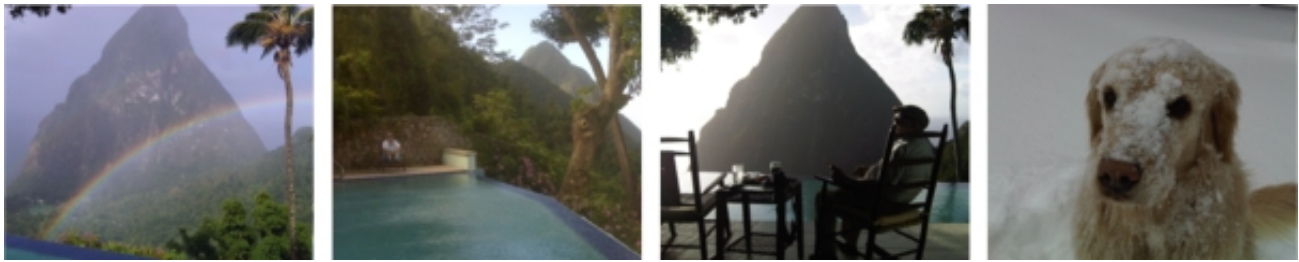


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Louise Penny's March Newsletter

Dear First name

"Without leaps of imagination, or dreaming, we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming, after all, is a form of planning."
- **Gloria Steinem**

What a time we've had in February! You just never know what will happen when you wake up in the morning, do you? Thank heaven, really.

Everyone has recovered just fine (except our car, which is still in 'hospital') after last month's accident. Thank you for all your kind wishes.

London Times Book of the Week

We've just heard that BURY YOUR DEAD has been chosen, just this past weekend, as the London Times Book of the Week! When Dan Mallory, my editor at Little, Brown called to tell me I shrieked and jumped up and down, and hugged Michael - then picked the phone back up and asked -

'What does that mean?'

Clearly, it was good news - but how good?

Now, there are no guarantees, of course, but it means that Bury Your Dead will probably get into more hands in the UK than all my other books combined. How thrilling is that? WH Smith, one of the huge chains in Britain, co-sponsors the Book of the Week - which means they put it in the window, and give a special price, and do all they can to get people to pick it up.

This sort of event would be exciting for me anywhere in the world, but for it to happen in Britain is even more special. I was raised on British mysteries, as you can probably tell. I make no secret of the fact writers like Christie, Tey, Sayers, Innes are my literary godparents.

And I happen, along with Michael, to adore London.

So to be chosen by the London Times as its Book of the Week is beyond a dream. It's the sort of fantasy I had lying in the bathtub, looking at the snow falling out the window - before I'd even written the first book. Closing my eyes and summoning the wildest of dreams.

And now so many have come true. I wish we could be in London this week - and walk into WH Smith - and see Bury Your Dead in the window. See it promoted. Maybe even see people buying it.

Bury your Dead US Edition



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But the next best thing is imagining all that happening.

Wow.

Bury Your Dead - Nominated for Agatha award

And we had other great news for Bury Your Dead! It has been nominated for an Agatha Award for Best Mystery in the US! Here's a list (in alphabetical order) of the nominees for Best Novel -

STORK RAVING MAD by Donna Andrews (Minotaur)?

BURY YOUR DEAD by Louise Penny (Minotaur)?

THE SCENT OF RAIN AND LIGHTNING by Nancy Pickard (Ballantine)

DRIVE TIME by Hank Phillippi Ryan (Mira)?

TRULY, MADLY by Heather Webber (St. Martin's Paperbacks)

Bury Your Dead - Nominated for Barry award

Bury Your Dead has also been nominated for the Barry Award for Best Crime Novel in the United States! Here's a list of nominees for the Barry -

NOWHERE TO RUN, C. J. Box (Putnam)

CROOKED LETTER, CROOKED LETTER, Tom Franklin (Morrow)

THE LOCK ARTIST, Steve Hamilton (Minotaur)

MOONLIGHT MILE, Dennis Lehane (Morrow)

BURY YOUR DEAD, Louise Penny (Minotaur)

SAVAGES, Don Winslow (Simon & Schuster)

Quite different lists, no? Always fascinating to see how different awards recognize different sorts of books. Happily, I think you can be guaranteed they're all terrific.

Sweet Dreams

On the personal front, Michael and I have been dreaming about, talking about, fantasizing about our holiday in Saint Lucia for a year. I'm not kidding. A year ago we stayed at a Sandals in Saint Lucia for two weeks (our first Caribbean vacation) and loved it. But found it just a little too crowded. I think normally it wouldn't seem that way, but after an active time touring through the fall, and the Christmas season of socializing, we just wanted to say hello to food. And sand. And swimming.

