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Louise Penny

May Newsletter



"You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep spring from coming." **Pablo Neruda**

SPRING

Oh what a beautiful sentiment and a beautiful season! Here in Quebec spring, like a chick out of its shell, must fight its way forward. Perhaps because of that, spring is all the more precious and appreciated. Two weeks ago we were in shirtsleeves. One week ago we were in winter boots and parkas, shoveling. Who knows what tomorrow will bring. But eventually the flowers will prevail.

Spring.

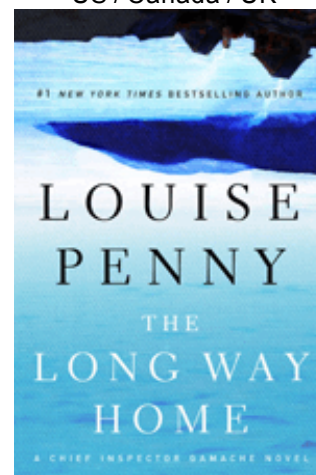
That's what hope looks like.

We've had a wonderful month of April. As you might know, Michael and I spent much of it in London. Indeed, we celebrated his 81st birthday there with his sister Carol as well as our nephew Adam and his fiancé Lindsay.

Now London was in full-blown spring, with all the trees in glorious blossom. We returned to snow. C'est la vie. But we did return on a wonderful new British Airways jet – called the Dreamliner. Lighter, faster, quieter – and terrific interior. It was huge fun.

The Long Way Home

US / Canada / UK



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How The Light Gets In

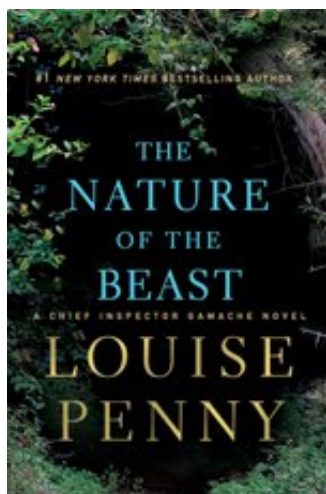
US / Canada / UK

I spend much of our final week in London meeting people who'd traveled there for the London Book Fair. It was very interesting and useful to meet with foreign publishers for the Gamache books and hear their thoughts and plans. It's fascinating to learn about how different the various markets can be.

But mostly Michael and I took advantage of being in the city we both adore. We took short strolls and sometimes jumped on the #11 bus. It was interesting to see his energy level leap up. He also seemed much more alert – though he was ready for a nap come the afternoon. Have to admit, I was too!

BOOK COVER **THE NATURE OF THE BEAST**

Now the really big book news from April was the reveal of the cover for THE NATURE OF THE BEAST. Here it is!

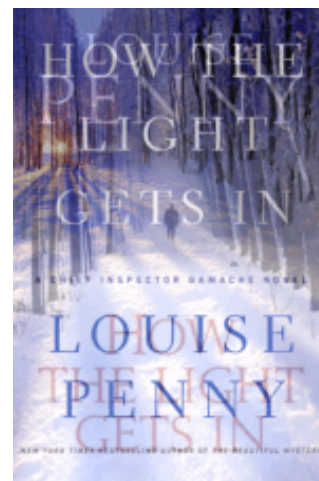


I gasped when I saw it. From my perspective it is absolutely perfect. I hope it's compelling even without reading the book, but I think you'll find after reading it you'll see all the levels this image works on.

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST comes out August 25th. Please, please spread the word. I know you've already told lots of people about the Gamache books, but if you could keep it up I'd really appreciate it. Word of mouth is so powerful, and vital. It would be great if even more people can discover Three Pines, and join us there.

Thank you for all you've already done!

Oh, I think I've mentioned this before, but you can pre-order THE NATURE OF THE BEAST from your local bookstore, or online, now. [Click here](#) for more information about the book.



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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

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY

HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN

THE LONG WAY HOME

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

INSPIRING BOOK LOCATIONS

The other exciting thing leading up to when the book is released, is the ongoing series we're calling The Real Places of Three Pines. What we're doing is taking a setting from each of the books, starting with STILL LIFE, and telling you about the real life place that inspired it. Here's the link www.gamacheseries.com. We're posting a new location every two weeks. I can't tell you how wonderful it is to introduce you to places in our neighbourhood that exist, and that you can visit if you'd like a taste and feel of Three Pines.

Bon voyage!

BOOK TOUR 2015

Now, speaking of voyage - my publishers were so kind to say that this year I needn't go on tour, because of Michael's dementia progressing. They let me sit with the decision for as long as I needed, but I finally decided I wanted to go on tour.

