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Louise Penny's October Newsletter

"There is no terror in the bang, only in the anticipation of it."
- **Alfred Hitchcock**



THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY - New York Times Bestseller

What a month! As you might know (but bears repeating), THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY came out in late August and immediately hit #2 on the New York Times bestseller list. And the best news is that Michael and I did not buy a hundred thousand copies ourselves. Or even fifty thousand.

But I sure do thank those of you who bought a copy (or two) of the book! I wish I could begin to tell you how it feels, to get the call from my publisher and editor and publicist. The plane had just landed in Atlanta from Houston and I was picked up by this lovely woman named Gail. We were just negotiating the airport parking lot when my phone rang.

It was Andy.

Now, I'd been expecting the call. I knew the advance word on the New York Times list was coming out that afternoon, but no one really knows when. I think it's designed to kill authors. We just explode with anxiety....and least, this one almost did. Adjectives all over the place. It wasn't pretty.

The phone rang. Now, we're in an underground parking lot in Atlanta, in a car, on a cell phone - and Andy's on a speaker phone in his office in New York. Honestly, I might as well have had a baked bean can to my ear.

'Hello?'

'Hello?'

'Andy?'

'Lou...zz.'

'Pardon?'

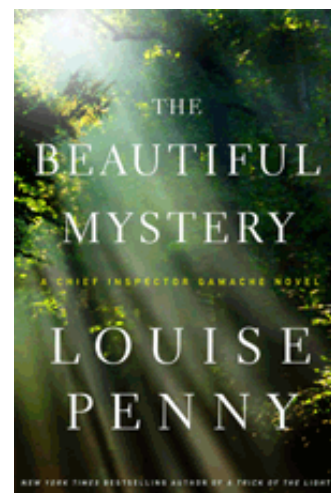
(and then a few expletives - though not as many as I'd have liked since I didn't know how Gail would react to a stranger in her passenger seat suddenly swearing. Most people, I've found, do not react well.)

'..ew ork....ist. ooo,' said Andy.

'I beg your pardon?' said I, casual and composed as usual.

'New...ork...imes list. Number two.'

The Beautiful Mystery US / Canada / UK



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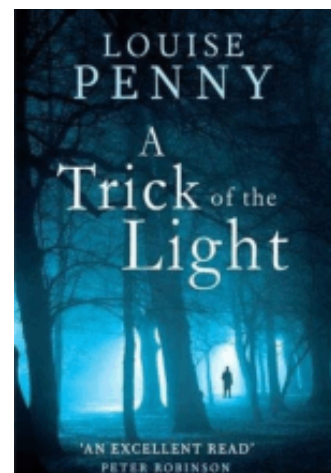
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Booksellers Association**

A Trick of the Light US / Canada / UK



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Then I was certain I'd misheard.

'Number 2???'

There was always a possibility he was calling me number 2 - which wouldn't bode well for the Times list.

We were emerging into the sunlight. Dazzling. Dazzling. Oh, Lord, was it radiant.

'You're number 2 on the New York Times list,' he said, clear as the dazzling day.

I don't remember a great deal after that, though I'm afraid it almost certainly involved language no lady from the South should hear. But she did not burst into flames, though I almost did.

Number 2, number 2. I did not think we'd ever top the thrill of last year hitting number 4 with A TRICK OF THE LIGHT. But guess what? We did!!!!

You and I. And Michael. And My Assistant Lise. And Linda. And Hope, Andy, Sarah, Matthew, Sally, Jeanne-Marie, Lauren, Paul, Dan, Jamie, Patty and, of course, Teresa.

We did it.

And now, forever, an underground parking lot in Atlanta is seared into my memory...and emerging into the sunlight.

Thank you, dear friend, for giving me this. For not just buying the books, or taking them out of your library, but for championing Gamache and Beauvoir, Gabri and Ruth. Clara and Myrna. For telling others about the Gamache books. And for knowing that while the books are definitely murder mysteries, they're not about death, but life. About friendship, and goodness, and choices. About community and belonging, and the courage it takes to stand in the light.

Thank you.

We also made lots of other bestseller lists, I'm so pleased to say - here's a sampling....

NPR	- #2
Washington Post	- #2
Vancouver Sun	- #1
Los Angeles Times	- #4
Toronto Globe and Mail	- #6
Macleans	- #3
Publishers Weekly	- #3
San Francisco Chronicle	- #5
Independent Booksellers USA	- #2
Independent Booksellers Canada	- #1

Reviews

And here's a sampling of reviews for THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY -

New York Times

Penny writes with grace and intelligence about complex people struggling with complex emotions. But

[Barnes & Noble.com](http://Barnes.com)
Amazon.com
Amazon.ca
Amazon.co.uk
 ABA American
 Booksellers Association

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

her great gift is her uncanny ability to describe what might seem indescribable - the play of light, the sound of celestial music, a quiet sense of peace.

People Magazine (Editor's Pick, 4 out of 4 stars)

With enormous empathy for the troubled human soul-and an ending that makes your blood race and your heart break-Penny continues to raise the bar of her splendid series.

The Globe and Mail

....It's a stirring, thought- provoking read, less a matter of whodunit than a relentless questioning of why any of us do anything. The Beautiful Mystery...stands as a powerful literary novel in its own right...

Richmond Times-Dispatch

...from murder, Penny - who melds prose at once expressive and restrained with a keen understanding of human emotions - creates a novel that earns its title, a book that shines with the grace and compassion that stamp her work.

