



## How the Light Gets In

*Louise Penny*

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## How the Light Gets In Louise Penny

Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec digs beneath the idyllic surface of village life in Three Pines, finding long buried secrets--and facing a few of his own ghosts.

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?

## How the Light Gets In Details

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## From Reader Review How the Light Gets In for online ebook

### Jim says

*"There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." —Leonard Cohen*

This is the ninth entry in the Chief Inspector Armand Gamache series and the second time that I have read this book. As enjoyable as it was the first time I read the book and was introduced to Armand Gamache and the village of Three Pines the second time around was even better. There were many events that took place prior to this story and the only way to gain a full understanding of what happened and why we are where we are is to read the earlier books in the series. I had a deeper appreciation as I read this book for the second time.

Christmas is approaching and the snow is a dazzling pure white lit by bright festive lights. Carols are sung, friends gather together in front of the hearth sipping hot chocolate. But for Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec shadows have fallen. His friend and lieutenant Jean-Guy Beauvoir hasn't spoken to him in months. Most of his best agents in the homicide department have left and forces seem to lining up against him. He is considering retiring.

Then he receives a message from Myrna Landers, his friend from Three Pines, that a friend failed to show up for Christmas. He welcomes the opportunity to get away from Montreal. Myrna's missing friend was known as Constance Pineault. But that was not her original name. Once she was one of the most famous persons in Quebec, in North America, and perhaps the world. When it is discovered that she has been murdered Inspector Gamache begins to dig deeper into her past life. The one she tried to hide from. Who would want to kill her? And why?

The murder of an elderly woman with a hidden past is not the only mystery in this story. There is plenty of political intrigue too. There is corruption at the highest levels in the Surete de Quebec and political offices. Gamache is hot on the trail and it seems everything is going to reach a climatic conclusion in the small village of Three Pines. A place so remote that there is no internet. No e-mail. No cell phones. Totally cut off from everyone. It is up to Inspector Gamache, a handful of trusted colleagues, and the residents of Three Pines to uncover the truth. What will be the cost to Gamache, his few trusted friends, and the village of Three Pines?

Louise Penny does an excellent job of developing characters and place. When you read one of these books you feel as though you know the characters and care about them ... excluding corrupt and evil Chief Superintendent Francoeur of course. You wish that Three Pines was real and that you could stay at the B&B and have a meal at the bistro. She even makes winter sound idyllic. Like stepping into a Norman Rockwell painting. I am left anticipating reading The Long Way Home and finding out what happens next with Armand Gamache, friends, and Three Pines.

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### Diane S ? says

I absolutely love this series as I am sure you can see by my rating, but I am always sad when I am done because now I have to wait for another year or so for a new one. I become so immersed in Three Pines and these people's lives it is often a shock to realize they are not real, but are characters in a novel. I wish they

were real, I wish Three Pines was a place I could visit.

Part of this story, concerned quints born during the Great Depression, and though there were real quints born, only the idea of them sparked this part of the story. These are character driven novels and the characters are unique and wonderful, full of insight, courage and love. This is a place where people come when they are at the end of something and looking for something different. It is a place not easy to find and modern technology has a way of not working here. It is a true quiet zone.

Has a wonderful bookstore, and I can't help feeling that Ruth and her duck may be the two best characters ever written. If you have not read these, start at the beginning. They get better with each successive book.

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## **Cook Memorial Public Library says**

A 2013 staff fiction favorite recommended by Jo, Andrea, Connie, Jane, Mary Ann, Sonia and Ellen.

Jo's review:

I adore Louise Penny's Chief Inspector Gamache series. I want to move to Three Pines, the imaginary, serene village in Quebec that somehow ends up having an unusual number of murder investigations. I want to eat in the bistro and stay at the inn and shop in the bookstore. I want to argue and share insults with Ruth, the local curmudgeonly poet. Most importantly, I want to have deep conversations over a café au lait with Chief Inspector Armand Gamache, Penny's thoughtful, compassionate protagonist.

A great novelist transports the reader into a fictional world with characters who are unforgettable. That's exactly what Penny has done with her wonderful world in Quebec. Although Penny is considered a mystery writer, she also is a great novelist who adeptly studies the light and dark in her characters. She introduced readers to Three Pines in her first novel, "Still Life", which I have placed in many library patrons' hands with excitement when I find out they haven't read Penny.

"How the Light Gets In" is the ninth and best book in the series yet. Gamache begins investigating a murder of a once-famous celebrity who also was a friend of the bookstore owner in Three Pines. While he uncovers clue after clue, he also deals with enemies in his own Sûreté du Québec police department who are trying to destroy his career. He faces the wrenching realization that he may not be able to help his former colleague, Jean-Guy Beauvoir, defeat his personal demons.

The writing is wonderful, the plot is intricate, and the character development is breathtaking. When I finished the last page, I said to myself, "Wow." Many characters from previous books return, which is why I always encourage patrons to start with the first book in the series. "How the Light Gets In" will be among my favorites of 2013. I can't wait for the tenth book so I can escape once again in Louise Penny's vivid imagination.