This is all part of what I told you about in my last letter – needing to make adjustments but not putting our lives on hold – awaiting the worst. No. We're going to live, gloriously, giddily, gratefully while we can.

Hence London. And my decision to go on tour. It means a lot to me to be able to meet you and look you in the eye and thank you. And it has never been more meaningful or necessary than now – after all you've given Michael and me.

However, this will be a different tour with some stops that have been traditional changed so I can go to some new places and thank people I haven't met before. It will also be a shorter tour since I will be anxious to get back to Michael – and Bishop!

The design of a tour is actually quite complex. Trying to hit some new places and some old favourites. Trying to make the flights not too complex.

To be honest, I just don't have it in me anymore to do a grueling tour. Perhaps in the future, but for now they are being so kind and thoughtful to tailor it to my needs.

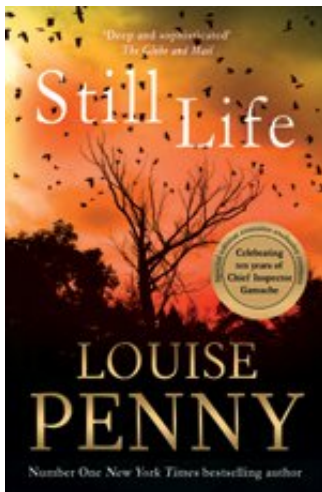
As soon as I know the schedule, I'll let you know.

AUDIO BOOKS

We also haven't yet chosen a successor to Ralph Cosham for the audio book. So difficult! He set an

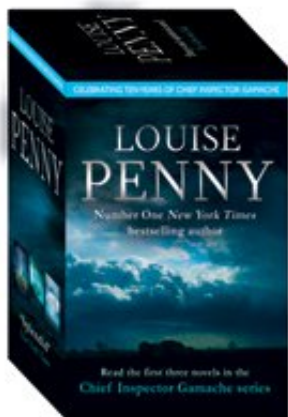
almost impossibly high standard. So – the search continues. We want to do Ralph proud. Again, as soon as we have news on that front, I'll let you know.

10 YEARS OF GAMACHE!



As you might know - 2015 marks the tenth anniversary of the appearance of Three Pines and Chief Inspector Gamache in Canada, in the novel STILL LIFE. It is incredible to look back over the landscape - to be honest, I would never have dreamed we'd have come so far.

To celebrate, a special box set of the first three books will now be available in Canada....and, only in Canada, a special edition hardcover of STILL LIFE. I am so excited about this! The box set will come out on June 18th and the special edition HC of STILL LIFE will come out on almost exactly the 10th anniversary of the first publication - July 7th. You can now pre-order, which is not a bad idea since the editions will go quickly.



JAMAICA PARTY OF 5

Some more fun personal news – we've decided to go back to Jamaica in mid-May! At first, when the idea came to me, I dismissed it. It felt just too indulgent – but then I thought....why not? Whose permission exactly am I waiting for? If not now – when?

So in the spirit of giddy life, we're heading off again. Have asked his sons Mike and Victor to join us – and a wonderful friend from the UK, Rosemary, said over lunch one day that if I needed help with Michael, she'd come too.

So she's coming too!

No half-measures here. As they say in Jamaica – no problem!

WRITING THE NEXT GAMACHE BOOK

I'm starting to write the next Gamache book today. May 1st. I've spent months walking around with a notebook, jotting thoughts, quotes, impressions, odd bits and pieces. And little by little they're forming, coalescing into themes and characters and scenes and plot and subplots.

Such a thrilling time – when all is potential. But today I put the first word on paper and will work every day, finishing sometime in 2016.

In broad strokes, my process is to set a word-count everyday. At first, because while thrilling it is also terrifying and intimidating to start a new book, the word-count is very low. 250 words.

I want to make the writing as pleasurable as possible – to set myself up for success. And not see it as an excruciating chore.

So, I set a low word-count to start. I can generally do 250 words in an hour or two. Then have the rest of the day to 'play'.

At some stage, fairly early one, I raise the count to 500 and sit there until the muscles feel ready for the next stage.

1,000 words a day.

I generally stay there for most of the rest of the manuscript – which comes in at around 120,000 words. But often around $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through something magical and powerful happens. The novel takes on a life of its own – and then the word-count becomes meaningless. I just write and write. To The End.

And then the re-writes begin....more about that some other time. Who needs to stare into that dark cave before it's necessary?

As you can see, structure and discipline are very important to me. I'm very goal oriented, so a word-count fits perfectly into my personality. But every writer does it differently. There's no right or wrong way to write a book.

So today a new adventure begins. Wish me, and Armand, luck!

Michael and Bishop and I hope this finds a spring in your step and spring in your heart.

Thank you for your company and your support.

Louise, Michael and Bishop

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