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Louise Penny's June Newsletter

"The rule now is, be humble and play to your strengths."
- **Unknown**



May

Hope you're enjoying the spring (though I know in some places it's late fall). Michael and I arrived back from the UK to a tentative spring here in Quebec, after a cold and wet April. But May was, for the most part, gorgeous. And we've had the blossoms to prove it. Alliums up, lilac come and gone. Peony and roses about to pop and the irises are crazy. Just a ripe, lush time of year here.

UK Visit

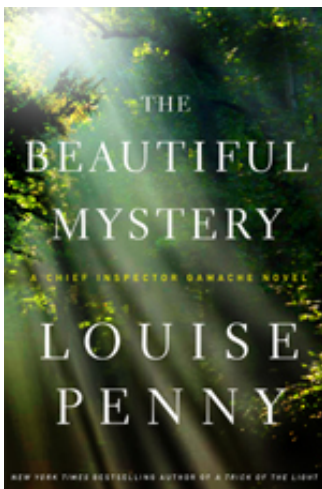
We had a great time in the UK – and Michael and his son Vic extended it with a trip to Scotland, where the highlight was meeting Linda Lyall and her family – husband Kevin, and children Christopher and Jennifer. Linda designs and manages this newsletter and my website. Many of you have commented on how beautiful the site is – and I try to take full credit (bien sur!) – but the fact is, Linda came up with the design, and changes the colours and the main photos for every book.

For instance, the next book – THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY – is set in a remote monastery in autumn, so that will guide the colours and photos she chooses.

August book launch

Indeed, THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY will be launching August 28th.

The response to the advance copies for THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY are just coming in.



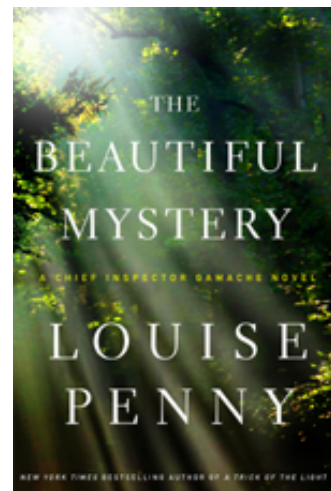
August 28th 2012

Marian Misters, one of the owners of Sleuth of Baker Street in Toronto, one of the top crime fiction bookstores in North America, wrote me after finishing the book. Here's part of her letter:

Every time I read one of your books I am left breathless and The Beautiful Mystery is no exception. In fact, I really do think this is the best book you have ever written. Hands down. What a read!...Now, besides wanting to visit Three Pines, I want to visit this monastery and eat their wonderful soups, breads and cheeses....you have written a masterpiece.

The Beautiful Mystery

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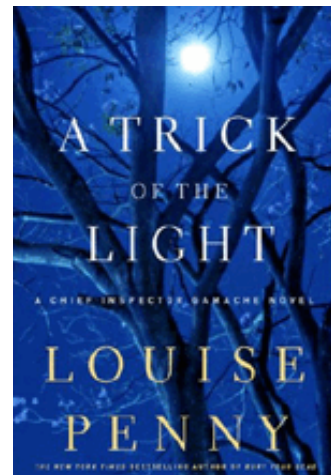
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A Trick of the Light

US / Canada / UK



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You can now pre-order it through your bookstore or online. I suspect you've already done that, and if so – thank you! If not – well, honestly, what are you waiting for? Except, I know times are tough and hard covers aren't cheap – but you can always reserve it at your library. As you know, I adore libraries. So much so that I made Armand's wife, Reine-Marie, a librarian.

But, when I was designing and creating the village of Three Pines, and trying to think what the community of my dreams would contain, the first thing I created was Myrna's New and Used bookstore. The second was the bistro. Then the bakery. Have you noticed that there do not seem to be any vegetables in Three Pines? Except the dreaded zucchinis.

There's nothing like a 'bricks and mortar' bookstore. If I feel homesick or a little blue when I travel, I head to a bookstore. Just to be there. To smell the books. To be in that atmosphere, among other booklovers. I always feel safe and calm.

Tour dates

We're just now designing the tour for the launch of THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY. A few events have been pinned down. There will be a very limited, special, pre-launch event here in the Eastern Townships on Saturday, August 25th. Danny and Lucy, at Brome Lake Books are organizing it. After that I head out across North America on tour. The only two dates completely confirmed are Scottsdale, Arizona – at Poisoned Pen Bookstore – on Monday, September 3rd. Then in Houston the next day, for an event at Murder By The Book. Beyond that, Sarah Melnyk at Minotaur Books in New York is juggling dates and requests. I should be able to give you the complete schedule by July.

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY, is, as I say, set in a remote monastery where 24 monks live in silence and seclusion. Besides prayers, they produce two things, chocolate covered blueberries, and Gregorian Chants. One for the body, one for the soul. Their plain chant, singing the word of God in the voice of God, is so mesmerizing, so glorious that the little recording they made of the chants to raise money has become a sensation.

People from all over the world have tracked down these reclusive monks. And want in. But the old doors remain barred.

The monastery was built almost 400 years ago, by monks on the run from the Inquisition. But now another sort of inquisition has arrived, in the form of Chief Inspector Gamache, the head of homicide for the Sûreté du Québec, and his second-in-command, Inspector Beauvoir. The cloistered Brothers have no choice but to let them in, to break their isolation and their silence. The outsiders have come to investigate a murder.

One of the monks is dead. And one of the monks did it.

