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## Louise Penny's July Newsletter



*"We read to know that we are not alone."*  
- CS Lewis

### Solace in Books

I've always loved that quote from CS Lewis. As a lonely child who found solace and friends in books, I immediately understood it. But the older I get the more facets I see. The kindred spirits we meet when we find someone who shares our taste in books. The wonderful conversations reading sparks. The characters we discover who have the same habits, fears, insecurities, needs and passions.

What a relief.

### Flood crisis in Canada

But then there's another layer. One I hope those of you reading this in Southern Alberta will feel. I, along with millions of others around the world, have been watching the flooding in Alberta with horror. In High River, in Siksika, in so many other communities - and of course, in Calgary. The images are so shocking - I cannot begin to imagine how unbelievable it must be for those of you who actually experienced it. Most of downtown Calgary flooded and evacuated. Four deaths (thank God not more). Thousands of homes destroyed. The premier of Alberta warning it could take ten years to recover. And billions and billions of dollars in damage.

And through it all, what did Albertans do? They helped each other escape. They gave food and water and clothing and shelter. Money and time. They helped each other recover. And it continues. And the need will continue for a long time to come.

If you'd like to help, there are many organizations rising money and collecting goods. We happen to donate to the Salvation Army and the Canadian Red Cross, both of which have set up special funds. Here's the link to the one for the Red Cross.

[Canadian red Cross - Alberta flood relief donations.](#)

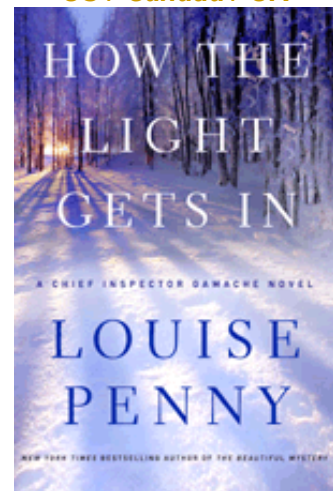
I hope you Albertans know, you are not alone.

It was disconcerting to be so far away, in London, England, while all that was happening. In much happier news, I'm having a wonderful time in London. Honestly, who wouldn't?

### HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN - Starred reviews

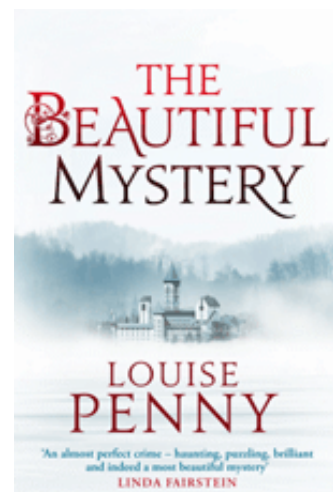
But before I tell you about some of our adventures, I have some

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book news. As you know, HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN (book 9) will be published in the US and Canada on August 27th.

Before that happens, there are four crucial pre-publication journals that we hope to get reviews in. And...hope to have favorable reviews. And, dare we go this far, hope against hope for a starred review (which indicated an extraordinary book).

Well, all four have reviewed HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN, and all four gave it starred reviews. This is almost unheard of - and you can imagine how happy, how ecstatic, I am! Here are excerpts:

#### Kirkus

★ *....luminous insights into trust and friendship, that will hook readers and keep them hooked.*

#### Booklist

★ *Penny has always used setting to support theme brilliantly, but here she outdoes herself, contrasting light and dark, innocence and experience, goodness and evil both in the emotional lives of her characters and in the way those characters leave their footprints on the landscape. Another bravura performance from an author who has reinvented the village mystery as profoundly as Dashiell Hammett transformed the detective novel.*

#### Publisher's Weekly

★ *Complex characterizations...subtle plotting...masterful...unfolds with subtlety and intelligence. Once again, Penny impressively balances personal courage and faith with heartbreaking choices and monstrous evil.*

#### Library Journal

★ *Penny's mysteries are really character studies. There is police procedure being followed, but the forensics take second place to Gamache's absolutely fascinating probe into the characters of every single person involved in the investigation: the police, the witnesses, and especially the suspects. He cares passionately about each person and makes the reader care. Highly recommended.*

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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

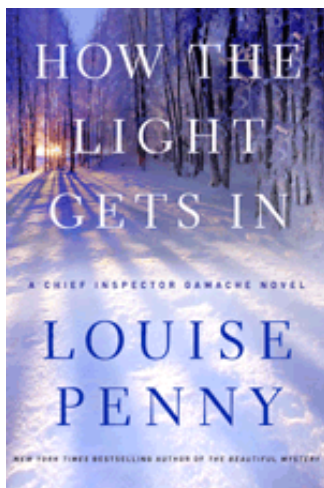
BURY YOUR DEAD

A TRICK OF THE LIGHT

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY

HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN

## HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN - Read the book excerpt



As we press forward to publication date, things are getting more and more exciting. And, I hope adding to that excitement, I have an excerpt from HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN to share with you. It's the first two chapters.

If you'd like to read them, [just click here.](#)

## Advance Reader copies - June winners

But, ten lucky readers of the newsletter have won the entire book - in advance copy. This past month was the final giveaway, with winners selected at random (My Assistant Lise assures me, from her yacht in the Mediterranean. Hey...wait a minute...)

