

Mercy



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Book Description

General Fiction Large Print Edition An inspired meditation on love. Publishers Weekly 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. Booklist * A Literary Guild Selection What would you do for someone you love? Would you lie? Would you leave? Would you kill? When Jamie MacDonald arrives at the police station with the body of his wife and the confession that he killed her, he is placed under arrest, and a small Massachusetts town grapples with the questions raised by the act. Is it murder to kill a terminally ill person who begs you to do so? Mercy explores this highly charged emotional and ethical issue in a novel that is as haunting as it is beautiful. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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.

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.

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.

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

From Kirkus Reviews

Despite kilt-wearing characters right out of Brigadoon, Picoult (Picture Perfect, 1995, etc.) persuasively explores a mercy killing in a small Massachusetts town and the subject of spouses who love too much. Wheelock has been home to the tradition-upholding MacDonalds and their hereditary chieftains since the 18th century, when the clan fled Scotland after the British defeated them in battle. Each clan chief has inherited more responsibilities over time, and the current laird Cam MacDonald is, like his father before him, the local chief of police. Cam yearns to travel and, though married, finds wife Allie's devotion stifling. Allie, a florist, has in turn suppressed all of her own opinions and pleasures for the sake of making Cam, whom she adores, happy. As the story begins, another MacDonald, James, has demonstrated his overwhelming love for wife Maggie in a very extreme form: James turns himself in to cousin Cam after admitting that he has smothered Maggie at her request because she was terminally ill with cancer and could no longer stand the pain. While the quality and wisdom of James's devotion to his wife will be tried in public, Allie's love for Cam will also be tested as free spirit Mia arrives in town. Mia has been everywhere and seen all the places Cam dreams of; she is also a whiz with flowers and gets immediately hired by Allie. While Allie helps James's lawyer find witnesses who will attest to his devotion to Maggie (he's now being tried for murder), Cam and Mia have an affair. A heartsick Allie learns of it, throws Cam out, sells all of his belongings, and then tries to forget him. But true love is resilient, and Allie, like James, having learned the price of being "the one who loves more," will now try for greater balance. Overly predictable characters aside, Picoult does manage this time to bring trendy, headline-grabbing themes to life. (Literary Guild alternate selection)

Book Dimension

length: (cm)17.1 width:(cm)10.6

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