

LOUISE PENNY'S

GAMACHE SERIES CHECKLIST



MINOTAUR BOOKS



WWW.GAMACHESERIES.COM

A NOTE FROM LOUISE PENNY



Welcome to the Three Pines Book Club—gathering in this virtual location of Myrna's New and Used Bookshop.

The first book in the series is *Still Life*. I suspect most of you have already read it, but I also think some of you might be new to the series.

The novels are set, for the most part, in the fictional Quebec village of Three Pines.

I created the village as a place of refuge. A place I would choose to live. That was beautiful, and peaceful. That offered company, companionship—as well as croissants and rich café au lait. And licorice pipes.

I was much taken, years ago, when reading Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. Orlando, the main character, had lived many lifetimes in many guises. Now, I'm paraphrasing the opening of that book, but Woolf wrote something to the effect that over the years, in each of those lifetimes, Orlando was looking for only one thing. It wasn't riches. It wasn't power. It wasn't even love.

What Orlando yearned for was company.

I'd been through periods in my life when I thought I would die from loneliness. And so the idea of belonging, of company, of home, was powerful.

The world, when I started writing *Still Life*, was suddenly a pretty scary place. 9/11 had happened the year before and more attacks seemed imminent and would almost certainly be completely unexpected. Suddenly places and activities that had seemed benign, safe, fun, were riddled with insecurity.

I wanted to pull the sheets up over my head, stay in bed, and read.

But, like you, I couldn't. But what I could do was create that safe place.

Oddly, perhaps, I also chose to violate it—by bringing murder into the pretty little village, and into the lives of Clara, Peter, Ruth et al.

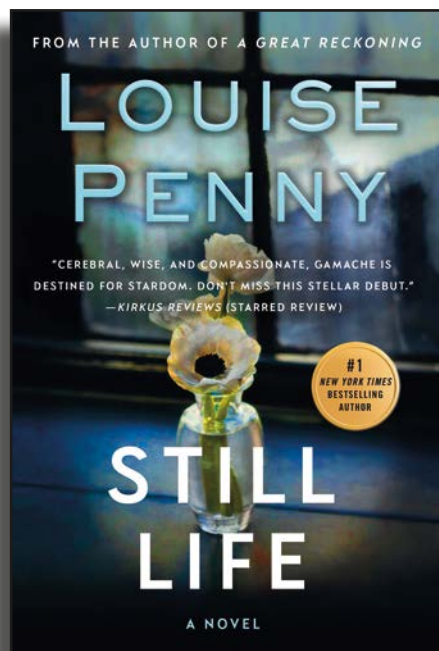
But it also brought Chief Inspector Gamache. The decent man, who made a living investigating the indecent act of homicide.

Just as I created a community I would live in in Three Pines, and villagers I would choose as friends in Clara and Myrna and Gabri etc—I also intentionally created, in Armand, a man I would marry. Because, in many ways, I knew if *Still Life* spawned a series it would become like a marriage. And he needed to have the qualities I admire in a man. In anyone. The qualities I strive for, and so often fall short of, myself.

These books are murder mysteries, but they're not about murder. They're about love and belonging, about loyalty and choices. And the courage to be good.

Best,





□ STILL LIFE

Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Surêté du Québec and his team of investigators are called in to the scene of a suspicious death in a rural village south of Montreal. Jane Neal, a local fixture in the tiny hamlet of Three Pines, just north of the U.S. border, has been found dead in the woods. The locals are certain it's a tragic hunting accident and nothing more, but Gamache smells something foul in these remote woods, and is soon certain that Jane Neal died at the hands of someone much more sinister than a careless bowhunter.

Book #1:

Originally Published 07/11/06

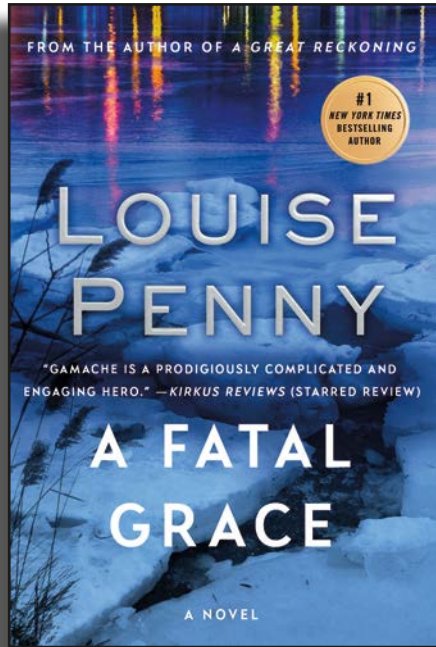
NOTES FROM THE BOOK

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Date started: _____ Date finished: _____





