



Frosted Shadow

Nancy Warren

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There's nothing pretty about murder.

Meet Toni Diamond, make up artist to middle America. She's also got a nose for trouble and a passion for solving mysteries. Imagine Columbo in a lavender suit. She never met a woman who wouldn't look better with a little help from the Lady Bianca line of cosmetics. But don't be fooled by appearances. Underneath the fake diamonds and the big hair is a sharp brain and a keen eye that sees the details as well as the funny side of life.

When a Lady Bianca sales rep is murdered at the annual convention in Dallas, Toni is the one who notices things that some people, like sexy Detective Luke Marciano, might easily miss. Only someone who understands as much about how to make appearances deceiving could see into the mind of this killer -- a murderer who wants to give Toni a permanent makeover.

Into a dead woman.

Frosted Shadow Details

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Author : Nancy Warren

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From Reader Review Frosted Shadow for online ebook

Elizabeth Olson says

This was a freebie, so I gave it a shot and enjoyed it more than I expected to. The Mary Kay-ish heroine had a lot more steel and more brains than I would have expected, and the mystery kept me guessing.

Steffie Dawn says

You know you have mixed opinions on a book when you have 5 pages of notes but still couldn't put it down. That was me with this book.

I don't want to be a negative nelly as a reviewer and I must say, I really enjoyed this book. The story itself was great, the murder mystery, though I did often feel like I was 10 again reading about missing objects and following the clues along with the character, rather than being a grown up reading a grown up book! But that's not technically a bad thing, it was great to remember what it was like to be 10 years old!

So the book begins and we meet Toni Diamond, a strong independent business woman. I didn't like her but I also loved her, she very much came across as someone I would not get on with in real life but I still admired her for her talent and skill in the makeup industry.

The first thing to make me cringe with this book was the fact business cards are handed out over the murdered corpse, ok, the author did mention that the character was not beyond it but there was no mention of it being disrespectful or anything and this was the first time I thought "I don't like Toni Diamond".

By the next page I had to take a break, I was very confused. The story felt so slow with overly told perspectives and then at the same time with many clues already figured out in the first 6% of the book it felt too fast! It was making my head spin.

I considered abandoning the book at this point, I knew I was going to probably have a love/hate relationship with the book but I decided to persevere simply because I wanted to know who the murderer was! "Her face was flushed with either anger or fear. Or maybe high blood pressure." Hated this line and had to read it multiple times. It isn't described at all, we as the reader are told the character's face is flushed either because of anger or fear or high blood pressure.

I was always taught not to start a sentence with the word 'Or' another one the author does is the word 'and' at 18% the author writes this sentence "And blondr" now forget the spelling mistake, it was the only one I really noticed in the whole book! However, that is not a sentence. I can't understand why it has been written with a full stop before the word AND just for two words, it didn't need any punctuation there at all. This brings me smoothly to my next point. The editing was great other than the one above I did not come across any spelling errors but there were a load of punctuation errors that really made me cringe. It felt like neither the author nor the editor understood when and how to use semi-colons and because of this many sentences (from one full stop to another) seemed completely lost in limbo as it had not been connected right to the sentence before it with the use of a semi colon. One or two of these and I honestly wouldn't notice but when it keeps happening and breaks the reading flow... yeah it's noticed.

Ok, my next 'what the hell' moment came when I arrived in chapter 7 and read the word putrid for the second time. Now putrid means "decaying or rotten" and is most often associated with smell. However, in Chapter 5 it is used to describe the colour purple. "a putrid purple" which is fair enough it might be a rotten

purple for the character Luke who I believe is the one thinking this but when the word putrid is used again in Chapter 7 to describe purple and then compare it to Easter baskets it makes absolutely no sense. Who associates something disgusting with Easter?? I had to check to see if the USA definition of this word was different to the UK one because I did not understand otherwise why it was written in this way. Nope, putrid is the same in UK and US English.

I found the building attraction between Luke and Toni very poorly written, I got it just. I mean, subtle touches, him coming to rescue her and so on were tiny signs that it was coming (and that fact I knew there was romance in the book) but it just wasn't put out there that this attraction was there and building, it kind of just happened and left me as a reader going... "What?"