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY has even gone into its 7th printing!

Tour and events

I had a blast on tour. Traveled all around the US and met so many of you. Wish I could have met more, but perhaps next year. I know some of you were disappointed I didn't include Canada on my tour this year. This was my decision. After seven years of touring Canada, from coast to coast, I just needed a break. I'm afraid I'm getting a little worn down.

Having said that, I will be at the Vancouver International Writers Festival on Saturday, October 20th. I have two events, the first is a panel of crime writers at 10:30am, with Deryn Collier and Robert Rotenberg. The second is called Mystery and Music, where I'll be talking about and reading selections from THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY, and will be joined on stage by the choir of Christ Church Cathedral. They'll weave Gregorian chants in and out of the reading.

I'm also going to Ann Arbor, Michigan this Wednesday (Oct 3rd) to help Robin and Jamie celebrate the 20th birthday of their fabulous mystery bookstore, Aunt Agatha's. There'll be all sorts of crime fiction writers there, and it's open to the public. We'll be signing our books, and loitering. The other writers include William Kent Krueger, Rhys Bowen, Julia Spencer-Fleming, Steve Hamilton, Vicki Delany - and lots more. The signing/party is at the store, and the art gallery next door, from 4-7 on Wednesday, Oct 3rd. Hope to see you there. You'll adore the other writers - all magnificent.

For more details, please [click here](#) - it will take you to the "Events" section of my website.

I was registered, at one time, to go to Bouchercon, the big crime fiction convention, in Cleveland, but had to cancel out since it's Canadian Thanksgiving (though here we just call it Thanksgiving), and I wanted to be home.

STILL LIFE - movie news

And, speaking of home - there's some other great news! **Filming has begun on the movie version of STILL LIFE!** It can now be announced that Chief Inspector Armand Gamache will be played by the amazing British actor, Nathaniel Parker! I'm thrilled! And I know, while he might not look like the Gamache in your mind's eye, he will



bring all the qualities necessary to the man. Integrity, warmth, humour, intelligence, kindness, and the courage of his convictions - as well as a sort of wounded vulnerability. But I also know, Nat Parker needs to, and will, make Gamache his own.

What a process for me. Sleepless nights. Excitement, stress, nausea, relief. I've at times scratched my head at the process of film-making....and at times been in awe at the sheer weight of details.

Well, filming began yesterday - which is why the October newsletter is delayed by a day. I wanted to be on set yesterday, and report back to you. Here are some photos from the set. On the top banner, you can see Michael with the actor who plays Miss Jane Neal, and me with Gamache/Nathaniel Parker (hard to see but I'm "writing" him). And to the left here, there's a picture of Kate Hewlett, a marvelous Canadian actor who'll be playing Clara, moi, then Nat (as I like to call him. He calls me, "Who's she?"). Below that you can see filming with Clara and Gamache, and finally the director watching a scene on the monitor.



I was actually moved to tears, seeing these creations, up and walking. I was a little afraid to meet the actors, in case they just weren't very nice - but to a person they were smart, thoughtful, collegial, warm and patient. What a relief! Since Nathaniel Parker is from the UK, we've invited him to come and spend Thanksgiving with us. I'd never have dreamed, ten years ago when I was writing STILL LIFE and setting it at Thanksgiving, that one day we'd be sharing it with the actor who so powerfully is bringing Gamache to life.

To say I have a lot to give thanks for is an understatement.

The film is produced in Canada by PDM Entertainment, written by Wayne Grigsby, directed by Peter Moss, and our broadcast partner is CBC Television.

It will absolutely be shown in the US and the UK, as well as other countries - but we won't know which broadcaster yet - until the film is made.

And in terms of Three Pines? The producers spent weeks scouring Quebec's Eastern Townships, and calling me asking, 'Are you sure Three Pines doesn't exist? Certain?'

And therein lies the difficulty. How to create a village that does not exist. What they've done is found a village that comes close, and will, via what I'm assured is the magic of television, make it appear to be the Three Pines of the novels. Stanbridge East in the townships is doing a wonderful job of standing in for the fictional location.

And, another treat for those of you who love listening to Ralph Cosham - he'll be in the film too! The producers of the film contacted the producers of the audiobook, Macmillan Audio, and asked if Ralph could be flown up, and appear in the art gallery scene. So he's going to do it! I'll get a photo and put in on the next newsletter. Longing to see the two 'Gamaches' together.

You can follow the latest film and book news through my [Facebook](#) posts, or the [blog](#) and on the [Film page of my website](#).

In the meantime, work on book 9 continues. Have finished the second draft. I now think I might do only one more draft before handing it to Teresa Chris, my agent. But I might chicken out, and do a fourth draft.

I want to end by hoping that you've had a wonderful September, and that October is good to you and those you love. I also want to thank you again, with all my heart, for finding Three Pines, and for knowing that while it doesn't exist physically, it exists in our hearts, when we choose to be kind.

I received this lovely letter a week or so ago from a reader:

Dear Ms. Penny,

My beloved brother, Michael, passed away this week. Like Chief Inspector Gamache, Michael was a man of great intellect and heart. He was six years older than I and used to read to me from Shakespeare from the time I was a little girl. I like to think of him now, not in heaven but in Three Pines, as eccentric and loveable as the best of its inhabitants.

Ann

I know Mike is in Three Pines, and I hope to have a café au lait with him there one day.

Be well, my friends - thank you for your company. And Happy Thanksgiving!

Louise

(aka - number 2!)

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