



ALL THE DEVILS ARE HERE Chapter 1

Hell is empty, Armand,” said Stephen Horowitz.

“You’ve mentioned that. And all the devils are here?” asked Armand Gamache.

“Well, maybe not here, here”—Stephen spread his expressive hands—“exactly.”

“Here, here” was the garden of the Musée Rodin, in Paris, where Armand and his godfather were enjoying a quiet few minutes.

Outside the walls they could hear the traffic, the hustle and the tussle of the great city.

But here, here, there was peace. The deep peace that comes not just with quiet, but with familiarity.

With knowing they were safe. In the garden. In each other’s company.

Armand passed his companion a *tartelette au citron* and glanced casually around. It was a warm and pleasant late-September afternoon. Shadows were distancing themselves from the trees, the statues, the people. Elongating. Straining away.

The light was winning. Children ran free, laughing and racing down the long lawn in front of the château. Young parents watched from wooden benches, their planks turned gray over the years. As would they, eventually. But for now they relaxed, grateful for their children, and very grateful for the few minutes away from them in this safe place.

A less likely setting for the devil would be hard to imagine.

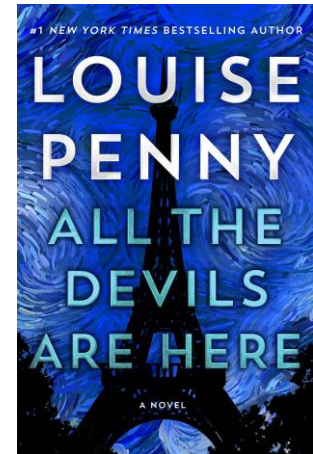
But then, Armand Gamache thought, where else would you find darkness but right up against the light? What greater triumph for evil than to ruin a garden?

It wouldn’t be the first time.

“Do you remember,” Stephen began, and Armand turned back to the elderly man beside him. He knew exactly what he was about to say. “When you decided to propose to Reine-Marie?” Stephen patted their own bench. “Here? In front of that.”

Armand followed the gesture and smiled.

It was a familiar story. One Stephen told every chance he got, and certainly every time godfather and godson made their pilgrimage here.





It was their best-loved place in all of Paris.

The garden on the grounds of the Musée Rodin.

Where better, the young Armand had thought many years earlier, to ask Reine-Marie to marry him? He had the ring. He'd rehearsed the words. He'd saved up six months of his measly salary as a lowly agent with the Sûreté du Québec for the trip.

He'd bring the woman he loved best, to the place he loved best. And ask her to spend the rest of her life with him.

His budget wouldn't stretch to a hotel, so they'd have to stay in a hostel. But he knew Reine-Marie wouldn't mind.

They were in love and they were in Paris. And soon, they'd be engaged.

But once again, Stephen had come to the rescue, lending the young couple his splendid apartment in the Seventh Arrondissement.

It wasn't the first time Armand had stayed there.

He'd practically grown up in that gracious Haussmann building, with its floor-to-ceiling windows looking out over the Hôtel Lutetia. The vast apartment had herringbone wood floors and marble fireplaces and tall, tall ceilings, making each room light and airy.

It was an inquisitive child's paradise, with its nooks and crannies. The armoire with the fake drawers made, he was sure, just for a little boy to hide in. There were assorted treasures to play with, when Stephen wasn't looking.

And furniture perfect for jumping on.

Until it broke.

Stephen collected art, and each day he'd choose one piece and tell his godson about the artists and the work. Cézanne. Riopelle and Lemieux. Kenojuak Ashevak.

With one exception.

The tiny watercolor that hung at the level of a nine-year-old's eye. Stephen never talked about it, mostly because, he'd once told Armand, there wasn't much to say. It wasn't exactly a masterpiece, like the others. Yet there was something about this particular work.

After a day out in the great city, they'd return exhausted, and while Stephen made *chocolat chaud* in the cramped kitchen, young Armand would drift over to the paintings.

Inevitably, Stephen would find the boy standing in front of the small watercolor, looking into the frame as though it was a window. At the tranquil village in the valley.

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"That's worthless," Stephen had said.

But worthless or not, it was young Armand's favorite. He was drawn back to it on every visit. He knew in his heart that anything that offered such peace had great value.

And he suspected his godfather thought so, too. Otherwise he'd never have hung it with all the other masterpieces.