



## Permed to Death

*Nancy J. Cohen*

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Sassy salon owner Marla Shore is giving grumpy Mrs. Kravitz a perm when her client dies in the shampoo chair. If that isn't enough to give her a bad hair day, handsome Detective Vail suspects Marla of poisoning the woman's coffee creamer. Figuring she'd better expose the real killer before the next victim frizzes out, Marla sets on the trail of a wave of wacky suspects. Her theory regarding whodunit gels only after she looks for the culprit closer to home.

"A terrific mystery debut for Nancy Cohen. Marla the beautician is a delight!"—Tamar Myers, author of the Pennsylvania Dutch Mysteries.

Permed to Death was originally published by Kensington. This Author's Edition has been revised and updated with added bonus materials.

## Permed to Death Details

Date : Published March 10th 2016 by Orange Grove Press (first published December 1st 1999)

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Author : Nancy J. Cohen

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## From Reader Review Permed to Death for online ebook

### AudioBookReviewer says

**My original Permed to Death audiobook review and many others can be found at Audiobook Reviewer.**

Marla Shore is a beauty salon owner with a slight problem. A well-known, respected but not necessarily liked client who just died in her perm chair. Like several other people in the community, Marla has motive AND opportunity. It does not help that poison is usually the choice of women too!

Detective Vail, handsome and smart and slowly stealing the heart of Marla, has to solve the crime. It's not looking good for Marla at all. Marla is not Sherlock Holmes or Jessica Fletcher but she has to prove her innocence and find the real murderer or she may not only lose the handsome Vail but her life as well!

A nice cozy mystery with twists and excitement. There are a couple of moments where I thought Marla should have had a "duh" moment or two but she didn't. I thought the other characters were fun and the type of friends everyone needs. I thought Nancy Cohen did a masterful job of creating a likable set of characters and mystery. Not one I would have thought of myself and I love cozy mysteries!

Mary Ann Jacobs performed very well. I enjoyed her voice and the excitement she interjected into the book. She wore the character of Marla very well. She helped bring the characters to life as well as the story with her voice.

I hope Cohen submits more books - this one was very good.

There were no issues with the production quality of this audiobook.

Audiobook was provided for review by the author.

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### LVLMLeah says

This is an OK cozy. It wasn't bad, not gripping either.

I had a hard time following. I listened to this book and I had to keep repeating pages since my mind wandered and it wasn't really grabbing me.

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### Kim says

I have been wanting to read this series forever but I only had the second book so I waited until I got the first. Well, I will be read second book soon. This was a fun read. It was exciting and unpredictable. I did have some moments when I wanted to smack a couple of characters but that what a good book does. It keeps me

guessing and going back and forth as to who done it.

A lot of devious people trying to damage a hard working woman but she takes matters in her own hands and almost gets killed. Your average cozy read but the chapters in the middle kept me entertained and kept my attention.

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### **Kristen says**

If you love fresh and entertaining cozies, this one is for you. This one takes place in Plantation, Florida. We're introduced to Marla Shore and her fellow colleagues at her salon. They're eccentric and have their own shares. And when a fellow customer dies in their salon, it makes Marla curious. There's an instant connection between Marla, a Jewish divorcee and Detective Vail, a handsome detective on the case, who's not so Jewish. We also meet her family and friends. There's a lot of drama in her own life, and root for Marla, who won't back down on preserving her reputation and her salon. This is a good page-turner. Marla's not just an ordinary heroine who has some flair in this series.

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### **Cornerofmadness says**

I had purchased this for my Mom (a hairdresser) years ago from the author at a Florida book fest. I didn't think it was badly written but on the other hand, Marla, the pov character, does particularly dumb things that made me crazy.

It opens with a bang with Bertha dying in Marla's hair cutting chair from a cup of poisoned coffee. Marla immediately freaks because Bertha was blackmailing her from what we assume was her guilt over losing a child she was babysitting as a teen (child drowned). Rather than be upfront with Detective Dalton Vail because she fears she'll be suspect number one (understandable) she hides that and decides to solve the mystery herself with the help of her friend Tally and a few other male friends (she has several friends doing favors for her through this with the hopes of dating her which she has no intentions of doing).

Adding to her troubles, her ex, Stan, is trying to force her to sell some property and is not above doing dirty tricks to do it. Marla digs into the case, often doing foolish things to do so (can't count how many times she confronted dangerous men alone, twice needing saving). I wasn't that impressed with Vail either who seems attracted to her which okay I expect that in cozies.

However, even though he has not cleared Marla as a suspect, he asks her out several times which might be a way to get her to talk but come across as a date. Very unprofessional (at one point he mentions his daughter needs a woman in her life (mom is dead) even Marla is unimpressed with that. His unprofessionalism bothered me. As did Marla's risk taking (like meeting a suspect in public to keep safe then wandering off alone with him).

