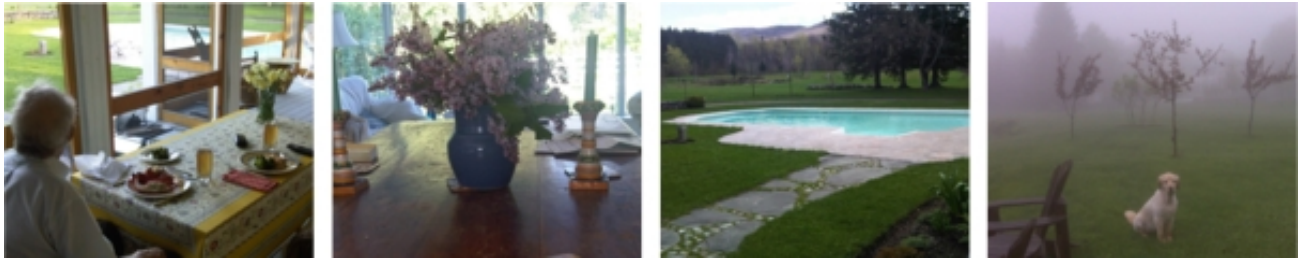


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Louise Penny's June Newsletter



"But tho' I am an old man, I am but a young gardener."
- **Thomas Jefferson**

I hope you're enjoying the season - as you can see by some of the photos above, we're having a typical Quebec spring, which means here one moment, gone the next. Sunny, hot and humid, then dreadful storms and rains. Lots of flooding. Not in our area of Quebec, but not too far away, along the Richelieu river.

Terrible flooding too in Manitoba and of course, down the Mississippi.

Forest fires in Slave Lake, Alberta, and Spain, and other areas.

And then there was Joplin, and the tornado. It was inconceivable what happened there. Horrible. What brought the terror home for me weren't the videos of the approaching tornado - though they were terrifying. It was an audio recording of strangers huddled together, I believe it was in a walk-in fridge at a restaurant. The deafening sound as the tornado approached, then struck. And above the roar, the fury, barely heard, were their screams. And their prayers. God, help us. God help us.

They survived, but so many didn't.

I'd been feeling hard done by. A May without much sun. Still inside. Still in front of the fire.

God help me, I don't feel hard done by anymore.

Outside our door it might be raining, but it's soft and in the moments when it stops we can hear the peaceful dropping of water from new leaves. And the scent of lilac hangs in the humid air.

And when I remember to do my sums I find all the columns full.

A Trick of the Light - ARC reviews

The publication of A TRICK OF THE LIGHT is getting closer!!!! The next Gamache book will be launched in Canada and the United States on August 30th. The earliest Advance Readers Copies, or ARCs, have gone out. And some wonderful reviews are coming back. **Kaye Barley, at Meanderings and Muses and Dorothy L. wrote:**

I keep using the word "stunning" for Ms. Penny's work time and time again. And I keep saying "this one is the best one yet." Big sigh.

A Trick of the Light is STUNNING and yes, it is the best one yet.

Bury your Dead US Edition



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HOW does she keep doing this? And continually top her own work?.... As far as what happens in Three Pines - suffice to say, A LOT! Some things many of us have been waiting for, a few things that will make you laugh out loud, some things that will break your heart and move you to tears along with a few surprise twists. You know - all those things that Louise Penny just keeps doing with such apparent ease.

Publisher's Weekly said "Few writers in any genre can match Louise Penny's ability to combine heartbreak and hope in the same scene." *Spot On!!!*

And **Booklist** gave it a wonderful review - here's an excerpt:

Like P. D. James, Penny shows how the tight structure of the classical mystery story can accommodate a wealth of deeply felt emotions and interpersonal drama.... Top of the genre.

So, I'm thrilled!!! It's always a bit stressful, as the first reviews come in. ("a bit" is a euphemism for something Ruth might say) I know I shouldn't care - but I do.

