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Louise Penny's July Newsletter

"Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?."

- J.K. Rowling

Happy July! We're celebrating Canada Day here. Fireworks and barbeques.

July is a marvelous month here in Quebec. It really is our one month of true summer. Long, lazy, hot days. Often humid too. In the country, where Michael and I live, the still evening and morning air is filled with the scent of roses and fresh mown grass. We have lots of roses, but my favorite it this dreadfully thorny bush that never blooms. And yet there is the strongest scent. Of apples. Took me a few years to realize the scent was coming from the leaves. After a rain, or heavy dew, when the hot sun comes out the entire garden smells of fresh apples. It's called a sweetbriar rose. Very old.

Some fun news this month -

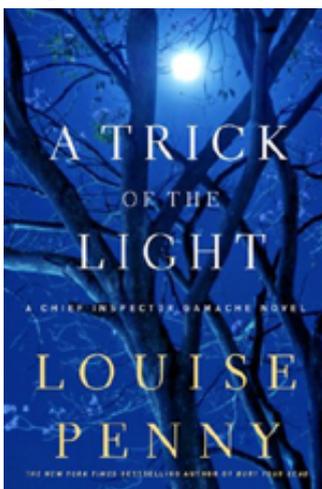
BURY YOUR DEAD - wins the Arthur Ellis

BURY YOUR DEAD has won the Arthur Ellis for Best Crime Novel in Canada!

To win an award is always (I must admit) wonderful - but perhaps just a little more so when it comes from my own country.

Bury Your Dead has also just been nominated for both a Nero Award, for literary excellence, and a Macavity award. I am beyond thrilled about that!

August 30th - A TRICK OF THE LIGHT

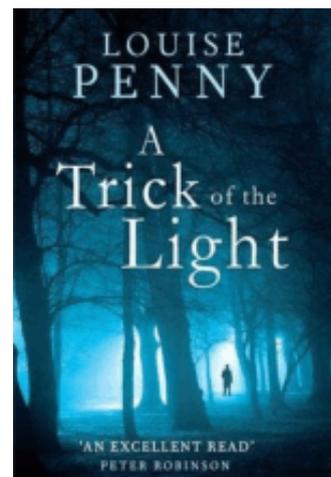


US / Canadian cover

The seventh book (can you believe it?) in the Gamache series is coming out August 30th. After waiting so long, it now seems so soon! I can hardly wait. I just adore A TRICK OF THE LIGHT.



A Trick of the Light US / UK Editions



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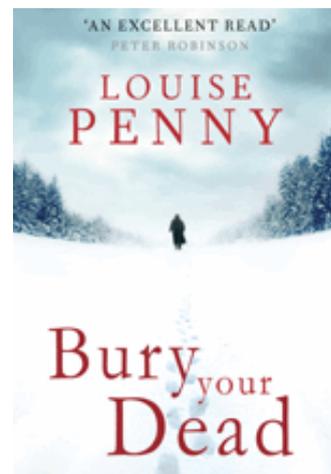
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In it, we go back to Three Pines. We see how the community is coping with the recent developments. How Clara is coping with finally getting her big break, a solo show at the world famous Musée d'art Contemporain in Montreal. We also see how her husband Peter is coping with it! And how Chief Inspector Gamache and Inspector Beauvoir are healing, or not, after the events of BURY YOUR DEAD.

And then, there's a murder.

I hope you like the book. It is my most personal yet, and one I needed to wait years to write.

The amazing writer Lisa Scottoline had this to say after reading an Advance Readers Copy (ARC) -

The superbly gifted Louise Penny is on my secret shortlist of must-read authors, and A TRICK OF THE LIGHT proves why. Artist Clara Morrow is about to have a prestigious show of her paintings when her childhood friend is found murdered, and the finger of suspicion points to Clara. Chief Inspector Gamache is called to investigate, and exposes the darkness that underlies the bright stars of Montreal's art world, where competition between friends, and even between husband and wife, can turn lethal. Ultimately, of course, it's Louise Penny who steals the show, and A TRICK OF THE LIGHT will not only keep you engrossed from start to finish, it will teach you something new about love, truth, and the human heart.