I mean it kind of jumped from him coming to rescue her, a subtle touch and a random kiss to having sex! There was no real description of how the physical body was reacting nor the mental thought process of either character building up to the romance, it was all told and never shown.

Being completely honest, I was disappointed with the way the book was written because I enjoyed it so much! If it was just that the story wasn't told to me and instead shown to me, I couldn't imagine any of the characters or visualise their behaviour or actions.

"She already seen [removed for spoiler]. Half [spoiler] head blown off." Seriously? That's it? When someone sees a head blown off they don't just see a head blown off, they see blood splatter, a gapping red hole, etc. None of this was described, the author just told me the head was blown off. It didn't make me squirm, didn't make me feel a little sick, it just happened.

Right, onto the positives; this story kept me guessing all the way to the very end. I haven't read a mystery in years because I always figured it out before the end but hand on my heart I didn't with this book. That is the reason for 4 stars instead of 3 because it takes a great mystery writer to keep me guessing and Nancy achieved it with this!

Renaë Rogers says

This book was a lot of fun. The MC was sharp and observant. The makeup tips were actually useful and accessible. And I really got an insight into a world I only knew a tiny bit about.

My mum was a consultant for a direct sales cosmetic company at one point and I knew a little bit about the company structure. What I didn't know about, since she was one of the people who joined mostly just to receive the discount on purchase prices, was the whole actual business of selling. The friendly fishing. The more persuasive methods that someone might use to sell.

And oh my gosh, the amount of stuff some of these women choose to keep on hand so they're stocked up for a client who might want something. And then the company changes their colours each year and the old stock is verboten. They give out samples to each makeover client but the colours from last year are no longer allowed to be used. What is a person supposed to do with all that suddenly worthless stock? I get that it's good for the company in that their sales occurred already. They got their money. What about the poor on-seller? At least back in my mum's day, she only carried her demonstration stock for doing parties and if anyone wanted anything, she put an order in at that point. That way, she wasn't carrying a whole lot of stock she might not be able to shift and hadn't outlaid a whole lot of money she wouldn't be able to recoup.

Sorry, I digress.

Except that I'm not, because that's actually all relevant.

Anyway, it was very interesting. I'm conflicted about what she does for a living and her viewpoint on makeup, but the quotes at the beginning of each chapter were food for thought.

Katharine Kimbriel says

Recommended.

Toni Diamond (she was married just long enough to gain a one-in-a-million last name) never met a woman who couldn't be enhanced by the Lady Bianca makeup line. As one of their top sellers, Toni lives and breathes her business, even when she recognizes that it's not a fairy tale business. She's got a sharp eye both for commerce and for detail, and also an appreciation for the humor of a situation. Toni has fought her way to the top of a competitive business, and she's earned her fake (and real) diamonds and the nice home that took her out of the trailer park where her mother still happily lives.

When a woman is murdered at the Lady Bianca national convention in Dallas, Toni's sharp eye sees details that the sexy attending detective might miss--details that have the police on the trail of a serial killer whose next victim might just be Toni Diamond.

I thought that this was a cute amateur detective story, almost a cozy except for a dash of sex. Toni is intelligent and sympathetic, a capable people-handler with good instincts about management and murder. The supporting cast (including her mother, a smart woman of ghastly taste, and her daughter, whose current joy is Goth everything) is appealing, the current love interest an attractive person, and the characters are not too stupid to live while solving the story.

I'd return to Toni's world to find out what happens next--and you even get a few makeup tips along the line! Recommended to anyone checking out a new cozy series, or in the mood for a few grins while enjoying a more classic, murders off-stage mystery. (It has a long sex scene that didn't add anything to our understanding of the characters, which is the only reason I didn't run off right away for more of the series. But I plan to return to it.)

Patti says

What can I say? I'm a sucker for the cozies!

This was the first book in the series, and the first time I have read anything by Nancy Warren. It was entertaining, and light. A bit too light, but OK.