Check our catalog: <http://encore.cooklib.org/iii/encore/... the light gets in penny>

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## **Joseph says**

I am kind of surprised by the remarkably high reviews this novel has received especially since it's as if Lee

Child kidnaped Louise Penny and wrote the last fifty plus pages of the novel. The conclusion begs belief since there is way too much exposition to tie up an already outrageous plot. What is even more disturbing is the pat happy ending appended to a critical supporting character struggling in the throes of drug addiction who all of sudden is sharing bon mots with his boss and mentor as best man and now father-in-law after causing him such psychic pain over the course of the novel. I have seem Hallmark cards less schmaltzy than this. The integrity of Inspector Gamache as envisioned by Penny-a literate, thoughtful, and humane individual- is diminished by this sort of cheap sentiment. In addition, the technology-related subplot was written as if Penny read an "Encryption For Dummies" book and decided she felt competent enough to structure key scenes around it. Alas, compared to the beautiful, thoughtful, humane characters and literary writing that usually marks the Gamache series, this book is a huge disappointment to the otherwise superlative series.

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## **Carol says**

### **SPOILERS BELOW**

Yes, I gave this one only three stars. I have read and really liked the other books in the series, but I thought this one was subpar -- not bad but not as excellent as its predecessors. Here's why.

1. Penny's writing style seemed almost a caricature of itself. All of those sentence fragments. Done for emphasis. Getting on my nerves. Time after time. In an overly dramatic way. I don't recall being so aware and irritated by the writing in past books but the jerky style of this one grated on me. It interfered with my ability to lose myself in the story, and that's a big flaw for me.
2. The plot lines just didn't hold together. There are really two separate tracks in this story, one involving the death of a famous quintuplet (think Dionne quints) and one involving the continuing politics and corruption that Gamache has fought against in the Surete. The former was a far more interesting story to delve into, although the solution to this murder seemed rushed and forced, almost an afterthought to the corruption story. The second plotline focuses on Gamache's attempts to uncover and counteract an ongoing plot that reaches the highest levels of Canadian government, as well as the Surete. I found this entire story line to be silly. It didn't make sense from the very beginning (the whole business about the Cree reservation and the dam? nonsensical), it didn't hang together well, and it made me think of a cartoon like Underdog or Powerpuff Girls, with an evil genius trying to carry out some nefarious plan so he can take over the world. Unfortunately the focus of the second half of the book is mostly on the corruption storyline, and it left me shaking my head in disbelief. Even the ending is just too much: ludicrous, not well thought out, a too-clever-by-half solution to an bizarre and unbelievable problem.
3. The character of Gamache is starting to become less real and less believable, and more of a superhero. Everything he does is perfect, he never makes a mistake, he is always a gentleman and noble and patient and wonderful in every way. (Could it be Mary Sue syndrome?) No one could ever be that one-sided and perfect and it makes him seem like some fantasy superhero rather than a genuine human being--especially in the context of this novel, where he must deal with so many challenges. Other characters (the imperfect ones, like Nichol) were much more believable and compelling.
4. The ending was just too pat and perfect from an emotional standpoint, as well as a plot standpoint.
5. The book is less of a police procedural, becoming more like a thriller with the corruption storyline. I hope

Penny goes back to a more traditional police procedural in any future books.

6. I'm really, really sick of everyone quoting the work of an imaginary poet. The same line, over and over again. ENOUGH ALREADY.

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### **Susan says**

I love this book! I was fortunate to receive an advanced copy of Louise Penny's latest mystery novel "How the Light Gets In", the ninth in the series about Chief Inspector Armand Gamache and the Homicide Division of the Surete du Quebec. I had already reserved a hard copy for the August 2013 release date because this is one author I buy in hardcover; the better to savor her writing. This truly gifted author has the ability to make you FEEL - so much so, that this is almost more novel than mystery - although there are three compelling mysteries entwined in this latest book.

In talking about this book, Ms. Penny says "My books are about terror. That brooding terror curled deep down inside us. But more than that, more than murder, more than all the rancid emotions and actions, my books are about goodness. And kindness. About choices." I guarantee she will make you feel all this and so much more. She will bring you to the edge of your seat, make your heart pound in anticipation and ache as you feel the suffering of her always well-constructed characters. Because she also lets you feel hope and joy, the struggle between the light and the dark is that much more vivid.

This book opens as Christmas approaches and the author deftly portrays the joy and anticipation of the season played off against the sadness as Gamache's elite squad is dismantled and scattered, while unscrupulous forces are at work in the Surete. Who will settle for nothing less than Gamache's destruction? and that of his next in charge Jean-Guy Belavoir? A terrible alliance that has been 30 years in the making will once again bring evil into the heart of the tiny village of Three Pines and threaten all that the inhabitants hold dear.

To those who have read all the previous books in the Chief Inspector Gamache series, you will not be disappointed, as her writing somehow is brought to an even higher level, her plots are even more complex, her characters more finely drawn. We know these people and we care about them; we feel with them.