This month's winners of HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN are:

***Amanda, Monmouthshire, UK***

***Shirley, Calgary, AB***

***Patricia, Palm Coast, FL***

***Nina, Kalispell, MT***

***Mary, Portland, OR***

***Jennifer, Lakewood, OH***

***Judith, Tasmania, Australia***

***Samie, Collierville, TN***

***Daune, Danbury, NH***

***Beverly, Sherbrooke, Qc***

I know you have championed the series for a long time, and I also know the success of the books are down to that. To you. No happy word-of-mouth, no writing career. No Gamache et al. Thank you, from the bottom on my heart! And please, please, keep blabbing about the books! I need your help to get the word out.

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## July Events

In other book news - **THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY is being published in paperback this month in the US (July 2nd) and the UK (July 4th).** [Click here to read an excerpt of the book.](#)

And, since I'm in the UK, I'll be doing a few events to promote it, including one at Goldsboro books on July 4th between 6:30pm and 9:30pm They're just off Charing Cross Road, and the event is the fabulous Crime in the Court. A whole slew (slain?) of crime writers will be there including some of my personal favorites, Mark Billingham, David Hewson, Nicco French. And others. And me! It would be wonderful to see you there. [Just click here for more information.](#)

On July 16th I'll be at the Rainham Library, in Essex, as part of their mini-festival of writing. I'll be sharing a stage with the wonderful Australian thriller writer, Michael Robotham at 7pm. It's a ticketed event, and to get tickets just email: [rainham.library@haverling.gov.uk](mailto:rainham.library@haverling.gov.uk)

The next day I'll be traveling to Harrogate for the crime writers festival. Harrogate is in Yorkshire, and in the last newsletter I described it as a sleepy little village and a reader quite rightly (and politely) corrected me. It is neither sleepy nor little. Indeed, people who know it well say it is thriving and extraordinarily beautiful.

Hope to see you there between July 18th and Sunday, July 21st. For more information, [here's the link.](#)

I'll tell you all about the events in the August newsletter. (there, yet another reason to live. You're welcome).

## HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN - Book Tour

We now have this years book tour event dates for you to see if there is an event near your area, [click here to visit my website](#) for a full breakdown of all the tour events.

If you'd like to follow me now, or during the book tour, or both, I do daily posts on [Facebook](#). Love to see you there.

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## London

Am having the most wonderful time in London. We've rented a flat in Chelsea. You can see the sunset view from the apartment (pictured at the top of the newsletter). Weather's been a bit mixed (send sun) and it is just about the most expensive place on earth (send money), but you know, many of the most wonderful things to do here are free, or almost free.

The Chelsea Physic Garden, as you see by the picture above, is a treasure. We took a free tour (had to pay a little for admission to the garden, of course) and had lunch in the café - one of the top 50 restaurants in London). Blissful. Tranquil, as you can tell by the photo. It's this small, walled garden, established in 1673 by the Society of Apothecaries, to grow the medicinal plants their members collected from all over the world. And the plants are still there, added to all the time. They have plenty of wooden benches, well aged, scattered around, to sit and admire, in peace.

We also hopped on the #11 bus and rode it from end to end...past St Paul's Cathedral, the Nelson's Column, Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, Sloane Square, The King's Road. Cheapest sight seeing bus around.

My friend Ayo gave me a behind the scenes private tour of the Supreme Court, and we lunched at Westminster Abbey. My agent Teresa and I had lunch at the Saatchi Gallery, sitting outside watching the children from Hill House play on the field.

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## Eau de Gamache

Michael and I lunched at Wilton's on Jermyn Street before going down the road to Floris. There we had an appointment with Shelagh Foyle, a perfumer at the oldest perfume shop in the UK. It's been in the same place for more than 300 years. A tiny shop right out of Harry Potter (pictured at the top of the newsletter). Shelagh works in the backroom, surrounded by vials and bottles with glass stoppers, and very old, yellowed, books. She has a laptop on her desk but writes everything down in a large register. She used a ballpoint pen, but I suspect there was a quill pen in her mahogany desk.

What she was making note of, for future reference, were the ingredients for Eau de Gamache - a cologne created uniquely for the character.

This was absolutely thrilling. I'd visited in November and talked about it with her. Shelagh read STILL LIFE and discussed it, and Gamache, with me. And then she started brewing, mailing me samples to Quebec, to sniff and try out. It was increasingly difficult to give her notes, since the last few were so close, but not quite... But what was missing? What was off?

Finally, we met again face to face, and spent an hour, concocting. It needed, she knew, to be masculine (sandalwood), without being astringent, as many colognes can be. It needed a hint of floral (rosewater) but not so much as to make it sweet or feminine. It needed to be the sort of scent I would follow for a few paces. The sort of cologne I would want to bury my nose into, in his shoulder (and hope Reine-Marie didn't appear). It needed to be earthy, warm, inviting, fresh.

And finally, she got it. Eau de Gamache was born.

The only downside is that if London is one of the most expensive cities on earth, Floris itself can hardly be described as cheap. Add on the fact each bottle needs to be mixed by hand, and then the ruinous shipping costs internationally, and you're looking at having to get another paper route.

But - the good news is, for those of you who want to investigate it, you can email Shelagh and get more information:

[fragrance@florislondon.com](mailto:fragrance@florislondon.com) **And please put Eau de Gamache on the subject line.**

I'm hoping to bring a few back to Canada, and when HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN is launched, I hope to offer one to you, as a giveaway. Assuming Michael gets that second paper route.

Hope you continue to enjoy your summer. And I hope those of you in southern Alberta continue to recover - with help from your friends. You are not alone.

With warm embraces,

Louise



**Louise Penny on Facebook**

**E-mail:** [contact@louispenny.com](mailto:contact@louispenny.com)  
**official website**