Book #2:

Originally Published 05/15/07

☐ A FATAL GRACE

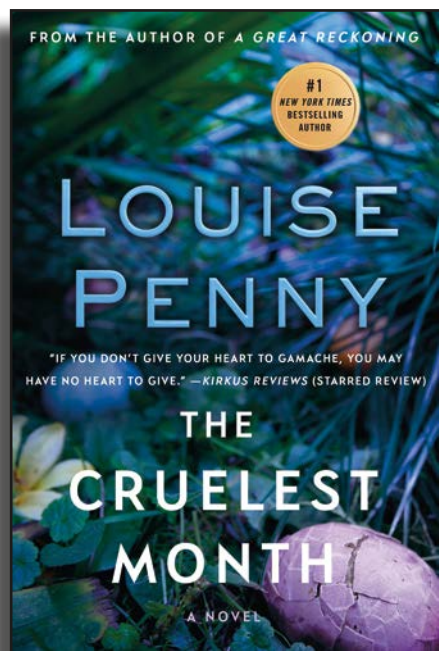
CC de Poitiers managed to alienate everyone in the hamlet of Three Pines, right up to the moment she died. When Chief Inspector Armand Gamache begins his investigation, it seems like an impossible murder: CC was electrocuted on a frozen lake, in front of the entire town, during the annual curling tournament. With compassion and courage, Gamache digs beneath the idyllic surface of village life to find long buried secrets, while his own enemies threaten to bring something even more chilling than the bitter winter winds to Three Pines.

NOTES FROM THE BOOK

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Book #3:

Originally Published 03/04/08

☐ THE CRUELEST MONTH

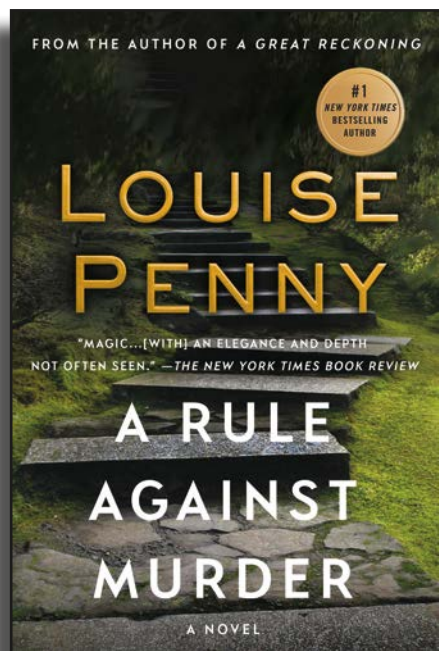
Welcome to Three Pines, where the cruelest month is about to deliver on its threat. It's spring in the tiny, forgotten village; buds are on the trees and the first flowers are struggling through the newly thawed earth. But not everything is meant to return to life. . . . When some villagers decide to celebrate Easter with a séance at the Old Hadley House, they are hoping to rid the town of its evil—until one of their party dies of fright. Was this a natural death, or was the victim somehow helped along? Brilliant, compassionate Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec is called to investigate, in a case that will force him to face his own ghosts as well as those of a seemingly idyllic town where relationships are far more dangerous than they seem.

NOTES FROM THE BOOK

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Book #4:

Originally Published 01/20/09

☐ A RULE AGAINST MURDER

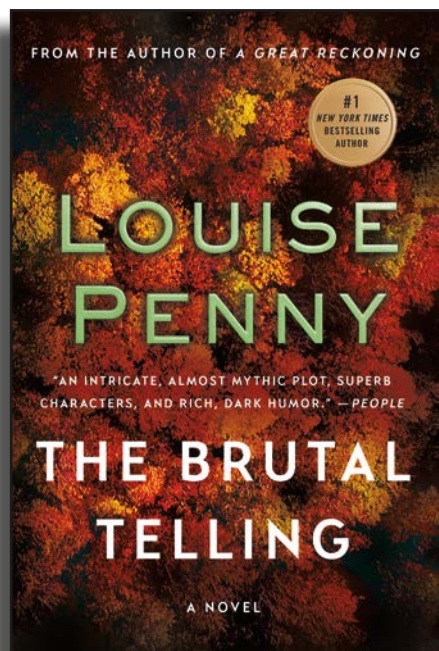
It is the height of summer, and Armand and Reine-Marie Gamache are celebrating their wedding anniversary at Manoir Bellechasse, an isolated, luxurious inn not far from the village of Three Pines. But they're not alone. The Finney family—rich, cultured, and respectable—has also arrived for a celebration of their own. The beautiful Manoir Bellechasse might be surrounded by nature, but there is something unnatural looming. As the heat rises and the humidity closes in, some surprising guests turn up at the family reunion, and a terrible summer storm leaves behind a dead body. It is up to Chief Inspector Gamache to unearth secrets long buried and hatreds hidden behind polite smiles. The chase takes him to Three Pines, into the dark corners of his own life, and finally to a harrowing climax.