Word Count competition

Now, onto the contest results! Last month I asked you to guess what the word count would be by the end of May for the next Gamache book, which I'm currently writing. The two people who come closest will win an ARC of A TRICK OF THE LIGHT.

And the word count is: **101,177**

And the winners are: *Jo Reyes and Jean Sheats*

Congratulations.

I won't do a giveaway this month, but in the July newsletter I'll be giving away the last two advance copies of A TRICK OF THE LIGHT.

And, if I can ask you a very great favour - can you continue, please, to spread the word? This is such a difficult time in publishing! So many bookstores closing, or under threat. So many of my friends have not had their publishing contracts renewed - and these are fine, award-winning writers. Many friends who are booksellers have lost their jobs. This has all happened so quickly. So much in publishing has changed just since I've been writing.

Not all, of course, is bad. Some is very exciting, and it's so important not to bemoan what has gone and damn the new. But until a sort of equilibrium is, so many remain vulnerable.

From a deeply selfish standpoint, I'd be most grateful if you can network, blog, tweet, and just old-fashioned blabber mouth about my books.

I know many of you have already told everyone you know - and then some. Thank you!!

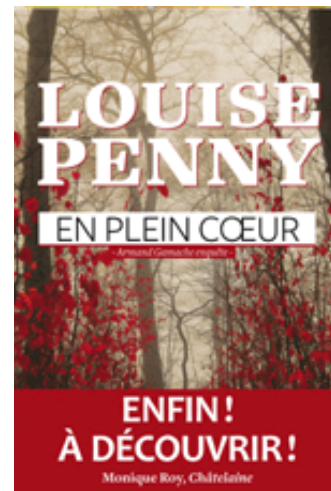
One Book, One Island event - STILL LIFE

In other news, the fall tour is coming together, including the announcement that STILL LIFE and EN PLEIN COEUR (the French translation of the book) have been chosen by Prince Edward Island for the new One Book, One Island event. This is absolutely thrilling. It's basically a province-wide (PEI is a Canadian province) book club - with STILL LIFE as the book!

I'll be going there in mid-September as the culmination of the One

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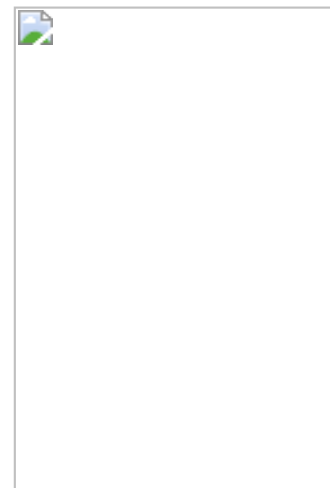
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Book celebrations.

North American book tour

The North American tour is still being finalized, but I can tell you that *A TRICK OF THE LIGHT* will have its world launch at Gibson's Bookstore in Concord, New Hampshire on Tuesday, August 30th, at 7pm!

From there the tour takes me from Arizona to Victoria, BC, to Prince Edward Island, and Ann Arbor, and a months worth of places (and thousands of air miles) in between. It's an exciting tour and I was hoping to unveil the specifics for you today, but it's proving more complex than we initially thought. Happily for me, I'm not the one coordinating it. I just nod and smile, and can hardly wait to see all of you. Or, as many as possible.

Last year, while touring for *BURY YOUR DEAD*, I had a sudden stomach flu and had to cancel one event. A reading and signing at a terrific bookstore in North Conway, New Hampshire called White Birch Books. I promised to get there for this tour, and I will. We just have to find a date, perhaps in early October.