Toni Diamond (real name) is a make-up sales rep (like Mary Kay), and she is one of two highest sellers. The other is Nicole Freedman. Every year, they battle it out to see who wins the 2 carat diamond ring at the yearly conference. The difference is that Toni does it honestly, while Nicole will win at any cost to the reps who are under her wing.

There are 2 murders during the conference, and when Toni becomes involved in finding the murderer, or murderers, things start to happen.

All in all, a fun read. I could stop and start, and pick up easily.

Glenda says

fun cozy mystery. Would have given it 5 stars if not for the 1 long sex scene...added nothing to the fun story.

Susie Kline says

This was genuinely a pleasant surprise to read! I've been waffling about reading lately, knitting and watching TV instead. Then I volunteered to review this book. I am so glad I did! My reading mojo is back!

Frosted Shadow by Nancy Warren is well-written with great characters, lots of action, lots of information, fun settings, and a great plot. Maybe I just found it intriguing because I once sold Avon...and Stampin' Up!...and can see how things can get out of hand. Fortunately, this is a work of fiction!

Toni Diamond sells Lady Bianca cosmetics with flash and flair, using her last name to her advantage. She's a director with the company and ready to shine and sparkle (all those diamonds help!) at the company's convention. But people keep getting murdered!

Determined to put her over-sized and carefully contoured nose into the investigation, she gets in deeper than she wants. Well, except when she's in the arms of Detective Luke Marciano...

Makeup and murder make for an exciting combination at the Lady Bianca convention. This is one year the participants--the ones who manage to survive!--will ever forget!

Get this book ASAP! It's a fun, fast read!

Cait says

This was a free book from Kobo. I love mysteries, so the description of the book drew my interest.

The story itself is pretty good. Toni Diamond is a sales rep for an Avon/Mary Kay type beauty company called Lady Bianca. When she attends a Lady Bianca convention at a hotel, she discovers that there may be a serial killer staying at the hotel who is targeting fellow LB reps. Toni has good instincts, and tries to help solve the mystery, but can't stick her nose into the investigation without receiving a few threats herself.

There is, obviously, a detective who becomes a possible love interest. However, there is enough twists in the story to keep it from being too similar to all of the other women sleuth novels.

I didn't like that the story talked about Toni's mother a lot, but didn't actually give her mother a name until the author remembered that she needed one. I also didn't like how it didn't mention anything more about Melody at the end. I would have liked to know how she felt.

Overall, it was a fun read, and I enjoyed it.

Joyce says

An easy and light read

Anika says

Rate: 3.5 It was interesting so much so that I wanted to read the next book in the series. It was about a convention in hotel where Members of the Bicana makeup met. There was a woman who died and police first think it could be related to the Bicana makeup conference but Toni Diamond one of the leading women at the conference does not want the company's reputation associated with the murder so she and sexy cop Luke go about trying to find out the killer. But there's another murder and it is Toni's frenemy so naturally everyone is talking about her and the fight that they had earlier. It was a good book.

Sarah Gresham says

I love this book it has amazing details and out going thought this book is one of the most high track, mind thinking nail bitten book it all starts out with romantic comedy. There's nothing pretty about murder. Meet Toni Diamond, make up artist to middle America. She's got a nose for trouble and a passion for solving mysteries. Imagine Columbo in a lavender suit. She never met a woman who wouldn't look better with a little help from the Lady Bianca line of cosmetics. But don't be fooled by appearances.

Kat Lebo says

Frosted Shadow, a Toni Diamond Mystery
By Nancy Warren

I had no expectations going into the reading of this book. I'd never heard of the author or the main character before, probably because this is the first book in the series (with the only other one I found being published in May of this year – 2014). It sounded like a fun, easy, no-heavy-thinking involved reading, and it was.

First – great editing and proofreading. I only found one error – blondr for blonder at location 646 on my Kindle, in the first paragraph of Chapter Seven. So, kudos on that front.

There was a dandy mystery in this book. It was well plotted and paced. I did figure out who the murderer was by the time of the second murder – but still enjoyed the path to confirmation of my guess. The setting for the mystery was interesting – a large hotel in Corvallis, TX, during a set of conventions, the most important being the Lady Bianca cosmetics national conference. However, other conventions were meeting there at that time, including a convention of mystery readers. The high drama and high jinx going ons that emanated from that cosmetics were hilarious, but I'd imagine would have any decent Avon or Mary Kay representative cringing.

