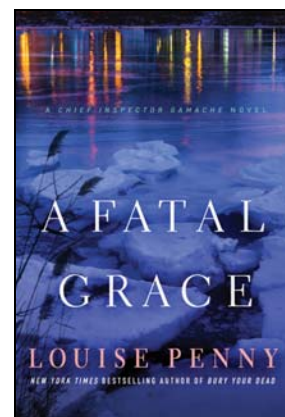




A Fatal Grace

By Louise Penny
St. Martin's Griffin
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Trade Paperback



Discussion questions for The Three Pines Mysteries, by Louise Penny

1. How important is the use of humor in this book?
2. Which Three Pines villager would you most like to have cafe au lait with at the bistro?
3. Why is Ruth a villager?
4. Louise Penny says her books are about murder, but at their heart they're about other things. What else is this book about? What are some other themes?
5. Agent Nichol is an extremely controversial character in the books. What do you think of her? What purpose does she serve?

Discussion questions for *A Fatal Grace*

1. In the golden age of classic murder mysteries, the Detection Club, whose founders included Dorothy L. Sayers and Agatha Christie, drew up a list of rules for crime fiction that included the following: "No clue that is important to the solution of the puzzle may be concealed from the reader." What are the clues to the murders in *A Fatal Grace*, and how does Louise Penny hide them in plain sight?
2. Consider the lines (from "A Sad Child," by Margaret Atwood): "Well, all children are sad/but some get over it." A number of the people in the novel have had damaging childhoods. What helps or hinders them in moving beyond those childhoods?
3. Discuss the different meanings in the book of "Be Calm" (and B KLM).
4. Beauvoir regards Gamache as having saved him. Is Gamache trying to do the same for Nichol, and what do you think his chances are for success? What do you think it takes to get on what Beauvoir calls Gamache's legendary, albeit well hidden, "bad side"?
5. Why does Gamache laugh with joy when Ruth Zardo says that CC de Poitiers "wasn't very good, but she wasn't so bad either. I mean really...who isn't cruel and selfish?" Do you think Gamache agrees with this idea? Do you agree?
6. Three Pines is described as enchanted and magical, a fairy-tale world—but it's also a world where Dr. Frankenstein creates a monster. How do you view the village and the people who live there?
7. Clara says, "At two in the afternoon my art is brilliant, at two in the morning it's crap." Peter doesn't understand her art, but Gamache calls it marvelous. What do you think this says about her art and about her marriage? Why does Gamache tell Clara that she has "an instinct for crime"?
8. What impression do you get of Reine-Marie from her relatively brief appearances in the story? What do you think of her marriage to Gamache?
9. Both Clara and Gamache believe they see God in the course of this story. How do you view their experiences (and why lemon meringue pie)?