NOTES FROM THE BOOK

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Book #5:

Originally Published 09/22/09

☐ THE BRUTAL TELLING

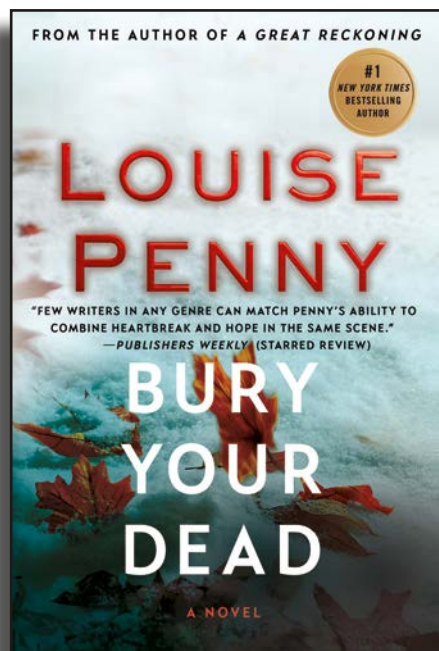
Chaos is coming, old son. With those words the peace of Three Pines is shattered. Everybody goes to Olivier's Bistro—including a stranger whose murdered body is found on the floor. When Chief Inspector Gamache is called to investigate, he is dismayed to discover that Olivier's story is full of holes. Why are his fingerprints all over the cabin that's uncovered deep in the wilderness, with priceless antiques and the dead man's blood? And what other secrets and layers of lies are buried in the seemingly idyllic village? Gamache follows a trail of clues and treasures—from first editions of *Charlotte's Web* and *Jane Eyre* to a spiderweb with a word mysteriously woven in it—into the woods and across the continent, before returning to Three Pines to confront the truth and the final, brutal telling.

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Date started: _____ Date finished: _____





☐ BURY YOUR DEAD

It is Winter Carnival in Quebec City, bitterly cold and surpassingly beautiful. Chief Inspector Armand Gamache has come not to join the revels but to recover from an investigation gone hauntingly wrong. But violent death is inescapable, even in the apparent sanctuary of the Literary and Historical Society—where an obsessive historian's quest for the remains of the founder of Quebec, Samuel de Champlain, ends in murder. Could a secret buried with Champlain for nearly four hundred years be so dreadful that someone would kill to protect it? Meanwhile, Gamache is receiving disquieting letters from the village of Three Pines, where beloved Bistro owner Olivier was recently convicted of murder. "It doesn't make sense," Olivier's partner writes every day. "He didn't do it, you know." As past and present collide in this astonishing novel, Gamache must relive a terrible event from his own past before he can begin to bury his dead.

Book #6:

Originally Published 09/28/10

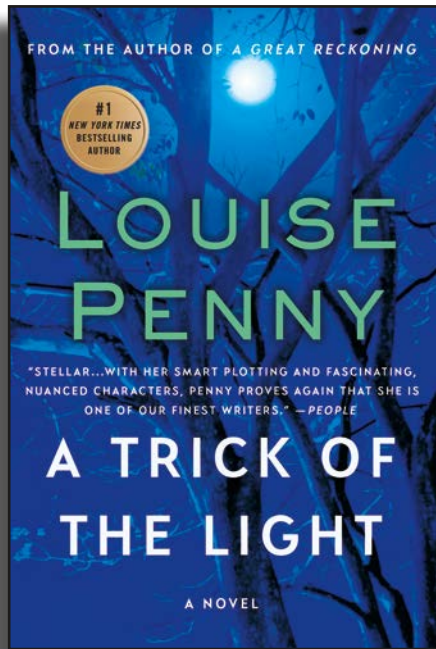
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Book #7:

