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Louise Penny's December Newsletter

"He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree." - **Roy L. Smith**

Christmas

Merry Christmas! Yes, I know – it's only December 1st, but I won't be speaking with you until after the holidays, so I wanted to say this right off. Happy Holidays!

I love Christmas – though I have to admit being a little overwhelmed by all the organizing that goes into it. Buying and wrapping gifts, cards, making sure all the wonderful people who have helped us get properly thanked. And then there's the decorating!

I can feel quite stressed – and every year I pledge to cut back – then bail out and do all the things we did last year! But, having said that, the fact is, our Christmases are much more relaxed. Michael and I give each other almost no gifts...books, magazines, some soaps, a CD or DVD perhaps. Small things we know the other would love.

I have two favorite parts of Christmas day: Lying on the sofa in front of the fireplace, smelling the turkey in the oven, and reading. Perhaps nibbling on chocolates or licorice allsorts.

And pulling the Christmas crackers....and looking at the people I love around the table.

It isn't gifts anymore.

Leading up to Christmas, I just love the decorations and the tree – and the food....but mostly, I think, the music. This year Michael and I are joining our friends Bal and Linda and Bethany Mount, and going to Ottawa in mid-December to hear our mutual friend Trevor Pinnock perform and conduct the Messiah. Since we're friends of the star we get a special box, overlooking the stage.

We're so excited we can hardly talk about it without giggling.

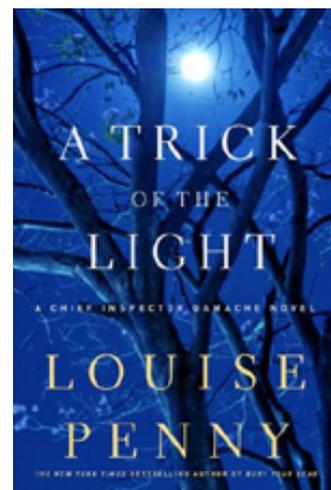
My brother Doug is coming for Christmas, then Michael's children Mike and Victor are arriving on Boxing Day.

Renovations complete

It will be such fun to show them all the renovations! We are beyond thrilled about how everything turned out. Took three months, and huge effort on the part of Bob Ray, our

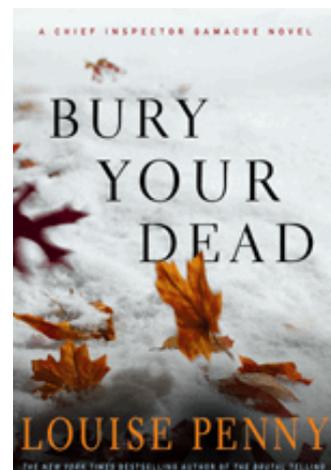


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construction manager and Mike and Gary and Maurice and all the other workers. But we're finally in!

Thank you for virtually holding our hands as we trudged through it. The big blow was when we realized we had to re-do the entire roof – of our main home and the cottage. Ugh. But had to be done.



And now can hardly wait for life to settle down a bit. We're planning to lock the door, close the curtains, unplug the phone, and become hermits for January and February. Then start writing the new book in March.

But, I'm getting a head of myself.

Amazon - great news for A Trick of the Light

We have had great news for A TRICK OF THE LIGHT! Both Amazon.com and Amazon.ca have named it among the Best Books of 2011 – and in the top 10 Crime Fiction books of the year! It has also made Publisher's Weekly list of Best Mysteries of 2011!

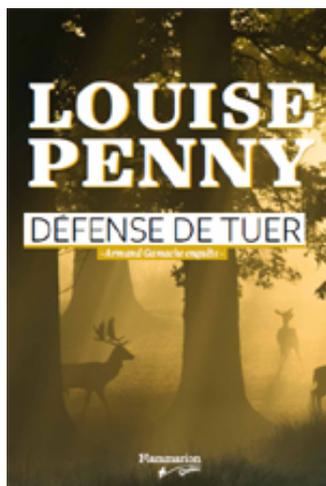
Bury Your Dead - nominated for the Nero Award

And the honours for BURY YOUR DEAD haven't ended. Michael and I are in New York City today (December 1st) because Bury Your Dead has been nominated for the prestigious Nero Award, for literary excellence in crime fiction. The winner will be announced this Saturday at a Gala in Manhattan.

Such an amazing experience – to come to New York, where one of my books is up for an award. Ten years ago I couldn't imagine writing such a sentence – and having it actually true.

January launch - Defense de tuer

In other exciting news, the fourth book will be published by Flammarion Quebec in French in Canada in early January. You can pre-order it from Amazon.ca. It's called Defense de tuer (The Murder Stone/A Rule Against Murder in English). I'm thrilled about this, since it means my friends and neighbours can continue to follow the investigations of Chief Inspector Gamache. I love the cover too!



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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

Rain gear giveaway

In my last Newsletter – for November – I mentioned our family reunion in Niagara-on-the-lake for Canadian Thanksgiving, and the rain slickers Michael and I kept from our trip on the Maid of the Mist boat, to see the Falls.

We held a giveaway, and now I can announce the winners....

Robin Robertson, of the Outer Hebrides

And *Linda Bernardi – of New York State* and a member of a book group called The Most Righteous of the Righteous Babes (beat that!)

Gamache café au lait mugs

With Christmas not too far away I wanted to mention the Vive Gamache café au lait mugs.



If you'd like a mug, just email Danny and Lucy at Brome Lake Books blb@b2b2c.ca - they're our local bookstore. Wonderful place, and really terrific people.

December events

Besides Christmas, we have a few book centred events this month. There is, of course, the Nero awards banquet in New York City that I mentioned, and I'll be meeting with the publisher to discuss the next book – THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY. It will probably be published in the fall of 2012.

On December 6th I'll be speaking to the Christmas meeting of the Women's Canadian Club in Montreal. It's a luncheon meeting.

And after that? I'm hoping it will be quiet – though at this stage I'm open to inspiration for my next book. It's a fun, and sometimes confusing, time. BURY YOUR DEAD is up for awards, A TRICK OF THE LIGHT is in stores and being promoted, My next book (THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY) is finished and with the publishers and I'm actively plotting the ninth book.

My head is swimming. Quick, someone get some eggnog and fruit cake. God, I love Christmas!

As always, as I write this, I think of all you have done for me. You've made my dream of being a successful author come true. And you've made it such fun. Told so many others. Held my hand when things got scary, and sometimes disappointing. Along with celebrating the wonderful events.

I know I'm not alone. I hope you also know you're not alone.

Happy holiday, my friend. And thank you for all the support, and all the joy of this remarkable year.

Louise

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