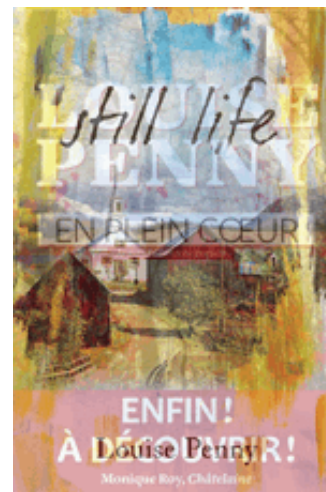
I actually like other people - but reach a stage where enough is enough. I long for solitude. I don't want to hear anyone else talk. I certainly don't want to hear myself talk. Or think. I don't want to eavesdrop on conversations on the lounge chairs next to us. Or smell their cigar or cigarette smoke. Or listen to their music. Or even know they're there and might start talking at any moment. Like verbal time-bombs.

I want a fun book in my hands and the cone of silence around me. And Michael inside the cone. Lucky boy.

And warmth.

So I searched for luxury (a word I learned to spell early in life, in case the wildest dreams came true) private villas in Saint Lucia. And found a perfect one. It's called [La Fleur des Pitons](#), and is actually

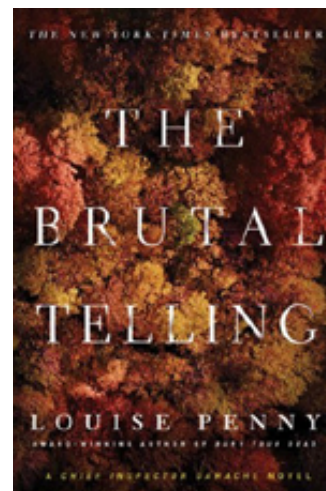
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right between the world famous Gros and Petit Pitons on the island. With, as you can see from their website, the most magnificent view of the sea. And the Petit Pitons.

So a year ago we made arrangements to rent it for two weeks this past February.

As it got closer I became more and more excited. You know, that six year old child at Christmas excited. I'd go to the website everyday and imagine, sitting on that patio, beside the infinity pool, looking at the Pitons and the sea. Wearing something very, very light. I'd also fantasize about wearing a bikini. And looking great. Why not?

Finally, the big day came. We drove to Burlington, Vermont because we love to fly from that small airport - and we love to fly jetBlue. 6am flight (as much fun as you think it was) to New York City - then 9am flight to Saint Lucia. By 2:30 the plane was landing...zooming over the blue water, over palm trees.

Divine.

We got to the villa - and it was all we dreamed of and more. A private chef was preparing nibbles for before dinner, to eat by the pool, and a meal of locally caught mahi mahi. We quickly changed and sat by the pool - and had that moment.

You know, that moment. Not ah ha. But ahhhh. All the work, the tensions, the stress, the disappointments, the efforts, the joys, the events, the losses, the happiness. All led up to this.

You can see Michael above, sitting in the golden late afternoon sunlight. Where he deserves to be.

That's the view from the living room.



This is the view from our bedroom - where we had coffee every morning. Those are not natural wonders, they're my Petit Feet. (actually, they'd be considered Gros Feet). But happy feet either way.

Except...

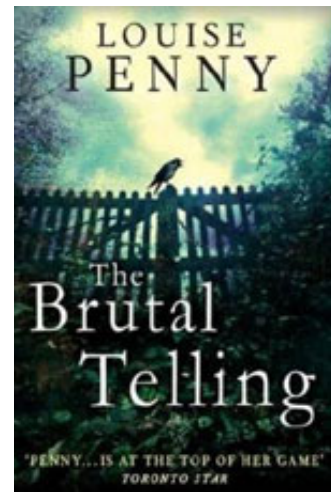
And some of you, who follow the blog, know the rest of the story.

The wind. And the rain.

Not perhaps as bad as people smoking and blasting music beside our beach chairs - but disconcerting. And unexpected.

I have to say, if it was just the rain and the fact it was unseasonably cool (I was in a sweater most of the time - which I hadn't foreseen, even in my wildest dream) we would have been fine. The villa was magnificent. And private. The view, as you see, was heart-stopping. One of the great views of the world, in my opinion. It never failed to stop us, gape-mouthed, in our tracks. We literally stared at it, silent, for hours at a time. And since we just wanted peace and quiet, rain wasn't a big issue. And though chilly, it was certainly far warmer than Quebec in February.

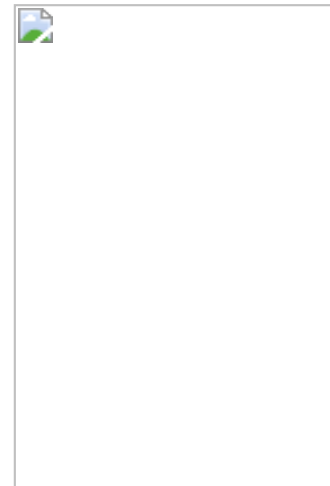
What got us was something I'd never have expected. It was the wind.



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**Cruelest Month
US edition**

Not a gentle and refreshing Caribbean breeze - it was a howl. A near constant tumult. A roar. I'm not kidding. There were times at night, after we'd closed the shutters, when we could barely talk - and we certainly couldn't hear ourselves think.