Originally Published 08/30/11

☐ A TRICK OF THE LIGHT

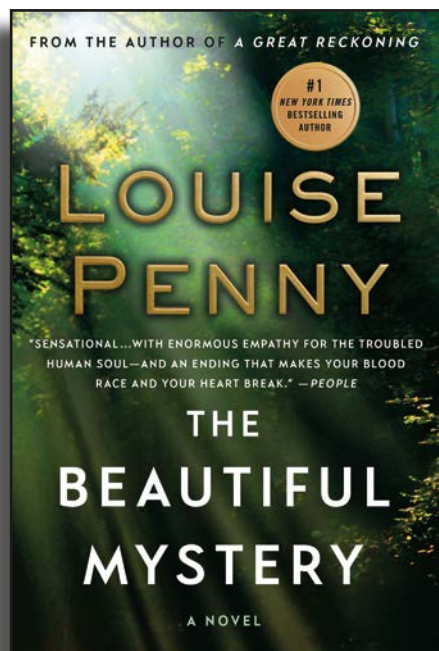
“Hearts are broken,” Lillian Dyson carefully underlined in a book. “Sweet relationships are dead.” But now Lillian herself is dead. Found among the bleeding hearts and lilacs of Clara Morrow’s garden in Three Pines, shattering the celebrations of Clara’s solo show at the famed Musée in Montreal. Chief Inspector Gamache, the head of homicide at the Sûreté du Québec, is called to the tiny Quebec village and there he finds the art world gathered, and with it a world of shading and nuance, a world of shadow and light. Where nothing is as it seems. Behind every smile there lurks a sneer. Inside every sweet relationship there hides a broken heart. And even when facts are slowly exposed, it is no longer clear to Gamache and his team if what they’ve found is the truth, or simply a trick of the light.

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Book #8:

Originally Published 08/28/12

☐ THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY

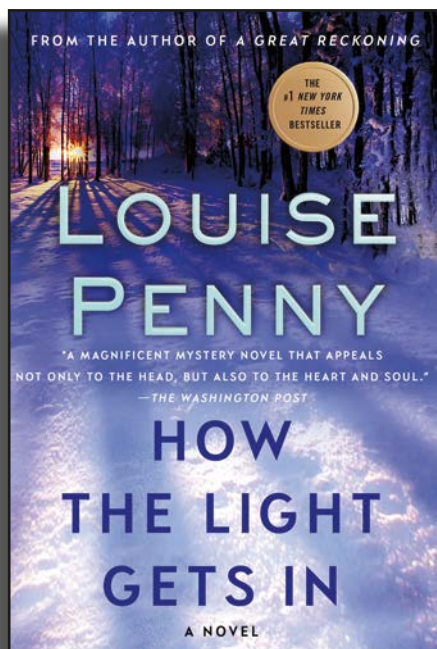
No outsiders are ever admitted to the monastery of Saint-Gilbert-Entre-les-Loups, hidden deep in the wilderness of Quebec, where two dozen cloistered monks live in peace and prayer. They grow vegetables, they tend chickens, they make chocolate. And they sing. Ironically, for a community that has taken a vow of silence, the monks have become world-famous for their glorious voices, raised in ancient chants whose effect on both singer and listener is so profound it is known as “the beautiful mystery.” But when the renowned choir director is murdered, the lock on the monastery’s massive wooden door is drawn back to admit Chief Inspector Armand Gamache and Jean-Guy Beauvoir of the Sûreté du Québec. There they discover disquiet beneath the silence, discord in the apparent harmony. One of the brothers, in this life of prayer and contemplation, has been contemplating murder. As the peace of the monastery crumbles, Gamache is forced to confront some of his own demons, as well as those roaming the remote corridors. Before finding the killer, before restoring peace, the Chief must first consider the divine, the human, and the cracks in between.

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Book #9:

