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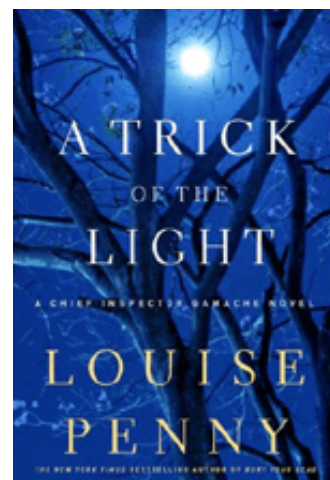
Louise Penny's April Newsletter

"Until he extends his circle of compassion to include all living things, man will not himself find peace."

- **Albert Schweitzer**



A Trick of the Light US / Canada / UK



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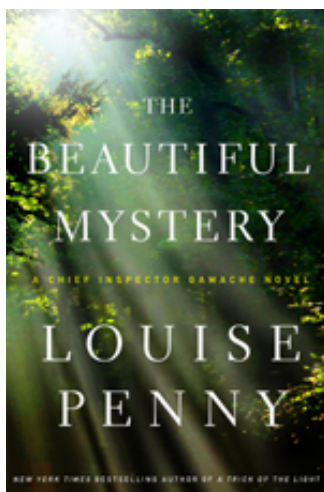
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London

Happy Spring! I'm writing you from London. Michael and I arrived in the UK a few days ago and went straight to the village of Burford. I'd never been to the Cotswolds, and had heard such wonderful things. So we found the Burford House Hotel. Glorious! Just what you'd hope an inn in a charming village would be. Beamed ceilings, eccentric roll to the floors, mullioned windows....and door handles that come to my knees. I feel like a giant! But it's lovely here. We're enjoying Burford so much we've rented a cottage for a month next year. Would love to write part of a book here. What a dream - writing a murder mystery while living in a cottage in the Cotswolds. Amazing good fortune.

We left Burford on Friday and are now in London, for all of April. One of our favorite places on earth.

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY



August 28th 2012

I really want to tell you the big news. We have a cover for the next Gamache novel, THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY! This is the American and Canadian cover. The book itself will be released on August 28th and you can now pre-order either online or at your local bookstore. That way you won't have to wait, if the print run sells out. A TRICK OF THE LIGHT went into four printings within the first two months.

I adore this cover for THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY. Among the things I love are the soft light, the dark corners, the deep forest and the sense of duality. The forest, I find, is both inviting and natural, and foreboding.

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY is set in a remote Quebec monastery, where the monks have taken vows of silence, but sing their prayers, in the form of ancient Gregorian chants. In fact, so glorious are their voices that these cloistered monks have become world famous.

But the thick walls and heavy door have remained closed to the outside world. Until one of the monks is murdered, and Chief Inspector Gamache comes calling. He will be the first 'outsider' in centuries to see the monastery, and hear the monks sing. But he knows that within this contemplative order, one of the brothers has been contemplating murder. And then committed it.

Intertwined in the murder is the music. Chants so astonishing in their simplicity, in their power to move, that they've become known as 'the beautiful mystery'. Gamache realizes that to solve one mystery, he must solve the other.

I hope you like this book. Writing and researching it was a remarkable experience for me.

Advance Readers Copies - GIVEAWAY

As you might know, we've been giving away advance copies, known as ARCs, for THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY. This month's winners have been chosen at random from all the entries, from last month and before.

They are:

Julie, West Hartford, CT

Gwen, Moncton, N.B.

We're giving away two more advance copies this month! If you've already entered, don't worry, you will be in the draw. If you haven't yet entered, just [click here](#) and send an email, with **THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY** in the subject line. The actual ARCs won't be ready for a couple of months, but the winners will get to read the book a few months before everyone else. And, we hope, spread the word. Unless, of course, you don't like the book, in which case... shhhhh.

Good luck!

And please, if I could ask the ongoing favour of you – can you please spread the word about the Gamache books and the series? I know you almost certainly already have, but if you could continue, that would be amazing.

A TRICK OF THE LIGHT wins the Independent Literary Award

We've also heard that A TRICK OF THE LIGHT, book 7 in the Chief Inspector Gamache series, has won the Independent Literary Award for Best Mystery. It's judged by a panel of independent literary bloggers. I am SO pleased.