Bury Your Dead - Anthony Award Nomination

And - more good news about *BURY YOUR DEAD*. It's been nominated for the Anthony Award for Best Crime Novel of 2011! Here's the complete list:

Bury Your Dead - Louise Penny - Minotaur Books

Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter - Tom Franklin - William Morrow

Faithful Place - Tana French - Viking

I'd Know You Anywhere - Laura Lippman - William Morrow

The Lock Artist - Steve Hamilton - Minotaur

All make terrific reading! The Anthonys are given out at the annual crime readers/writers festival. This year it's being held in St Louis. I was supposed to go, but had to withdraw. I'm afraid it has just gotten too busy, as you can see by the tour.

Audio book month

June is also audio book month! I know many of you listen not just to my books, but to many books on audio. It's a fabulous way to pass the time in a car, or on a train or plane. What great company. Especially when there's a wonderful narrator.

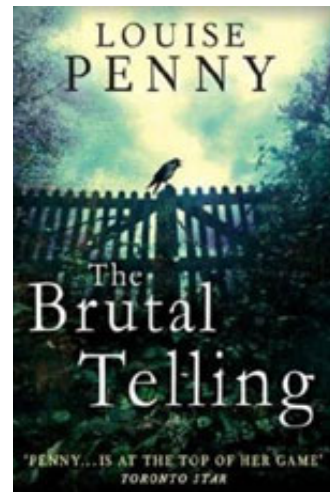
The amazing Ralph Cosham reads my books for the American market - in fact, he does it so well that *BURY YOUR DEAD* was named by AudioFile magazine as the best Crime Fiction audiobook of 2011.

If you'd like to hear Ralph read the first few pages of *A TRICK OF THE LIGHT*, just [click here](#).

Enjoy!

ebooks

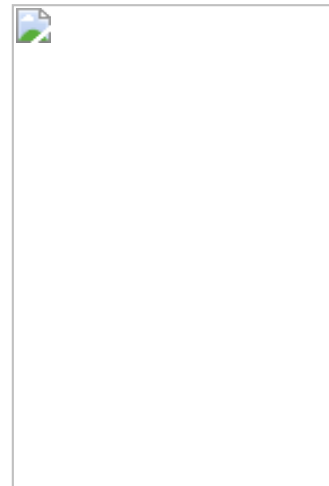
I also want to mention that *A TRICK OF THE LIGHT*, and all the other books, are available as ebooks. Now, in Canada, Amazon still doesn't have the Kindle up and running - so that won't work. But the books are available through [iBooks](#) and [Kobo](#). And apparently there's a way to get them, in Canada, through [Amazon.com](#), though I don't really know how. I wish I could be more helpful. I realize it's



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Cruelest Month
US edition

frustrating for those of you with ereaders. And since I'm not one of them, I really am a bit challenged in the specifics.

In the US the books are available on Kindle and Nook and every imaginable machine, including, perhaps, your toaster. They're also available in the UK as ebooks.

May

May might have been rainy, but it also had a lot of fun times. It started with the Mystery Lovers book festival, organized by the Mystery Lovers bookstore, in Oakmont, Pennsylvania..

From there Pat Valoon drove me to Bradford, Pennsylvania. I'm embarrassed to admit I had no idea the country there is so beautiful. Mountains and forests. And then, in a lovely valley, there was Bradford. Clearly a town with great taste since they'd chosen STILL LIFE as their One Book Bradford selection.

I can't tell you how much fun I had, meeting with high school classes and touring the library - they even gave me a tour of the Zippo Lighter museum. And I got a zippo! Then a dinner that night with the committee. After dinner I gave a talk to more than 100 people who'd braved the downpours to come out.

They made me feel so welcome and so comfortable. Like being in a room filled with brothers and sisters.

The rest of the month, for the most part, has been spent writing.

But, in the middle of writing, our friend Susan came for a long weekend and made us, among other things, posset. Have you ever had it? I mentioned on my blog that if Heaven had a scent, it would smell (in my mind) like lilacs after a spring rain. And peony. And if we could eat heaven, it would taste like posset.

It's an old English dessert, I believe. A lemony creamy pudding (I can hear Susan shrieking that it isn't a pudding - but I can't think how else to describe it).