Originally Published 08/27/13

□ HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN

"There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

—Leonard Cohen

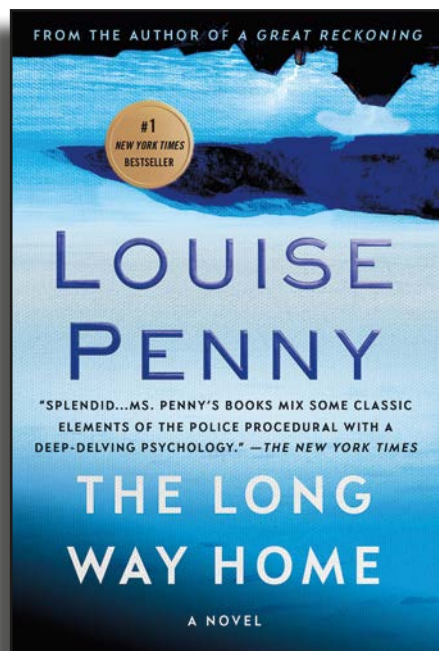
Christmas is approaching, and in Québec it's a time of dazzling snowfalls, bright lights, and gatherings with friends in front of blazing hearths. But shadows are falling on the usually festive season for Chief Inspector Armand Gamache. Most of his best agents have left the Homicide Department, his old friend and lieutenant Jean-Guy Beauvoir hasn't spoken to him in months, and hostile forces are lining up against him. When Gamache receives a message from Myrna Landers that a longtime friend has failed to arrive for Christmas in the village of Three Pines, he welcomes the chance to get away from the city. Mystified by Myrna's reluctance to reveal her friend's name, Gamache soon discovers the missing woman was once one of the most famous people not just in North America, but in the world, and now goes unrecognized by virtually everyone except the mad, brilliant poet Ruth Zardo. As events come to a head, Gamache is drawn ever deeper into the world of Three Pines. Increasingly, he is not only investigating the disappearance of Myrna's friend but also seeking a safe place for himself and his still-loyal colleagues. Is there peace to be found even in Three Pines, and at what cost to Gamache and the people he holds dear?

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Book #10:
Originally Published 08/26/14

☐ THE LONG WAY HOME

Happily retired in the village of Three Pines, Armand Gamache, former Chief Inspector of Homicide with the Sûreté du Québec, has found a peace he'd only imagined possible. On warm summer mornings he sits on a bench holding a small book, *The Balm in Gilead*, in his large hands. "There is a balm in Gilead," his neighbor Clara Morrow reads from the dust jacket, "to make the wounded whole."

While Gamache doesn't talk about his wounds and his balm, Clara tells him about hers. Peter, her artist husband, has failed to come home. Failed to show up as promised on the first anniversary of their separation. She wants Gamache's help to find him. Having finally found sanctuary, Gamache feels a near revulsion at the thought of leaving Three Pines. "There's power enough in Heaven," he finishes the quote as he contemplates the quiet village, "to cure a sin-sick soul." And then he gets up. And joins her.

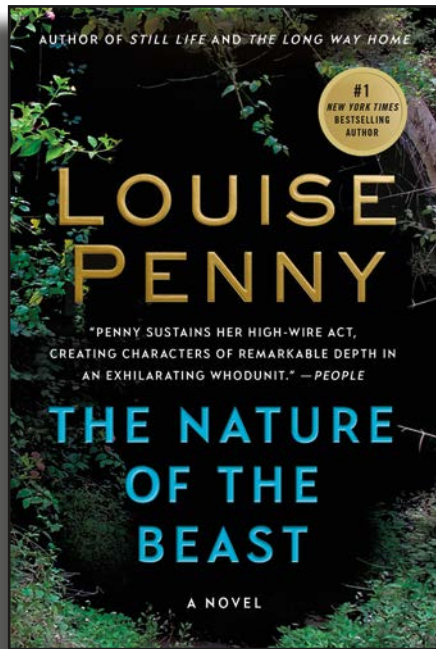
Together with his former second-in-command, Jean-Guy Beauvoir, and Myrna Landers, they journey deeper and deeper into Québec. And deeper and deeper into the soul of Peter Morrow. A man so desperate to recapture his fame as an artist, he would sell that soul. And may have. The journey takes them further and further from Three Pines, to the very mouth of the great St. Lawrence river. To an area so desolate, so damned, the first mariners called it The land God gave to Cain. And there they discover the terrible damage done by a sin-sick soul.

NOTES FROM THE BOOK

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Date started: _____ Date finished: _____





Book #11:

Originally Published 08/25/15

☐ THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

Hardly a day goes by when nine-year-old Laurent Lepage doesn't cry wolf. From alien invasions, to walking trees, to winged beasts in the woods, to dinosaurs spotted in the village of Three Pines, his tales are so extraordinary no one can possibly believe him. Including Armand and Reine-Marie Gamache, who now live in the little Quebec village.

But when the boy disappears, the villagers are faced with the possibility that one of his tall tales might have been true.

And so begins a frantic search for the boy and the truth. What they uncover deep in the forest sets off a sequence of events that leads to murder, leads to an old crime, leads to an old betrayal. Leads right to the door of an old poet.