The main character, Toni Diamond, is a hoot. She's a rags-to-riches tale, with a sassy attitude and a fetish for physical perfection. She, and her host of strange but wonderful cohorts are fun, easy to identify with and you find yourself wishing someone would invite you to one of their at-home makeup parties.

One of my favorite parts of the book involved the quotes at the start of each chapter, some real, some obviously not so real. My favorite was the first chapter's quote, from American playwright, Jean Kerr: "I'm tired of all this nonsense about beauty being only skin-deep. That's deep enough. What do you want, an

adorable pancreas?”

However, although I really enjoyed the book, I'm not particularly driven to purchase the next book in the series. I liked Toni Diamond. I did. I liked Detective Luke Marciano, too. I was happy to see them get together. But, I'm happy leaving them where the novel did and not so sure I'm interested in more cosmetically inspired mysteries.

Lola says

I was really enjoying the book and the characters, but then Ms Warren lost me when she just had to throw in the sex scene between Toni and Luke. Why is it that just about every writer now days has to make their book porn. Is it because they don't think that anyone will read their work without it? Take out the porn and you would have a good book.

Roberta Pearce says

This novel reads so airily and smoothly, the pages practically turn themselves. Ms. Warren has a lovely economical style; the prose is not weighted down with characters' convoluted wonderings and examinations of thoughts. Simple statements and naturally flowing dialogue render the entire work a beautifully crafted cosy [if I understand the correct meaning of that]. I read it in one sitting, uttering an “Ah!” at the end, in regret it was over and pleasure that I had read it.

As a rule, I note any formal-style issues in review - mostly because I'm pedantic and can't help myself. So . . . Double hyphens rather than em or en dashes, and were inconsistently styled. Some commas missing before names of addressees -[a fictitious example, not taken from the novel!] “Let's eat Grandma,” rather than “Let's eat, Grandma.” Lastly - and most importantly considering the overarching storyline - the spelling of “makeup” varied: “makeup”, “make-up”, and “make up”. “Makeover” also was inconsistent, with at least one “make-over”.

But enough of negatives. I enjoyed this novel immensely. I won't rehash the plot [the blurb covers all that a potential reader needs, and I would regret slipping with a spoiler].

Toni Diamond is a heroine to be admired: smart, independent, funny, flawed, and courageous; a woman who has come from nothing and is intent on building an empire for herself as a cosmetic sales rep. Is makeup frivolous? Yes . . . and no [*she writes, hugging her Maybelline Great Lash protectively to her*]. Women - and men, for that matter - prefer to put their best face forward; we merely don't like to brag too much about the machinery of doing that. Ms. Warren's novel, on the other hand, proudly celebrates that machinery in the over-the-top world of sales reps hawking the fictitious Lady Bianca beauty line as the backdrop to an intriguing murder mystery.

There is a constant sense of colour - the writing is brightly painted with it. Maybe there were a few too many beauty tips tossed into the narrative, but they suited the story . . . and I learned a lot [so thanks, Ms. Warren!]. And at the heart of the novel is a wealth of clever words and nuance, with many hilarious lines - many of which were literal LOL moments - too numerous to list here. The chapter lead-in quotes are excellent in lieu of chapter titles, giving the reader a pithy image of what's to come. And the climax builds and peaks with precision, wrapping up the novel with no unnecessary lingering - and at the big reveal, I was still a bit unsure

who the murderer was.

With glittering fake diamonds and big hair and tongue-in-cheek descriptions of same, Ms. Warren puts an unadorned human face on the cosmetic. And it's awfully pretty.

For my random thoughts on writing, visit my blog on Goodreads.

Ted Tayler says

"Strictly for the ladies"

Perhaps the predominance of make-up references was what made me lose interest a third of the way through this one. It was a different twist for a mystery story line, and it's fairly well written, but I can't see that single quirk being able to sustain a three book series. I was hoping for an easy, fast read, but looking at the chapters I skipped, I was in for a long slog. Sorry, not my shade of lipstick.