And sleeping was near impossible. The problem was the wind, yes - but also the Caribbean house design, which is normally fabulous. There are not many windows. Instead, there are wooden shutters - with slats. To let the breeze through. But if the breeze is a mighty wind it literally howls through the slats.

This, I hasten to say, is extremely unusual. Normally that area gets what you want. Warmth and enough of a breeze to make the heat comfortable. But no more.

After a couple days of this, as I lay sleepless in bed, I snuck up, tiptoed down the hall to the living room, and turned on the laptop - checking return flights. There was a jetBlue flight we could get on in two days time.

I tiptoed back to bed and lay there, looking at the magnificent cathedralled ceiling. And listening to the roar of the wind. Not quite believing what I was about to do. Or how to do it.

Finally I poked Michael in the side.

'Honey...' I whispered. 'Oh, honey.'

He turned to look at me. This either meant my water had broken (but since I wasn't pregnant it seemed unlikely), the house was on fire (but since I wasn't screaming it was equally unlikely), or some Lucille Ball idea had occurred to me at 3 am.

His face showed which one he suspected.

'Yes?'

'Are you sleeping alright?'

Pause. 'I was.'

'I'm just sort of, um, well, wondering -,' I stammered.

Michael had the 'just out with it, Lucille' look.

'- I can't sleep. In fact, I can't think. I'm sorry, but the wind is just too much.'

He got up on one elbow and looked at me. 'What are you suggesting?'

'I want to go home.'

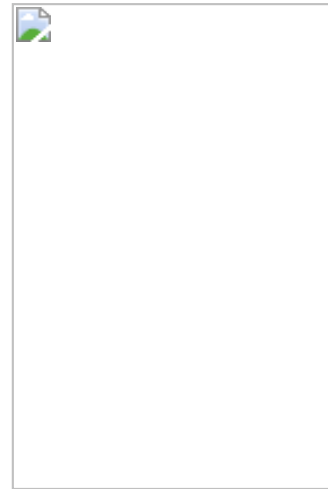
Now, this wasn't the first time the poor man had heard this. You might remember a few years ago we were vacationing in Paris, right after my book tour ended, and I realized I was too exhausted for Paris. So we flew home.

Michael paused, smiled, and said, 'Then so do I.'

We got on the laptop and booked the return flight right away. And then prayed the bad weather would get worse, justifying our decision.

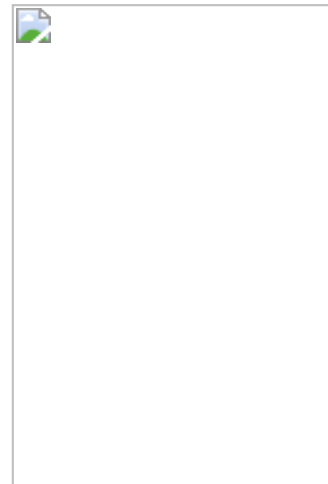
It didn't get worse, but it didn't improve either - and by the time we got on the plane, after 4 days in Saint Lucia, we were both craving peace. And quiet. And home.

We jetted back and spent the balance of the holiday in our Montreal



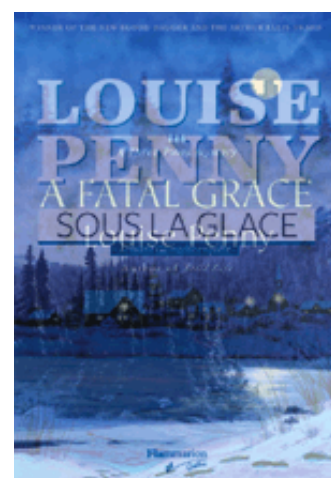
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Sous La Glace
A Fatal Grace
 / **Dead Cold**



apartment, renting crappy movies, ordering pizza, walking the streets, reading - staring at the city. And feeling the cares and stresses slip away.

That villa was magnificent. I'd recommend it to anyone. In fact, we invited some friends to go down and stay there in our stead, which they did. And loved it. Were completely blown away by it (fortunately not literally).

But we were just happy to be home.

Though, I have to say, on our first day in Saint Lucia we got the news that Bury Your Dead had been nominated for the Barry Award. On the second day we got the news that it had been nominated for the Agatha Award. And we both thought, maybe we should stay and see what other wild dream the wild wind blew our way.

But I think our friends were meant to be there - and we were meant to be in Montreal.

New book

This, being March 1st, is also an exciting day for me.

I start writing the next book. The eighth Gamache mystery. The one set in the monastery. It's wonderful to be back in the company of the monks. But mostly, it is such a pleasure to be back in the company of Chief Inspector Gamache et al.

If you'd like to follow the process, feel free to [friend me on facebook](#), or follow my [blog](#).

Hope you've enjoyed your February. Hope a kindly wind has been blowing your way.

Be well, my friend, and I'll write again in April.
Louise

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