And now it is now, writes Ruth Zardo. *And the dark thing is here.*

A monster once visited Three Pines. And put down deep roots. And now, Ruth knows, it is back.

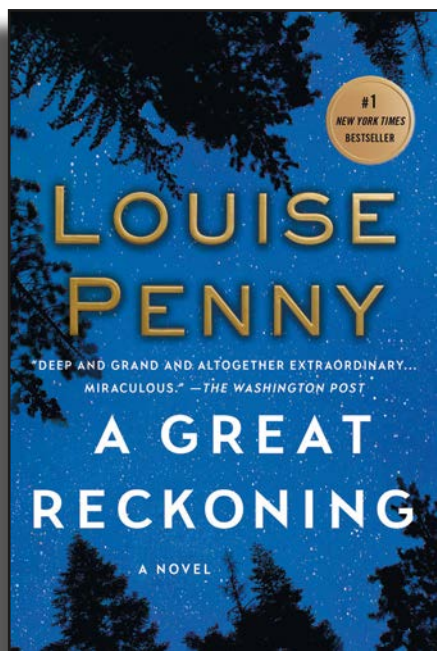
Armand Gamache, the former head of homicide for the Sûreté du Québec, must face the possibility that, in not believing the boy, he himself played a terrible part in what happens next.

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Book #12:
Originally Published 08/30/16

☐ A GREAT RECKONING

When an intricate old map is found stuffed into the walls of the bistro in Three Pines, it at first seems no more than a curiosity. But the closer the villagers look, the stranger it becomes.

Given to Armand Gamache as a gift the first day of his new job, the map eventually leads him to shattering secrets. To an old friend and older adversary. It leads the former Chief of Homicide for the Sûreté du Québec to places even he is afraid to go. But must.

And there he finds four young cadets in the Sûreté academy, and a dead professor. And, with the body, a copy of the old, odd map.

Everywhere Gamache turns, he sees Amelia Choquet, one of the cadets. Tattooed and pierced. Guarded and angry. Amelia is more likely to be found on the other side of a police line-up. And yet she is in the academy. A protégée of the murdered professor.

The focus of the investigation soon turns to Gamache himself and his mysterious relationship with Amelia, and his possible involvement in the crime. The frantic search for answers takes the investigators back to Three Pines and a stained glass window with its own horrific secrets.

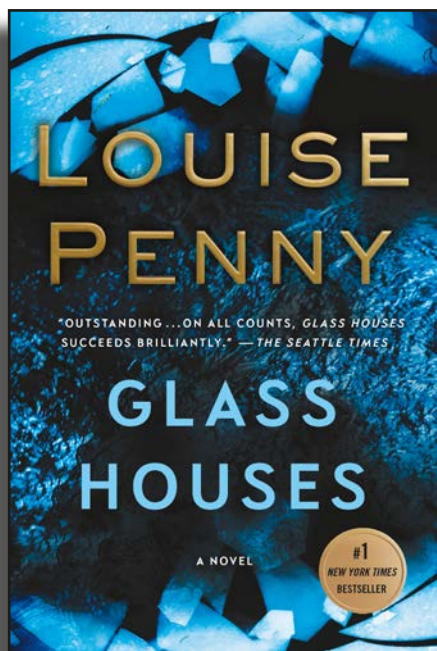
For both Amelia Choquet and Armand Gamache, the time has come for a great reckoning.

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Book #13:

Originally Published 08/29/17

□ GLASS HOUSES

When a mysterious figure appears in Three Pines one cold November day, Armand Gamache and the rest of the villagers are at first curious. Then wary. Through rain and sleet, the figure stands unmoving, staring ahead.

From the moment its shadow falls over the village, Gamache, now Chief Superintendent of the Sûreté du Québec, suspects the creature has deep roots and a dark purpose. Yet he does nothing. What can he do? Only watch and wait. And hope his mounting fears are not realized.

But when the figure vanishes overnight and a body is discovered, it falls to Gamache to discover if a debt has been paid or levied.

Months later, on a steamy July day as the trial for the accused begins in Montréal, Chief Superintendent Gamache continues to struggle with actions he set in motion that bitter November, from which there is no going back. More than the accused is on trial. Gamache's own conscience is standing in judgment.

