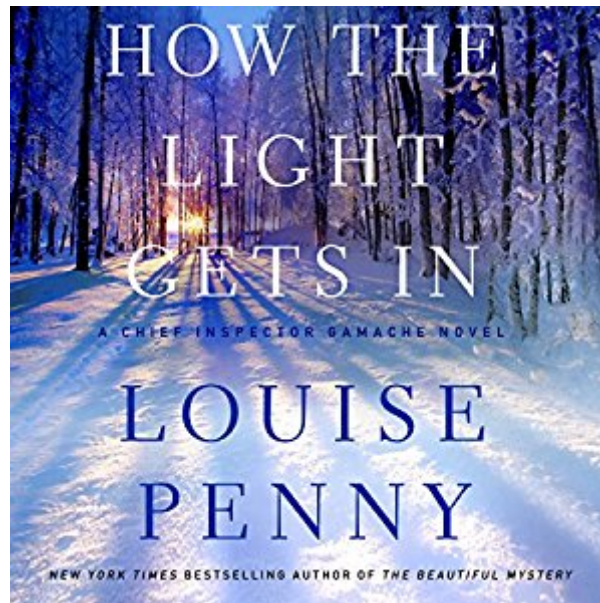




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How The Light Gets In: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel, Book 9



Synopsis

"There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." (Leonard Cohen) Christmas is approaching, and in Québec it's a time of dazzling snowfalls, bright lights, and gatherings with friends in front of blazing hearths. But shadows are falling on the usually festive season for Chief Inspector Armand Gamache. Most of his best agents have left the Homicide Department, his old friend and lieutenant Jean-Guy Beauvoir hasn't spoken to him in months, and hostile forces are lining up against him. When Gamache receives a message from Myrna Landers that a longtime friend has failed to arrive for Christmas in the village of Three Pines, he welcomes the chance to get away from the city. Mystified by Myrna's reluctance to reveal her friend's name, Gamache soon discovers the missing woman was once one of the most famous people not just in North America, but in the world, and now goes unrecognized by virtually everyone except the mad, brilliant poet Ruth Zardo. As events come to a head, Gamache is drawn ever deeper into the world of Three Pines. Increasingly, he is not only investigating the disappearance of Myrna's friend but also seeking a safe place for himself and his still-loyal colleagues. Is there peace to be found even in Three Pines? And at what cost to Gamache and the people he holds dear?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Constance Pineault is the kind of woman you hope would move to the winsome village of Three Pines. She is self-sufficient, feels motherly to bistro owners Gabri and Olivier, is friends with bookstore owner Myrna, drinks happily with mad poet Ruth, and is even considering getting a

duck. But there is a mystery about Constance. She won't let Clara paint her portrait. It is almost as if she has a secret in her past. Perhaps a big one. Perhaps a secret someone would kill for. "Who doesn't have a secret?" asks crazy Ruth. Secrets, and the revealing of them, is Inspector Gamache's focus in this book. It seems everyone has them. There's the mysterious death of a woman by a bridge he passed - why would a young woman jump over a bridge in a cold Canadian winter Gamache wonders. Then there's the mystery regarding Gamache's cunning supervisor, Chief Superintendent Francoeur, who is decimating Gamache's homicide department and ordering Gamache's former assistant Jean-Guy Beauvoir on dangerous raids. Is Francoeur trying to drive Gamache and Beauvoir over the edge, or is something deeper and more sinister at play? And what about the secrets in Constance's past? The sleepy little village of Three Pines is about to have a rude awakening. Even high tech visits it in Gamache's efforts shine the light on the secrets. This is one of the most intense investigations Gamache has lead as the secrets go deeper and deeper. Will the villagers act to protect Gamache and their village from the bad guys? Will the bad guys meet their match in Ruth? A brilliant balance between modern, big city intrigue and bucolic, small village happenings, this mystery novel is an absorbing read. Grit meets charm. There are enough clues to ferret out some of the secrets with Gamache and his team, but some secrets will probably surprise you. Intricately plotted, this mystery is complex without being confusing. Ruth's duck has never been more entertaining. You may want to send your kids to their grandparents for an overnight and tell your partner it's a good time for them to take that fishing trip, because once you start reading, you won't want to stop. This is my favorite mystery in this series by Louise Penny so far. It is deep, witty, surprising, original, sophisticated and even a bit cinematic. Louise Penny's writing is more riveting and nuanced with each book. As to whether you will want to read this series in order, Penny herself recommends that the books are probably more enjoyable if you do read them in order to follow the arc of the story. She says she wrote them to be standalone books, also. At the end of this book, you sense Gamache will be charting some new paths for himself in a promising future. This is definitely a page-turner, and one of my favorite mystery reads I have read. If you wish to read this series from the beginning, the books in order are: STILL LIFE A FATAL GRACE / DEAD COLD THE CRUELEST MONTH A RULE AGAINST MURDER / THE MURDER STONE THE BRUTAL TELLINGBURY YOUR DEAD A TRICK OF THE LIGHT THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN* If you go to Penny's author's site there's a link to her Facebook account which is fun to follow, as well as images of her desk and views from where she writes, and her musings and news along the way on her writing life.

