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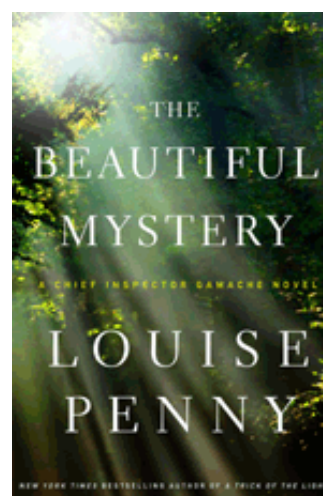
Louise Penny's March Newsletter

Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.

- Martin Luther King Jr.



The Beautiful Mystery US / Canada / UK



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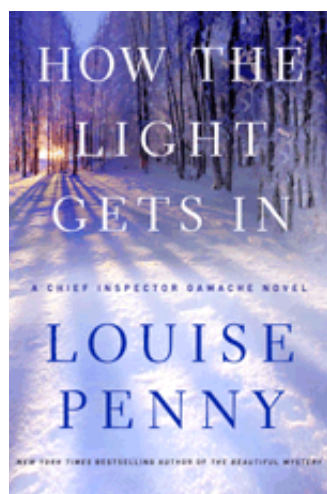
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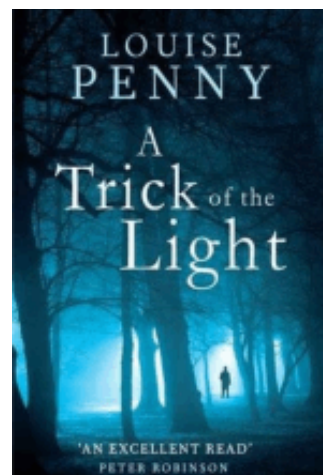
Once you read the book, you might recognize that the plot and themes resonate in this cover. Obviously, I won't go into that now. That's a discussion for after the book is out.

A cover is always so critical. If done well, it isn't so much a template of the book, but a suggestion of the themes. A great cover captures the feeling, the nuances, the ideas, the spirit of a book. David Rotstein, the head designer of Minotaur Books/St Martin's Press, worked hard to reflect the essence of HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN, while not hitting you over the head with it. Is this a sunset or a sunrise? Is the forest encroaching, or are we in the clear?

I will say no more, but let the cover whisper to you.

We had fun revealing the cover on my Facebook page over the course of the past five days. Showing a little at a time - [here's the link to Facebook](#), if you'd like to check it out. (You don't need to join to see it).

A Trick of the Light US / Canada / UK



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If you'd like to pre-order HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN, just [click here](#). It's now available for pre-order at your local bookstores and online. It's rarely a bad idea to pre-order, especially since book 8, THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY, quickly sold out and eventually went into 9 printing. I'd hate for you to have to wait - it would kill me!

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THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY - nominated for the Agatha Award

And, speaking of THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY, we've had some wonderful news. It has been nominated for the Agatha Award for Best Mystery in the US! It's a very strong field - and congratulations to all the nominees, many of whom are close friends of mine. Makes it even more fun and meaningful. Here's the Best Novel category:

The Diva Digs Up the Dirt	by Krista Davis
A Fatal Winter	by G.M. Malliet
The Buzzard Table	by Margaret Maron
The Beautiful Mystery	by Louise Penny
The Other Woman	by Hank Phillippi Ryan

The winners will be announced at the terrific mystery readers/writers convention called MALICE DOMESTIC, in Bethesda, Maryland, at the beginning of May. I'll be there, and would love to see you.

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

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY - nominated for the Audie Award

As though the Agatha nomination wasn't exciting enough, we have more great news. I know many of you listen to Ralph Cosham reading the books. Well, Ralph and THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY have the great honour of being nominated for the Audie Award for Best Spoken Word Crime Novel in the US! This is a huge award, the audio book equivalent of the Oscars. It's presented by the Audio Publishers Association in the US, and will be awarded at the end of May in New York City. I'll be there for that as well - applauding whoever wins (but rooting for Ralph!)

Here's the complete list of nominees in that category:

Hush Money by Chuck Greaves	(narrated by Dan Butler), AudioGo
The Good Thief's Guide to Vegas	by Chris Ewan (narrated by Simon Vance), AudioGo
And When She Was Good	by Laura Lippman (narrated by Linda Emond), Macmillan Audio
The Beautiful Mystery	by Louise Penny (narrated by Ralph Cosham), Macmillan Audio
The Nightmare	by Lars Kepler (narrated by Mark Bramhall), Macmillan Audio

Congratulations to everyone - should be an amazing evening.

Bringing a book to the shelves

February was both quiet and eventful for me. No traveling (which I must confess was nice - made it relaxing. Flying or driving in winter is never without some stress in Quebec) but quite a bit of work at home. There were plenty of discussion as the cover for HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN evolved - and the line edits arrived. That's the stage in the publishing process when the actual writing is finished - and this is about accuracy in details, grammar, continuity. I find this stage quite difficult because I'm not a naturally detailed person. I love order, but prefer if others look after the details.

Sadly, with a line edit, no one but me can go over it. The manuscript arrives in paper form because the editor has all sorts of hieroglyphics - purple squiggles - that can't be communicated in an electronic file. Besides, I prefer a paper copy at this stage. I sit with a café au lait in front of the fire, and go through the pages, one by one, noting her queries, and either agreeing or disagreeing with them.

The amount of work in bringing a book to the shelves, the dedication of so many people, continues to amaze and impress me. It starts with the author, but then it gets handed over to editors, artists, publicists, publishers, line editors. All trying so hard to make this book something we can all stand behind and say - 'I did this'.

These books are my offspring - my only creations. My hope is that they'll outlive me. The Gamache books are almost certainly not perfect - but they're definitely the very best I can do. The best the whole team can do.

There's comfort in that.

And now we get closer and closer to the moment HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN gets into your hands.

Please spread the word, as you have for all the Gamache books. I know how you've championed them. Pressed them into the hands of friends and family. Told perfect strangers in the bookstore about them. Blogged, tweeted, posted on Facebook and other social media about Gamache et al. And I'd so appreciate it if you could continue.

I'm deeply grateful....feels like we're marching shoulder to shoulder toward August 27th. The start line, not the finish. Very exciting (and, I must admit, sometimes so stressful I can feel my stomach ache.)

March in New York

March is shaping up to be slightly more active than February. I'm going to New York City for a photo shoot with the great Sigrid Estrada. Will try to get the jam out of my hair. She asked me to have a manicure before the shoot in case my hands appeared in the photo (brushing croissant flakes from my frock) and I had to explain that a manicure would not help since I have the worst nails this side of the river Jordan. All gnawed.

She met that statement with silence. I immediately put a finger in my mouth.

This might prove a long day.

I'll also be having lunch with some senior magazine editors - then flying home for a simply wonderful evening on March 23rd. The Yamaska Valley Optimists are holding their annual Women of Influence evening, and they asked if I'd agree to be one of the local women celebrated, along with Emma Stevens and Sylvie Beauregard. As you can imagine, being nominated for literary awards is thrilling and always surprising - and very moving. But to be recognized by friends and neighbours is special beyond words.

And since it's the day I fly back from New York City, my nails might even be done. Though that would make me almost unrecognizable.

Some of you have wondered if My Assistant Lise actually exists, since she seems too good to be true. Well, here, finally, is photographic evidence (top right). She's trying to hide behind the astonishing hooked rug she made. It's designed from our garden. Lise, among other things, is a master gardener. And hooker. (there, I said it!).

Hope this finds you thriving and well, healthy and happy

With light and love,

Louise

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