I liked that Marla was Jewish (that was different from so many overtly Christian cozies) and she wasn't entirely unlikable but when a character doesn't even listen to her friends when they call her on her risk taking, it's obvious it's a plot contrivance.

I might read more or this or not. It didn't make that much of an impact on me.

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### **Marla Bradeen says**

PERMED TO DEATH is an entertaining mystery. The characters are all unique, and each suspect has a believable motive. I enjoyed how the heroine's personal problems added intrigue to the mystery, and Cohen's writing style kept me engaged. This is a great start to a long-running series.

Disclosure: I won a free copy of this book in a giveaway.

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### **Suzan says**

Mary Ann Jacobs narrated this book and I thought did a wonderful job. I would give her 5 stars. The story was just okay for me. I listened to the end because I liked Mary Ann's voice. I might listen to more in this series if Mary Ann Jacobs is the reader again.

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### **Rohn Strong says**

I really liked this book...a lot. It was fun, inviting, layered, and the murderer was pretty difficult to figure out.

The reason I gave it 4 out of 5 stars was simply because I found it difficult to keep track of the characters. There were SO many suspects and people and conversations with random people that it felt a little like watching a movie with 12 main characters. It made it difficult to know who was the murderer and who was just a drive by character introduced for a few pages.

I also found Marla, the MC, a bit strange. She had a casual hook up with a guy but emotionally manipulated many other men who genuinely told her they wanted a relationship with her. That part bothered me a little.

All in all it was a good read, quick too! I think I finished it in just a few days, reading an hour here and there.

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### **Vincent O'Neil says**

Nancy J. Cohen's Permed to Death is one of those books that start out fast and don't slow down. In this, the first novel in her acclaimed and long-running "Bad Hair Day" mysteries, we meet main character Marla Shore in the styling salon she owns in Florida. One page later we get the dead body—the deeply unpleasant Bertha Kravitz, who dies right there in the salon. One of the big questions in amateur sleuth mystery novels is just why is this untrained individual trying to solve a murder? In this case, the answer is readily apparent. Marla was alone with Bertha, and had just served the coffee that killed her. Marla's automatically a suspect, and the readers soon know she has a hidden reason (or two) for wanting Bertha gone. She needs to identify the real killer before the slowly constricting web of means, opportunity, and motive closes around her.

One way of describing the “cozy” mystery genre is to offer the novels of Agatha Christie as examples. That description actually works for Permed to Death, because one of the most effective things Nancy Cohen does in this book is provide a batch of potential suspects in a fashion similar to Dame Agatha’s. The suspects are all believable, and organic to the communities surrounding Marla and Bertha. As the story unfolds, we learn more about the friends, relatives, coworkers, and enemies (some Bertha’s and some Marla’s) who might have liked to see Bertha dead and Marla blamed. By the end of the story I had changed my main suspect several times, and still didn’t guess who it was.

This is a fine debut novel, and as of this writing the “Bad Hair Day” series has 14 books in it. So go spend some time with Marla in Florida. You’ll be glad you did.

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## **Joseph says**

I like to put mysteries into two categories...

**Triller mysteries:** Like Sue Grafton and Michael Connaley. dark and edgy.

And what I like to call...

**Small town mysteries:** Light hearted and fun. Like this one.

When I pick up one of these small town mysteries it's usually because I've become disenchanted with all the tropes that accompany more harsher mysteries. Stuff like the loner hero that is tough and tortured, the super cop/super dad who fights against the law and then he falls in love with someone who understands him and knows him but they can't be together, blah blah blah. You get the point.

They populate a lot of average mysteries and slowly just become boring.

I was pleasantly surprised when this book was not only a fun book to read but also used a lot tropes from the thriller genre and did them much better.

The story is about a lady name Bertha Kravitz who gets poisoned in the salon of our protagonist Marla Shore. Shore is accused of the murder by detective Vail and so she goes out to prove her innocence by finding the real culprit.

Marla is a great character, she fun, perky, and sarcastic but never trying to be rude and is kind to her friends too. While she is "tortured" by things I won't spoil, and the things that torture her are talked about way too much; It's not bad because it doesn't affect her likeability as a character and it's not the only thing about her. I actually felt genuinely bad for her and wanted her to overcome her problems and succeed.

The characters she meets while trying to solve the murder are all interesting and all different. If one person is talking they will say different things from another person she'll interview next scene. Everyone feels like they could have had a hand in the murder. Although her actual friends feel somewhat underdeveloped but I still liked them.