The Hunger Games

As some of you might know, Chief Inspector Gamache was whisked away for two weeks in March to compete in the CBC Books Canadian literary (CanLit) Hunger Games! He was pitted against 23 other characters from Canadian fiction in a battle to the death. For two weeks the 12 male and 12 female Canadian literary characters hunted and dispatched each other. The survivors each day were determined by reader votes. It came down, on the final day, to three. Joseph Boyden's First World War sniper, Xavier Bird, Anne of Green Gables (the vixen) and yes, our own Armand Gamache! The battle see-sawed. It was hideous and horrendous, and unbelievably enervating, as readers voted and voted to keep their 'tribute' alive. Finally, it was between Anne Shirley (the vixen) and Armand! Now, Anne might be all 'kindred spirits' in the books, but believe me, in the Hunger Games, she was out for blood! She had huge, passionate support from around the world, and especially the great province of

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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

Prince Edward Island. But in the end - Armand prevailed!!! When the Games were over, Chief Inspector Gamache was the last one standing - thanks to your votes.

The next day, Armand issued this statement:

What a horrific experience this has been, trapped and having to combat men and women whom I so admire. Anne Shirley, a favorite of my own daughter Annie. Xavier, who fought so bravely. Flavia and Scott and so many others. I'm keenly aware that the only reason I won was because of the support, the passion, the dedication of so many voters. I could feel them, cheering me on, giving me courage when my own flagged. Alone, I am nothing. This victory belongs to the team. Reine-Marie joins me in saying, thank you, thank you, merci. Vive les lecteurs. Long live reading and readers! And long live Canadian literature!

Armand Gamache, Chief Inspector of Homicide for the Sûreté du Québec.

But now, a week later, it can be revealed, that Armand did not kill Anne of Green Gables. He could not! Unbeknownst to the organizers of the CanLit Hunger Games, Gamache figured out how to save, and smuggle out, Anne and Flavia and a number of others. They're undergoing therapy, as am I.

Honestly, these CanLit Hunger Games were both brilliant and extremely stressful. But I'm so grateful for the amazing support of so many readers, many of whom voted so often they got kicked off the site! (Can't you just hear what Ruth would say about that?)

Charity Chair Auction



Another fun bit of news is that My Assistant Lise (patent pending), Michael and I are involved in a fund raising project for our local village. It's for a space called the Coeur du Village, Salle Alec et Gerard Pelletier. This is a small theatre and performance space, where classes are also held, movies shown, plays performed. It's a way to stimulate and entertain both children and adults.

But it needs support (read: money!) So some locals came up with a wonderful idea. Make and sell chairs, that are both functional and works of art. They asked almost 50 local artists to be involved, including us. The result is: Voila! The Vive Gamache chair. Lise did most of the work, but we all discussed it. It has many of the book covers on the seat (I try not to read any symbolism into that...) and a few quotes from the books on the ribs. I'm FINE. Surprised by Joy. Goodness Exists.

And it's signed by all three of us.

This is one-of-a-kind. We've put it up for auction, and if you'd like to bid on it, [click here](#). It will take you to our site and from here you can bid. The Chair committee will pay to have it shipped to you. And, you can actually sit on it – it's not just for show.

Writing book 9

As those of you who received (and read) the March newsletter know, I started writing Book 9 last month. I cleared the agenda, declined almost all social engagements, and just focused. I also decided, after eight books, perhaps I could finally take it easy. Take my time. Enjoy the process of the first draft more, rather than driving myself.

I wanted to be kinder to myself, as I wrote. So I set the daily word count goal very low. 200 a day to start, building up to 500 a day.

It would take longer to complete the book, but I'd enjoy it more.

Well, wouldn't you know, the first day I wrote more than 1,000 words – the second two thousand words.

I think I don't follow orders well, even (perhaps especially) my own.

But I think what happened was since I cleared the agenda, and vowed to be gentler with myself, I was much more relaxed, and the words came more easily. My first drafts are all real messes, and this is no exception. Big, smelly piles of missteps. But now I'm less afraid of that mess. I know, or believe, that when the final draft is done it'll be something I'll want you to read. As I want you to read **THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY**.

And what fun to be in London now, writing in the morning (well, most) and playing in the afternoon. Next Tuesday Michael and I have breakfast at the Wolseley, then we'll cross Piccadilly to the Royal Academy, to see the David Hockney show, then I'll be having lunch with my agent, Teresa Chris. The next day, lunch with my editor at Little, Brown, Dan Mallory.

Later in the visit I'll be having afternoon tea with Ann Cleeves, a good friend and gifted crime writer, then for Michael's birthday he and I will be going to the Lake District and the Sharrow Bay Hotel.

But I have to say, our favorite thing to do in London is walk. Along the King's Road, and get tulips at the wonderful flower stand. Walk through Hyde Park, then stop in at the Natural History Museum or the Victoria and Albert Museum.

But mostly, Michael and I love to stroll through London, marveling at its beauty. Good thing we like walking and looking so much – can barely afford to do anything else in this glorious city.

So remarkable to feel I'm closing in on what I have so longed for – balance. That equilibrium between my personal life and writing. Finding time for both. I suspect it will be an ongoing struggle, but I do feel it's getting closer.

What an unexpected life.

Thank you for your company on the journey.

Louise

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