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Louise Penny's January Newsletter

*Ring the bells that still can ring,
Forget your perfect offering,
There's a crack in everything,
That's how the light gets in.*
- **Leonard Cohen**

Happy New Year!

And if you're like me (and there's great comfort in knowing I'm far from alone) you too are deeply cracked.

I use that quote from Leonard Cohen's poem/song "Anthem" because I need to keep remembering that sentiment, given some events in my life in 2012 and I suspect in your life over the past year. Given the storms, the losses. The unbearable tragedy of Newtown. Given the diagnoses no one wanted to hear, but had to. Given events that happened, some in slow motion that we could see coming from far off, and those that hit catastrophically out of nowhere.

Given the darkness. And from that, the compassion, the community, the embraces. The calls to action.

26 Acts of Kindness

There's a movement called 26 Acts of Kindness, started by the remarkable Ann Curry. I heard about it. I applauded it. But it took a shocking length of time to realize it was an invitation not to others, but to me too. And so I've started down that lovely, heartbreaking, redemptive road.

One act for every person killed at Sandy Hook school. And remembering not just those children and teachers, but all the innocents who've died violently around the world.

At first I thought I'd do one act a day, then I realized it would quickly become a chore and more about timing than the act. I wanted it to be thoughtful. Intentional. Not a race.

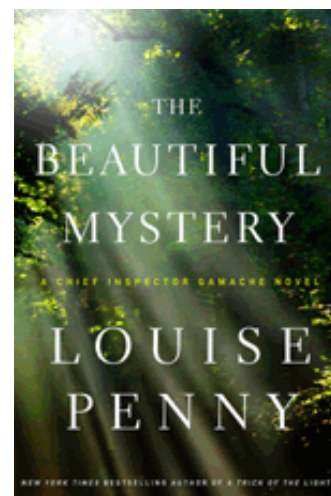
The first act, a few days ago, was a large donation to our local food bank.

Then a sizeable tip to a server at a hotel restaurant.

I'm hoping and planning to expand the acts beyond money and to start giving of my time too. But we'll see. One act at a time. With gratitude. And with sorrow. And with joy. Bittersweet acts of kindness, offered with the humility that comes from having hesitated. But finally the light got in.



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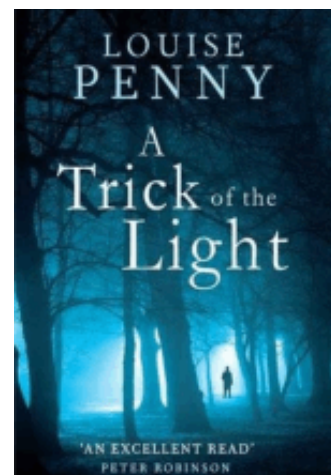
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2012

Despite some natural ups and downs, 2012 was a wonderful year for me. It saw the publication of THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY, the eighth Armand Gamache mystery. The book debuted at #2 on the New York Times list and made bestseller lists internationally. I hate to say its success was a shock - but it was!



A glorious, amazing, dream come true. How often, from the time I was a little girl, did I dream of being a writer? Every day. Indeed, here's a photo of my brothers - little Robbie, little Dougie - and me. It was taken at Christmas (Rob with his new guitar) about the time I started dreaming of being a writer. How amazed that girl would have been had she known what would happen to her in the coming years.

Amazed and relieved.

Yes, a remarkable year. I was on book tour in Houston when the publisher, Andy Martin of Minotaur Books, called with the news that THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY was #2.

I shrieked and will never, ever forget it. Nor will I ever forget that the reason THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY has found its way into so many homes and so many hands, is because of you. Embracing Gamache. Embracing Three Pines. Embracing the series.

Thank you.

Book 9 title

2012 also saw the completion of the next Gamache book. Called, for the longest time, Book 9. But we thought we could do better. After much thought, I realized I needed a title that spoke to not just the one book, but the series. And the themes of the books. Like that wonderful elegy Auden wrote for Herman Melvin:

*Goodness existed, that was the new knowledge.
His terror had to blow itself quite out to let him see it.*

The books, and my life for that matter, have been about terror. But finally, blessedly, about goodness.