The world this book built was defined and fun to be in. Every place feels like it's own separate location with

it's own feel and characters. From the salon with it's gossiping workers and customers, to the shady nightclub with it's questionable crowd and alcohol aplenty. Even Marla's home often being the resting place in between running around everywhere, the book also balances the generally happy atmosphere but with a darker undertone. Nothing like a mafia base but there are times this book can remind you it's still a *murder* mystery. Overall it was a world I really wanted to jump into.

I won't spoil how the mystery plays out, but I will say this book does a great job of giving the reader all the pieces but still being a great "whodunit" story. I really had no clue who was the culprit but afterwards I realized that the clues did point to them all along. I wish more mysteries could do that these days. Overall if you're a fan of mysteries you will enjoy this light hearted take. If you're not, still pick this one up as it's still a great story.

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### **Barbara Fricks says**

I enjoyed the progression of the story as the author developed the characters. The author takes you through the suspects, gives you supporting theories as to whether they may be the murderer and then clears them. She did a good job keeping me guessing and though I suspected, I did not know who the murderer was until the end. I usually have a difficult time following more than four or five characters in a story but there was enough depth in each one that it was easy to connect with and follow them. I appreciated the Yiddish/Jewish glossary in the back.

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### **FangirlNation says**

In **Perm'd to Death** by Nancy J. Cohen, Marla Shore comes in to her salon early one day to do the hair of her longtime client, Bertha Kravitz. While waiting for her client's hair to set, Marla fixes Bertha some coffee, complete with Bertha's personal can of creamer. Then Marla goes to the back room to get towels, only to hear a gasp. Returning to the main salon room, Marla finds Bertha slumped over, dead. Upon learning that Bertha has been murdered, Marla's mind flashes back to the age of 19, when a small child she was babysitting managed to get out of her playpen while Marla was fielding a phone call for the parents of the girl and fell into the pool and drowned. A surplus of guilt has influenced her actions ever since. And now, this murder has dredged up another negative part of Marla's past, for which Bertha had been blackmailing her to get free hair services for years.

Read the rest of this review, more reviews, and other wonderful, geeky articles on FangirlNation

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### **Madonna Dolin says**

I received a copy from netgalley in exchange for a review.

This is the first book in a new series and I enjoyed parts of it quite a lot. I just found the author to be a bit windy. She apparently had a real thing for fashion since she went into great detail on what people were wearing and the exact shade of it. There was too many characters for me to keep up with that added nothing to the storyline and could have easily been left out.

Marla owns a beauty salon although she used to be a nurse (very odd transition) and she gives a customer

poisoned coffee, to make matters worse, this customer was blackmailing her. (figured out very early on about what) and that could have been left out of the story completely. Before the cops lock her away, she has to figure out who is really responsible for killing Bertha and why. There is good humor use in the book and it was probably 2/3 in before I figured out who did it and why. I will probably read the next book in the series to see if it grows on me. I wouldn't go out of my way to recommend this book but if someone was considering it, I would tell them it is better than a lot of books and they should give it a chance.

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### **Lisa Kay says**

★★★½?

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### **Katilyn says**

Not good. Granted, it was a new authors first book, but that's not much on an excuse. The main character is Jewish, but that's not mentioned for the first several chapters so her random use of yiddish words is confusing in the beginning, as is the fact that none of the words are explained, you just have to assume meaning from context or use google. Which is fine, but knowing the book was published in the 90s when googling word definitions wouldn't have been second nature shows the greenness of the author. This book is also a set up to a much longer series (around 14 that I saw on goodreads), but the lack of exposition makes it feel as if I were reading book 10 instead of book 1.

The main character, Marla, also has two deep, dark secrets that are hinted at in the most vague and frustrating way. I have no problem with authors making characters mysterious to the reader but the way it was accomplished was more "vague, attention seeking, passive-aggressive Facebook update" than what the author was probably going for. \*spoiler? Is this book new enough to expect that?\* She also jumped straight into solving the murder without any real reasons other than she wanted to prove it wasn't her, and once you find out her actual possible motives.....still clings to that as her reasoning. My last issue with the main character is that she keeps reminding you of the accident she was part of by saying things like "I have to live my life to the fullest because xxxx didn't get to!" Or "what lively young people on the beach, too bad xxxx won't experience that!" ???

If you like semi trashy, transparent writing (think read at the beach/ in a plane books) then it's ok, and even gets a little interesting at the end, but overall it's a sloppy, ham-fisted attempt - better to jump into the series at book 5 or 6 since you won't be missing any character exposition anyway! \*\*haven't actually read any of the others in the series so don't follow that as an actual "read this series" recommendation!\*\*

I gave this book a two because she did manage to keep the actual killer hidden for most of the book - except the time she BLATANTLY told her main character who it was in a short conversation and the main character immediately ignored the multiple sentence arrows pointing straight to the killer ?.

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