Lemon Posset - recipe

Better yet - I'll give you a recipe. My sister-in-law, Carol (Michael's sister), who lives in London, read the blog and sent this:

Lemon Posset

Serves: 4 / 6 Ramekins (possibly up to 8)

500ml double cream, (I use the 600ml with just the same amount of sugar)

125g caster sugar

Zest of 1 lemon

Juice of 3 lemons

Candied lemon zest and shortbread (optional) -- (Zest all the fruit to make the crispy!)

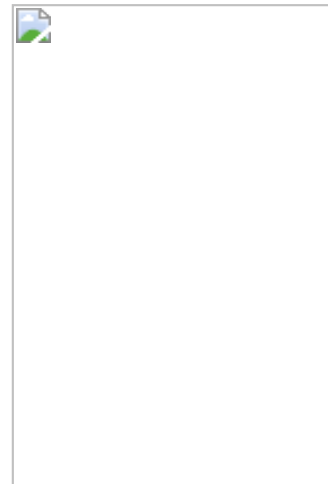
Put the cream, sugar and zest from one half of one lemon in a medium pan over a low heat. Bring to a simmer without boiling, and cook for 3 minutes. Stir to avoid sticking. Add the lemon juice and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 7 - 8 minutes. Stir continually so that it doesn't stick and you will 'feel' it thickening.

Allow the mixture to cool slightly before pouring into ramekins. When cold, cover with cling film, to protect the colour, and leave to set in



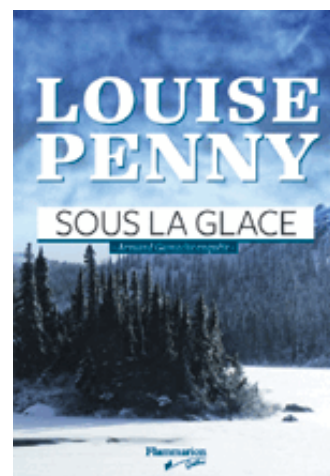
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Sous La Glace A Fatal Grace / Dead Cold



the fridge for two to three hours, or overnight. To serve, garnish with candied lemon zest and some shortbread or crisp biscuits on the side.

This is a fabulous summer dessert.

June events

June is a fairly quiet month. I really must finish the first draft early in June. So that's a priority. Then I set it aside for a few weeks, so that I can have some distance from it. Then I begin to edit.

On June second Michael and I have a special event to celebrate. Brother Charles, who was so kind when we visited the nearby monastery of Saint-Benoit-du-lac to research the book I'm writing, is going to take his final vows. And, lovely man, he's invited us. So we'll be returning to the Benedictine monastery for that.

On June 17th I'll be going to the Cowansville penitentiary to meet with inmates and talk about reading and writing.

On June 19th one of the top travel writers in Canada, Joanne Sasvari, will be coming from Vancouver to spend the day with me and tour locations in Quebec's Eastern townships that have inspired the books. I plan to take her to some stores and restaurants in Sutton and Knowlton. To Georgeville. To the monastery of Saint-Benoit-du-lac, where I hope she'll also meet Brother Charles. And then on to Manoir Hovey. She'll stay the night and I'll simply join her for dinner, then drive home. A fun and full day.

After that, I'll fly down to Universal Studios Orlando to help our friend Bethany celebrate her 16th birthday.

Michael and I end the month with our own celebrations. Back to Hovey, where we were married, to celebrate our 15th wedding anniversary.

Funny, it feels at once much longer than that - as though we've always been together - and much shorter. Part of me can't believe it's already 15 years.

Time is such a funny thing, isn't it?

Well, I've taken enough of yours. I wish you a safe, healthy, happy June. Feel free to join me on [Facebook](#), and follow along on the [blog](#). All posset, all the time. (If only that was true).

Be well, my friends.

Louise

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