And so, book 9 of the Gamache series is called:

HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN - from the Cohen quote.

HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN will be published on August 27th - but you can preorder it now. Not a bad idea, since THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY has gone into 9 printings in just a few months.

I hope you like it. And if you wouldn't mind spreading the word, I'd appreciate it!

STILL LIFE - film

2012 also saw the filming of STILL LIFE. It will be shown on television in Canada on CBC (in French and English) and almost certainly in the US, Britain and internationally. We don't yet have a broadcast date, but I'll let you know as soon as we know.

Nathaniel Parker plays Gamache. I saw a rough cut, over Christmas, and he is brilliant! Oh, such a relief. What a remarkable actor. As you know, I was very, very afraid that neither the filmmakers nor the lead actor would really be able to capture the qualities of the Chief Inspector. But Nathaniel Parker has. I think you will be very pleased. I watched it 4 times....the first time with my hands splayed over

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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

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY

my eyes, watching through the cracks. But I slowly lowered my hands when I realized there was no reason for terror. It was good. Indeed, it was very good. Nathaniel Parker's Gamache and Anthony Lemke's Beauvoir are wonderful. Apart they're superb, but in their scenes together they're astonishing. Absolutely amazing chemistry.

youtube fun

On a completely unrelated topic, I know I'm late to this party, but after seeing excerpts and parodies, I finally in the last few days of 2012 watched the original video for Psy doing 'Gangnam Style'. Now, there's a beautiful mystery! Oh, dear Lord, it's hilarious! [Here's the link](#), in case you haven't yet indulged. I keep watching it, because it makes me smile.

But I think my favorite music video discovery of the year is from McGill University's Faculty of Medicine - made to raise awareness of cancer research. It also makes me smile. And since Michael was a professor of medicine at McGill, we know all the professors. Such fun! [Here's the link](#).

January Events

There're a few things happening in January, but for the most part I'm trying to take some time off. But I need to tell you that on January 2nd I'll be a guest on the Vermont Public Radio (VPR) show Vermont Edition - live. Taking your calls. I suspect if you go to the [VPR website](#) you can stream it live, and even call in. Love to hear from you. It will be from noon to 12:45.

Then I'll be in Quebec City for the launch of ENTERREZ VOS MORTS - the French version of BURY YOUR DEAD. That's on January 17th. My Assistant Lise is coming with me, as is the Quebec publisher, Louise Loiselle of Flammarion Quebec.

Another fun thing is that we'll be meeting with a company that organizes walking tours of Quebec City. They approached us about creating a Bury Your Dead tour (not sure they'll call it that....) - But a Gamache tour based on the book and going to all the sites and bistros and bars mentioned. We'll see. It's very important to me that if I endorse something it is terrific. I'd hate for you to take the tour and it be a waste of your time and money. I'll let you know how it goes.

Then, on January 31st, I'll be in Oakville, Ontario. The Ontario Library Association has very kindly asked if I'd speak at their annual general meeting. I, of course, asked what was for lunch. Then said yes. Actually - I could not agree fast enough. Like most authors, I'm keenly aware of how important librarians are (so much so I made Reine-Marie Gamache one), but also what a critical role they've played in my success. It's a chance to thank them (and have a nice lunch...)

Facebook

I also want to mention that while the blog is more or less dormant, I do a mini-blog on Facebook everyday. Now, I know you might not be a fan of Facebook, but the good news is, thanks to Linda Lyall who manages my website, you can go to the [louisepenny.com homepage](#), find the link to Facebook, and read the daily posts without actually joining Facebook. It would be fun if you could join us.

I hope 2012 was kind to you and that 2013 will be kinder still. I hope I was kind in 2012. And I hope, in 2013, to be kinder still.

Bonne Année. Happy New Year. And thank you - Gamache Style!

Louise

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