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## Louise Penny's November Newsletter



*"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."*  
- Mr. Rogers

### Canada

I'm afraid most of the news I had has been replaced by recent overwhelming events here in Canada. You've almost certainly heard about the attack in Ottawa on October 22nd.



A young soldier, on ceremonial guard duty at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, was shot and killed. His name was Nathan Cirillo. He was 24 years old and a member of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada. Since it was ceremonial, volunteer duty his rifle was unloaded. He was unarmed. Corporal Cirillo leaves behind a five year old son, a mother, two sisters and a nation shocked and grief stricken.

[Here is an account of what happened](#) as bystanders ran to help him...

Mr. Rogers' mother was right. There are people willing to help. I found that account so painful, so moving, I almost couldn't read it.

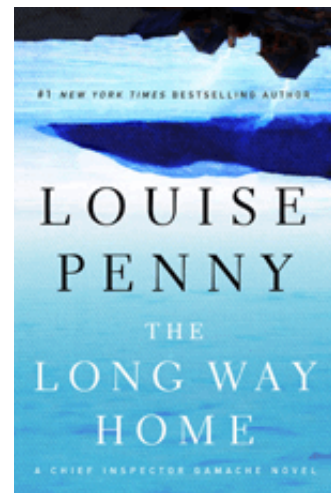
The murderer then made his way into the Parliament Buildings where an unarmed House of Commons guard, Samearn Son, wrestled with him before being shot in the foot. The gunman then ran down the wide corridor of Parliament, exchanging gunfire with armed guards.

He was finally stopped, shot dead by Kevin Vickers, the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons.

It was unbelievable, unfathomable, to see and hear gunfire within the home of our government. A place most of us know well from visits, from news reports, from trips there, as school children.

This attack came just days after two members of the Armed Forces were targeted in an attack in Saint-Jean-Sur-Richelieu, not far from where Michael and I live. They were run down by a car. Because

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they were soldiers. Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, age 52, died of his injuries.

The day after Kevin Vickers shot and killed the gunman in Ottawa, Parliament, in a show of solidarity and defiance, sat in session. The session was opened, as always, by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Kevin Vickers.

[Here's a link](#) showing what happened the day of the shootings in the Parliament buildings - and the day after.

When I'm on tour I'm sometimes asked if I really believe people like Armand Gamache exist. I tell them about Romeo Dallaire, the Canadian General who headed up the ill-fated UN response to the civil war in Rwanda. He tried desperately to stop the genocide, arguing that his forces needed the power to intervene, but he was ordered not to. The experience was so shattering he suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and came back a passionate and vocal humanitarian.

I also tell them about Rene Jalbert, a proud member of Quebec's Royal 22nd Regiment, the storied Van Doos. Like Kevin Vickers, he went on to become Sergeant-at-Arms. His duty was to the National Assembly in Quebec City. In 1984 a heavily armed man entered the NA and shot three people dead, wounding 13 others before entering the Assembly chambers where hostages took cover under desks.

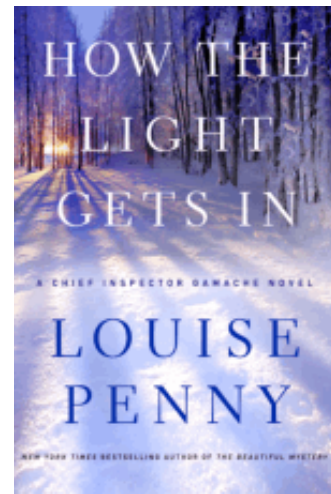
Monsieur Jalbert, on realizing what was happening, entered the chamber, unarmed. He showed the gunman that they'd once belonged to the same regiment. He calmed him, offering him cigarettes, and then invited him to discuss the situation in Jalbert's private office, in effect making himself the sole hostage.

Rene Jalbert spent four hours talking to the gunman, finally convincing him to give himself up.

And now I can add Kevin Vickers to that list. And Barbara Winters. And Samearn Son. And the men and women who ran to help Nathan Cirillo. And so many others who are heroes everyday, whose names we never know.

Goodness exists. Bravery exists. Kindness exists. And it is stronger than hatred.

It has been incredibly powerful, and very comforting, to see the support internationally for Canada. The empathy, the offers of help. The displays of friendship. As a Canadian I have been deeply and genuinely moved. As an individual, I've been overwhelmed by the support and kindness shown on my [Facebook page](#), after the events.



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Here's the order of the **Chief Inspector Gamache books**, from the first to the most recent:

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**HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN**

**THE LONG WAY HOME**

## Ralph Cosham

Unfortunately this isn't the only sad news. Closer to our Three Pines home, we had the devastating news that Ralph Cosham had passed away. He was the voice on the audio versions of the books and had become, over the years,



a good friend.

I know for many of you, Ralph was the voice and spirit of Gamache. Here's an unfortunately quite blurry photo of him (and me) in New York City, after he won the Audie Award for Best Crime Fiction Audio Voice, for THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY. It was a sparkling, exciting, magnificent evening. It was an honour to be on his arm.

It's a terribly sad time for all of us. But I take a little comfort in imagining Ralph now, sitting by the fireplace in the bistro, with a scotch, chatting with Armand and Clara and Gabri, and sparring just a little with Ruth.

Ralph was exactly what you hoped he'd be. Thoughtful, warm, smart and kind. And he is so very, very missed.

I'll leave you now with the words Barbara Winters whispered in Nathan Cirillo's ear as he died - the last words he heard -

***"You're a good man, you're a brave man. Your family loves you. Your parents are so proud of you. Your military family loves you. All the people here, we're working so hard for you. Everybody loves you."***

There is nothing more I can possibly say except thank you, thank you to the people who are helping. And have helped. So much to remember this Remembrance Day.

With warm embraces,

Louise and Michael and Bishop

(To see the photographs used in this newsletter in a larger size [click here to see them via my website.](#))

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