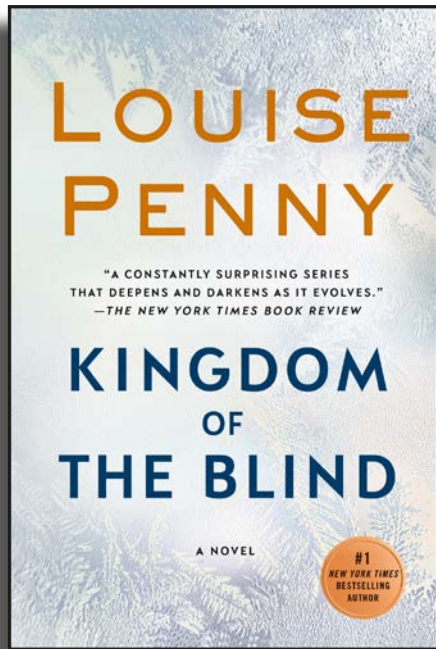
In her latest utterly gripping book, number-one *New York Times* bestselling author Louise Penny shatters the conventions of the crime novel to explore what Gandhi called the court of conscience. A court that supersedes all others.

NOTES FROM THE BOOK

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Book #14:
Originally Published 11/27/18

☐ KINGDOM OF THE BLIND

When a peculiar letter arrives inviting Armand Gamache to an abandoned farmhouse, the former head of the Sûreté du Québec discovers that a complete stranger has named him one of the executors of her will. Still on suspension, and frankly curious, Gamache accepts and soon learns that the other two executors are Myrna Landers, the bookseller from Three Pines, and a young builder.

None of them had ever met the elderly woman.

The will is so odd and includes bequests that are so wildly unlikely that Gamache and the others suspect the woman must have been delusional. But what if, Gamache begins to ask himself, she was perfectly sane?

When a body is found, the terms of the bizarre will suddenly seem less peculiar and far more menacing.

But it isn't the only menace Gamache is facing.

The investigation into what happened six months ago—the events that led to his suspension—has dragged on, into the dead of winter. And while most of the opioids he allowed to slip through his hands, in order to bring down the cartels, have been retrieved, there is one devastating exception.

Enough narcotic to kill thousands has disappeared into inner city Montreal. With the deadly drug about to hit the streets, Gamache races for answers.

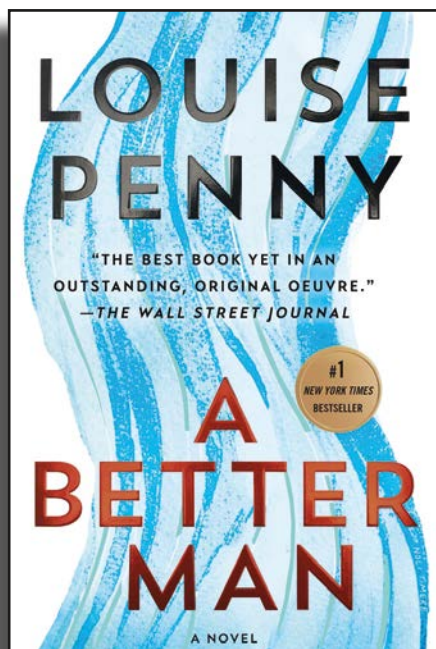
As he uses increasingly audacious, even desperate, measures to retrieve the drug, Armand Gamache begins to see his own blind spots. And the terrible things hiding there.

NOTES FROM THE BOOK

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Book #15:
Originally Published 08/27/19

☐ A BETTER MAN

The air is thick with excitement and anxiety as Sûreté du Québec agents gather in the conference room for the Monday morning meeting of the homicide department.

This will be Armand Gamache's first day back since his demotion from head of the entire force, to head of homicide. Complicating matters, he'll be sharing the duties with his former second-in-command, Jean-Guy Beauvoir.

Amid blistering social media attacks, Gamache sets out on his first assignment—to find a missing woman.

The search for Vivienne Godin is played out against a backdrop of catastrophic spring flooding. Three Pines itself is threatened, as the Rivière Bella Bella breaks its banks. A province-wide emergency is declared and desperate efforts are underway to save towns and cities, dams and bridges.

As Gamache leads the search for Vivienne, he develops a profound empathy for her distraught father. With a daughter of his own, he finds himself haunted by the question, how would you feel, if...

As the rivers rise, and the social media onslaught becomes crueler, a body is discovered. And the victim's father contemplates a murder of his own.

And the question facing both Gamache and Beauvoir shifts.