It's a great idea to pre-order A TRICK OF THE LIGHT, since the first editions go quickly. Your local bookstore will happily reserve you one as will any of the network of fantastic crime fiction bookshops across the US and Canada, or you can do it through [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca). Danny and Lucy at [Brome Lake Books](https://www.bromelakebooks.com) would also be happy to reserve you a copy and mail it to you!

Win an ARC of A TRICK OF THE LIGHT

I have more Advance Readers Copies (ARCs) of A TRICK OF THE LIGHT to give away! The US publisher, Minotaur Books, did a second printing.

This time it'll be a random draw. I'll be giving away five copies of A TRICK OF THE LIGHT. Just write to me at:

contact@louisepenny.com and I'll do the draw and announce the winners in the August newsletter. Please write **ARC CONTEST** in the subject line, so I'll know it's you. It would be helpful if you included your mailing address in your entry. Thank you!

And - if you do read the book, and like it, would you mind putting up reviews on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, at blogs and on GoodReads? Wherever people go for literary opinions. And please continue to spread the word.

I so appreciate all the help you're giving me and the Gamache books!

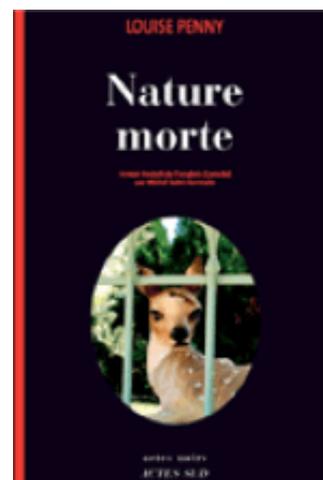
Another fun development for A TRICK OF THE LIGHT is that the UK publisher, Little, Brown, has decided on a cover, you can see it rotating with the US cover at the top of this newsletter on the right hand side.

Now, the book won't actually be coming out in Britain until next winter. I just love both covers, and I also like the fact they're very similar, in colour and style and tone.

STILL LIFE - new US cover

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Still Life



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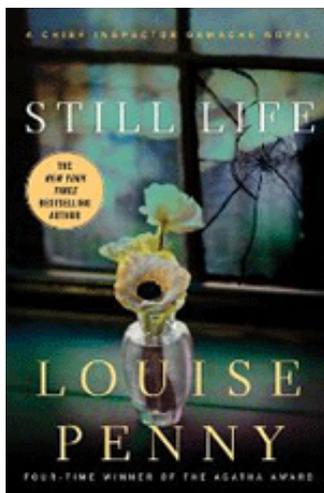
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 Commonwealth



And, speaking of covers, we have a new one for STILL LIFE in the US! I always liked the original cover, but I think this one is even better! Hope you agree.

Finished book 8

It's been a busy winter and spring.

I finally finished the first draft of the next book (book 8!) Worked until 2am one morning in early June - determined to finish. Wow - I'll tell you, writing THE END is thrilling, even (perhaps especially) at 2am.

Normally I'd take a couple of weeks off to detach from the story, and let some of my thoughts settle, before starting the second draft. But this year I had a whole lot of events crowding the agenda in June, so I'm taking an entire month. But it's not really 'off' - more 'away' from actually writing or re-writing.

It's a fascinating month, from my point of view. As a writer. You see, I feel very strongly about this book and want to do it justice. It's the one set in the fictional monastery. The one with the silent order, who have become world famous for their voices, their Gregorian Chants. Such fun to see Gamache, Beauvoir and others in that setting. But I realized while the plot was working, I needed to hone the themes. Honestly, all my first drafts are like that. The first draft is about getting the broad-strokes right. Subsequent drafts are about honing and sharpening.

So this time 'away' has allowed me to think about the themes, read more, make connections. See some of the scenes more clearly. Hear conversations between the characters. In other words, ways to improve the book. I walk around with a notebook, writing scenes longhand, and sometimes just writing a single word that has struck me.