Canadian author Louise Penny has so far written nine stories in this series. The first four, labeled "Three Pines Mysteries," were well written, homey whodunits set in a small town in Canada and solved by Chief Inspector Gamache and his sidekick Inspector Jean-Guy Beauvoir of the Surete du Quebec. By the time Book 5, "The Brutal Telling" (often referred to as Penny's breakout novel) came out, the cover label had changed to "A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel." Book 6, "Bury Your Dead" opens with the news that in the interim between the "Brutal" and "Bury" books, something horrendous had happened that left many of Gamache's men dead and both Gamache and Beauvoir seriously injured and emotionally ravaged. The emotional and physical impact of that tragedy will follow the two detectives relentlessly through all the Gamache novels that follow. Which is why I recommend newbies read "Bury Your Dead," "A Trick of the Light," and "The Beautiful Mystery" before tackling this one. By the time we get to this ninth in the series, the bad apples, led by the villainous Chief Inspector Francoeur, will have taken over control of the Surete from Gamache and the good guys; the Francoeur faction will have grabbed away all of Gamache's best detectives--including Beauvoir--and are blatantly plotting to force Gamache's resignation. While all this is going on, there's a murder to be solved. Gamache has been called to Three Pines, where Myrna, the bookstore owner, needs his help finding her missing friend Constance, who, it will turn out, was (a) murdered and (b) the last of Canada's famous Ouellet quintuplets. In recent years I've read all the Gamache books as soon as they come out...which means there's at least a year and a good couple of dozen other novels between my last Penny novel and its successor. Till now, the author's usually been really good at reminding her readers of the back story basics. But not this time. This time she seems to think readers could just pick up where the action and characters and relationships left off a year ago and take it from there without added memory joggers. I found myself calling friends and asking, hey do you remember back in "The Beautiful Mystery" how and why Beauvoir let himself get co-opted by Francoeur and why he now has gone over to the other side and how Gamache let that happen etc.? I could be wrong here, but I think jumping into this 9th book in this exceedingly complex series, with its 400 pages and large cast of characters without having first read its three or four predecessors would be madly confusing and a real challenge.

ADDENDA

8/26/13 re the conversations here among reviewers on whether this is or is not the ending of this series: Quote from the opening paragraph of Maureen Corrigan's rave Book World review in today's Washington Post: "'How the Light Gets In' is the culmination of a story arc that has been developing over the most recent books; happily, it is not the termination of the series." Addenda 4/13/14: I just read that next in the series, due out in August '14, is "The Long Way Home," with Gamache retired and living in Three Pines.

This is the continuing story of Chief Inspector Gamache and the Suret   of Montreal, Quebec. Louise Penny draws us into a world of corruption, mistrust, murder, and greed by painting scenes with amazing visuals and characterizations you won't soon forget. I was especially drawn to the charming village of Three Pines and the eccentric, funny, sentimental people who live there. There were many moments that left me crying (wait until you read about the duck!) and others that left me going ah! Ms. Penny creates a thirty year old trail of deceit and murder on two different storylines that will leave the reader unable to set the book down until the very last page. I love stories that take what you think you know and turns it on its ear. This is one of those books. I will certainly be reading more from this talented writer! I give How The Light Gets In 5 lovely kisses! One of the best books I've read in a very long time! First posted on It's All About the Romance

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