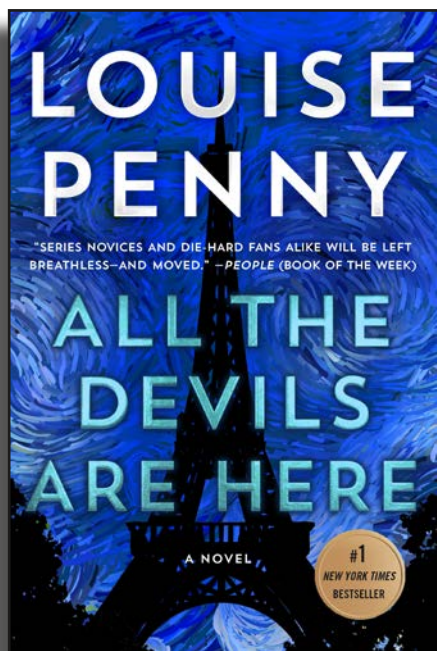
What would you do, if... your child's killer might walk free?

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Book #16:

Originally Published 09/01/20

☐ ALL THE DEVILS ARE HERE

The 16th novel by #1 bestselling author Louise Penny finds Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec investigating a sinister plot in the City of Light.

On their first night in Paris, the Gamaches gather as a family for a bistro dinner with Armand's godfather, the billionaire Stephen Horowitz. Walking home together after the meal, they watch in horror as Stephen is knocked down and critically injured in what Gamache knows is no accident, but a deliberate attempt on the elderly man's life.

When a strange key is found in Stephen's possession it sends Armand, his wife Reine-Marie, and his former second-in-command at the Sûreté, Jean-Guy Beauvoir, from the top of the Tour Eiffel, to the bowels of the Paris Archives, from luxury hotels to odd, coded, works of art.

It sends them deep into the secrets Armand's godfather has kept for decades.

A gruesome discovery in Stephen's Paris apartment makes it clear the secrets are more rancid, the danger far greater and more imminent, than they realized.

Soon the whole family is caught up in a web of lies and deceit. In order to find the truth, Gamache will have to decide whether he can trust his friends, his colleagues, his instincts, his own past. His own family.

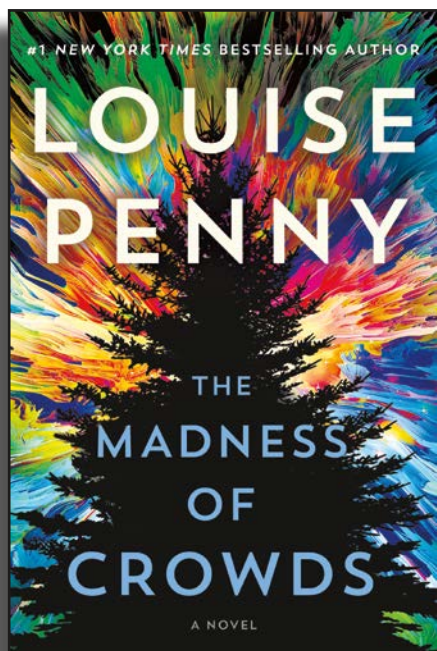
For even the City of Light casts long shadows. And in that darkness devils hide.

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Book #17:
Originally Published 08/24/21

☐ THE MADNESS OF CROWDS

You're a coward.

Time and again, as the New Year approaches, that charge is leveled against Armand Gamache.

It starts innocently enough.

Time and again, as the New Year approaches, that charge is leveled against Armand Gamache.

It starts innocently enough.

While the residents of the Québec village of Three Pines take advantage of the deep snow to ski and toboggan, to drink hot chocolate in the bistro and share meals together, the Chief Inspector finds his holiday with his family interrupted by a simple request.

He's asked to provide security for what promises to be a non-event. A visiting Professor of Statistics will be giving a lecture at the nearby university.

While he is perplexed as to why the head of homicide for the Sûreté du Québec would be assigned this task, it sounds easy enough. That is until Gamache starts looking into Professor Abigail Robinson and discovers an agenda so repulsive he begs the university to cancel the lecture.

They refuse, citing academic freedom, and accuse Gamache of censorship and intellectual cowardice. Before long, Professor Robinson's views start seeping into conversations. Spreading and infecting. So that truth and fact, reality and delusion are so confused it's near impossible to tell them apart.

Discussions become debates, debates become arguments, which turn into fights. As sides are declared, a madness takes hold.

Abigail Robinson promises that, if they follow her, ça va bien aller. All will be well. But not, Gamache and his team know, for everyone.

When a murder is committed it falls to Armand Gamache, his second-in-command Jean-Guy Beauvoir, and their team to investigate the crime as well as this extraordinary popular delusion.

And the madness of crowds.

NOTES FROM THE BOOK

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