross the line of moral obligation? And what does it mean to truly love another?

Praised for her "personal, detail-rich style" (*Glamour*), Jodi Picoult infuses this page-turning novel with heart, warmth, and startling candor, taking readers on an unforgettable emotional journey.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

What could have been a competent, topical novel about a mercy killing becomes, in Picoult's (following *Picture Perfect*, 1995) hands, an inspired meditation on love. The setting is Wheelock, Mass., a slightly eccentric town where most of the residents are of Scottish descent, where weddings end in a blood vow, the name MacDonald is "painted on an alarming number of mailboxes" and police chief Cameron MacDonald doubles as clan chief and protector. On a seemingly ordinary day in Wheelock, Jamie MacDonald, a cousin of Cameron's, drives to the police station and announces: "My wife here, Maggie, is dead, and I'm the one who killed her." Cam finds himself saddled with a murder case and a conflict of interest: his cousin has given in to the pleas of his cancer-ravaged wife to kill her, and he's come to the clan chief to confess. But as police chief, Cam must also prosecute. On the same day, Cam's wife, Allie, the local florist, hires Mia, a violet-eyed beauty with a genius for flower arranging. Allie gets involved in Jamie's case, and Cam, who has spent his life in service to his community and his clan, falls in love with Mia and begins an affair that will bring his marriage to the breaking point and change it profoundly. Like Jamie, Allie is the marriage partner who loves more. "It's never fifty-fifty," says Jamie. As Jamie's court case proceeds, Picoult plumbs the emotional core of both marriages. The pace of the trial is slow, but Picoult pays loving attention to her central characters, fashioning a sensitive exploration of the balance of love.

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From Library Journal

Cameron MacDonald is both the chief of police in the Massachusetts village of Wheelock and the reluctant figurehead chieftain of the MacDonald clan, which immigrated there in the late 1700s. Thus it is to Cam that his cousin Jamie turns after he accedes to his suffering wife's wish and helps her to die. Cam, who longs to travel and free himself from his family obligation, arrests Jamie for first-degree murder but then hires a lawyer for him. On that same day, exotic young Mia wanders into the village and is hired by Cam's wife, Allie, to help out in her florist shop. Cam and Allie have reached a comfortable plateau in their marriage, but both sense that something is missing. Mia and Cam are irresistibly drawn to each other, she to his established place in local society and he to her itinerant lifestyle. The story explores love and the intricate balance of give and take that marriage demands. Picoult (*Picture Perfect*, LJ 1/95) offers a well-written novel with touches of spirituality that are reminiscent of Alice Hoffman's stories. Highly recommended for most collections. ?Kathleen Stevens, Fairfax Cty. P. L., Vir.

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From [Booklist](#)

Picoult, author of *Picture Perfect*, has, once again, walked the fine line between fluff and worthwhile drama to create a high-caliber romance. The setting is a small Massachusetts town where Cameron MacDonald, a modern incarnation of a Scottish laird, is the handsome, well-respected police chief, but in spite of appearances, he's quite unhappy and emotionally ill-prepared for the arrival of two unsettling strangers: a long-forgotten cousin, Jamie, who is carrying the body of his adored wife, Maggie, in his truck, and Mia, a beautiful, penniless traveler seeking shelter for herself, her cat Kafka, and her bonsai trees. It is Allie, Cam's calm, competent, and loving wife, a florist, who offers Jamie, who has confessed to the mercy killing of his terminally ill wife, succor and who provides Mia with a job. But, as they say, no good deed goes unpunished, and Allie must contend with Cam and Mia's hot little affair. A graceful stylist, Picoult entertains her readers not only with feel-good storytelling and irresistible characters but with consideration of such serious moral dilemmas as euthanasia and forgiveness. *Donna Seaman*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Antoinette Hogg:

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