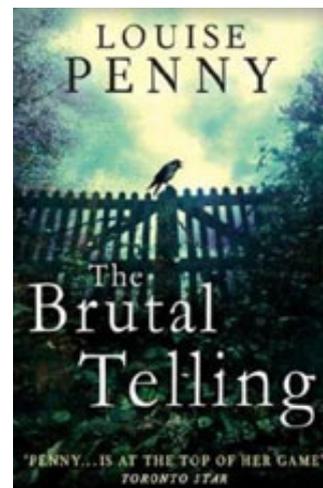
The trick is not to panic. Not to let the fear of failing, the fear of not doing the book justice, paralyze my mind. It's hard to explain - but mostly I need space and time and quiet. To let ideas and inspiration come.

I suspect most writers do the same thing.

For all the talk of quiet, though, the truth is that one way for me to get deeper is to listen to music. I'll go for a drive and put in my "Book 8" disk - and let my mind go blank. Before long I'm seeing the characters - but more than that, I'm feeling them. Feeling what they're going through. The first draft is about the head. The revisions, for me, are about the heart. Feeling it in the chest. Getting the emotions right, and rich.

Music helps me get there. If feelings made a sound, it would be music. The power of music always amazes me.

Not, perhaps, coincidentally, that's one of the themes of the book -



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Cruelest Month
US edition

the power of music.

Brother Charles' final vows

The other thing that was fun this past month was that Michael and I were invited to our friend Brother Charles' final vows at the monastery of Saint-Benoit-du-lac. We met him while researching this book, and he's been hugely helpful.

If you'd like to read about Brother Charles final vows, and what it was like, here's the link to the [blog post](#) I wrote about it.

Harry Potter and the 16th birthday

It's been a fun month - that took me to Orlando and The Wizarding World of Harry Potter to help celebrate the 16th birthday of Bethany Mount. Her mother Linda and I went with Bethany. What a blast! You can see some of our photos above. Amazing place. With the most fun ride ever - Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey. Yikes! We shrieked the whole time.

July

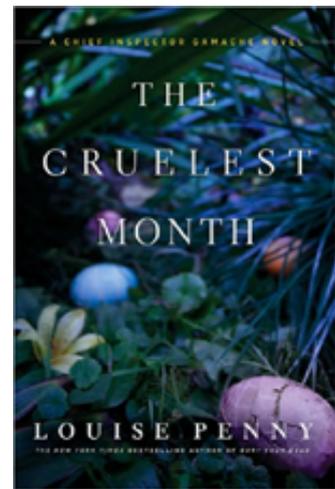
This month - besides trying to finish the second draft of the book - I'll be involved with WordFest in Knowlton, July 15-17th. You can find out more about this terrific literary festival here in the townships by going to knowltonreads.blogspot.com

At the end of the festival there'll be a special fund raising dinner for literacy, called the Peter Gzowski Invitational for Literacy, on Sunday, July 17th. It will be hosted by CBC Radio's Shelagh Rogers, and I'll be giving the keynote speech. If you'd like a ticket, or more information, just call Danny or Lucy at Brome Lake Books - 450-242-2242 or you can email them at: blb@b2b2c.ca

By the way, if you want to purchase a Vive Gamache café au lait mug, Danny and Lucy can arrange that too, and mail it to you.

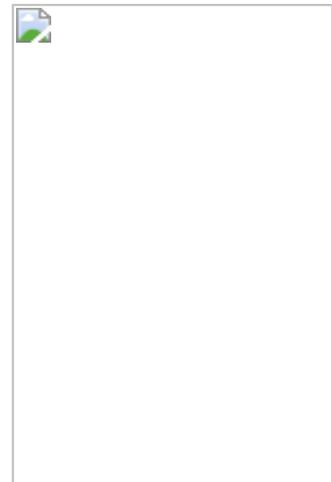
I hope you have a wonderful July - and thank you for all your support, and company. I genuinely appreciate it.

Louise



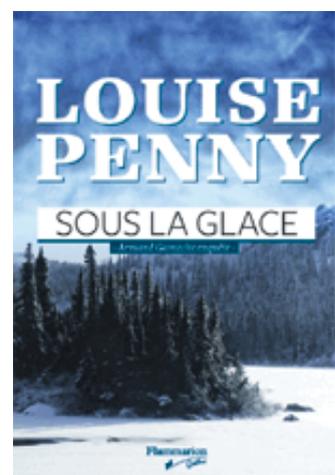
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