Like all the other Gamache books, the act of murder is simply the beginning. Like Gamache entering the monastery, the murder also allows me to look into the human heart. Into issues of faith and belief, of passions and loyalty. And choice. And tyranny. At how something as beautiful as these plain chants can open a path to the divine, or to the very worst in the human soul.

I'm so looking forward to the launch on August 28th, and to you reading it.

Indeed, some have already won advance copies of THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY. If you have, and

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Here's the order of the **Chief Inspector Gamache books**, from the first to the most recent:

STILL LIFE

A FATAL GRACE / DEAD COLD

THE CRUELEST MONTH

A RULE AGAINST MURDER / THE MURDER STONE

THE BRUTAL TELLING

BURY YOUR DEAD

A TRICK OF THE LIGHT

have liked it, I'd really be so grateful if you'd tell others. Rate it at GoodReads or Amazon or your local bookstore. Blog about it, or comment on DorothyL or other lists, post about it on Facebook perhaps, or Twitter. (only if you liked it, of course. If you didn't, then, well, never mind...)

Please spread the word. I can't begin to tell you how powerful that is. And how necessary. Books and series live and die by word-of-mouth. I'm really counting on you. But I also know you've already done a huge amount.

Thank you!

I'd like to especially appeal to you if you've been given an advance copy. They're quite rare and very precious and their sole purpose is to get the word out early, and with luck, get people excited to buy the book. We want to let established followers of Gamache know about it, certainly, but frankly the goal is to grow the series. Get THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY into the hands of people who've never heard of me or Armand.

And for that, I need you. I'm sort of bashful to keep pounding away at this because I know you've been so amazingly supportive already. Consider this perhaps not a pounding, but a whisper and an embrace. And a thanks.

Advance Readers Copies - contest winners

And – speaking of winning advance copies of THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY - we have two more winners! Last month we held a contest, organized by My Assistant Lise – to finish the following sentence:

Armand Gamache held the café au lait between his large hands and, looking out the bistro window, was shocked to see...

We had such a blast reading the entries! You know, some were hilarious and some were deeply moving. But they were all so great to get. Thank you. It seems like you had fun with it too. In fact, we had so much fun that Michael, My Assistant Lise and I have decided to hold another 'finish the sentence' contest this month.

But first – the two winners of the advance copy of THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY from the May contest are:

Alice, from Burlington, Ontario for this entry:

Armand Gamache held the café au lait between his large hands and, looking out the bistro window, was shocked to see... Myrna, caftan sopping and dripping, struggling to drag something, or someone, from the rushing, overflowing waters of the Bella Bella.

Riveting, Alice. Made us want to know what happens next!

And Sandra, from Belchertown, MA won for this entry:

Armand Gamache held the café au lait between his large hands and, looking out the bistro window, was shocked to see...Ruth limping blissfully around the common, as Rosa and three fuzzy ducklings trailed happily behind the old poet!

Congratulations, Sandra. Very fun!

Indeed, there were so many entries about Ruth and Rosa we made a shortlist of the best and then chose at random. The Universe picked Sandra!

June, Advance Readers Copy - Complete the sentence competition

Here's the challenge for the next contest. Complete this sentence....

'For God's sake Clara,' yelled Myrna. 'I'm begging you. Don't...'

Ha! Make of that what you will. I dare you. Two winners will receive an advance copy of THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY. To enter put "ARC Contest" in the subject line. And please include where you're writing from, just [click here](#) to email your answer and details.

A TRICK OF THE LIGHT - audio book giveaway

Audio books are becoming more and more popular, and I know many of you love listening to Ralph Cosham read the Gamache books. Well, June is Audio Book Month and to celebrate we're giving away two copies of the audio book for A TRICK OF THE LIGHT. It'll be a random draw, please put "Audio" in the 'subject' line. And please include your mailing address, [click here](#) to be entered into the draw. Good luck!

Vive Gamache Chair

An update on the Vive Gamache Chair - it went for 1,000 dollars to Alice in California. Congratulations Alice and thank you for all your support for this community centre. Over all, the Chairs Project raised 14,000 dollars!

UK paperback launch for A TRICK OF THE LIGHT

In another piece of publishing news, the British paperback edition of A TRICK OF THE LIGHT is coming out on June 3rd.

Vive Gamache café au lait mugs



Oh, I also want to remind you that Danny and Lucy now have more of the Vive Gamache café au lait mugs, and are happy to mail them anywhere in the world. If you're interested, you can [click here](#) to email them, and either Danny or Lucy will give you the details.

Michael and I use them for our café au laits every morning....indeed I have so many I'm embarrassed to tell you. Fueling the first draft of the next book. I'm closing in on the end of that first draft. I think. Hoping to be close to finished by the next newsletter. I'll let you know.

After you've read THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY you'll know why this next book is particularly difficult to write.

Hope you have the most wonderful June – and please know how much I appreciate all your support – not just in buying and reading the books, but in telling others, posting on websites, spreading the word. And then the final kindness, in writing to me to let me know what you think.

Thank you!

Oh, I meant to tell you about the quote at the top of the newsletter. I cut it out of a newspaper when we were in London. I have no idea who said it, but it struck me as simple and wise. It's now taped to my laptop, and I read it everyday as I write.

The rule now is, be humble, and play to your strengths.

It's a good day when I can do both.

Hope you're well, and thriving – and I'll write again in a month. Have fun with the contest! And please spread the word about the Gamache books. OK – enough said.

Louise

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