I highly recommend this book, but if you find yourself curled up in your chair, unable to stop reading far into the night, remember you were warned....

This is writing at its' very best. Bravo Ms. Penny, you are a Master!

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### **Phrynette says**

How the Light Gets In is possibly my favourite of this series so far! It had everything I look for in these books - Three Pines, snow (lots of), Armand Gamache being his wonderful self, great police work, lots of excitement and a duck.

It was pretty essential to have read the previous books in order to get the most out of this one. Some long standing plot lines were brought to a conclusion and the characters are so much better for having known

them a long time. Three Pines is a character in itself, especially at Christmas with log fires, hot chocolate and good friends.

There was a lot of action and considerable suspense and by the last quarter of the book there was no way I was going to stop reading just because it was the middle of the night and I had to get up early. I read through to the last delicious page and went to sleep happy.

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## **Margaret says**

While checking Goodreads to see how many ratings Louise Penny's very new novel has received (over 2,000 so far), I couldn't help noticing that it has earned a collective rating of 4.65. That eye-popping score just had to be one of the highest ratings I have noticed. For the sake of comparison, I decided to check the Goodreads ratings of some of the best books ever. Thomas Fagles' brilliant translation of *The Odyssey* earned a 3.65; Toni Morrison's *Beloved* has a 3.69; Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* merits a 3.76; David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* rates a 4.04; and Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* tops this group of five favorites with a 4.09. Respectable scores all, but none even close to Penny's 4.65.

What can account for the extraordinarily high rating of this very fine book? Don't get me wrong; I love reading Louise Penny, and I think *How The Light Gets In*, her ninth Gamache novel, is her best so far. But these scores got me thinking: why does this book outscore my five great books listed above? Why does it outscore (by 0.4 points or more) Penny's own first eight novels? Here is my best attempt to solve that mystery.

Penny's books hit us where we live, that is, in our belief that somewhere there must be a place as magical and comforting as Three Pines, that somewhere there must be a man as compassionate and professionally competent as Chief Inspector Armand Gamache. Three Pines isn't on the map; those who find their way there do so because they somehow need to be there. A good example would be Myrna Landers, the psychotherapist turned bookseller of used and new books. She arrived there by chance at a time of personal need, a time when she was wearying of her profession. She felt so welcome in Three Pines she opened a bookstore and stayed. Now she is a core character appearing in all the books set in Three Pines. The town bistro is the comfiest place on earth with its twin hearths at either end of the room and a menu consisting entirely of comfort gourmet food. The service is beyond excellent; during snowstorms Gabri (a co-owner of the bistro) walks through the snow delivering hot chocolate and crispy croissants to those who cannot walk to the bistro to get their breakfasts. We never read about septic tank service providers or school board fights; instead, Three Pines is home to artists, poets, and craftsman farmers and their families.

Chief Inspector Gamache, Penny's lead character, heads the homicide department of the Montreal office of the Sûreté de Québec. There he takes in broken-winged police officers unappreciated by the department at large and trains them to be the very best homicide detectives. Through Gamache's instruction they come to embody humility and wisdom by learning and using Gamache's core four statements: I was wrong, I'm sorry, I don't know, and I need help. Penny herself on her website says that if there is just one thing she wishes her readers would take from her books, it's that kindness exists. And if we read her books, we believe it does. Just look at Gamache.

While the Gamache books are indeed murder mysteries, it almost always seems that what goes on around the murder is somehow infinitely more important than the mere trying to figure out who done it. The interpersonal relationships of people is paramount, even more so in this ninth book than in any of its

predecessors. Yes, there is a mysterious murder in *How the Light Gets In*, and the victim (and her murderer) turn out to be very interesting indeed. But that seems almost incidental to the more pressing plot elements focusing on the problems within the Sûreté. Resolving those issues which concern Gamache's very place in this world seems entirely more important than solving the murder. Her readers certainly agree, even though some might wonder at the end of this book in which direction the next book might go. I trust that Penny knows her way, and I can't wait to see where she'll lead me.

Then there's the writing itself. While Penny is not trying to rival Toni Morrison or David Mitchell, she writes a stylish, literary, and lucid prose filled with insight into the human condition. And her books have been getting better. It matters if you read them in order, and if you do, you will watch a master writer honing her craft. This ninth book soars above the eighth. Can anyone continue to improve as much as Penny has, even though her very first book (*Still Life*) is both eloquent and excellently well-written. I bet Penny can.

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### **switterbug (Betsey) says**

For readers unfamiliar with Louise Penny's mystery series, this is #9 with Chief Inspector Armand Gamache. Although this is only my second foray into her Quebec crime series (my first being her last book, *BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY*), I was impressed with her ability to create multiple plots and weave them together. There's a fresh murder to solve in the town of Three Pines (where some of her series takes place), as well as an arc that started several books ago--the malfeasance of the Sûreté du Québec (police dept). Additionally, Armand's close colleague and personal friend, Jean-Guy Beauvoir, is suffering from addiction problems.

*HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN* takes us back to Three Pines, where I met several quirky/eccentric people for the first time, but am well aware that they are repeating characters, (or sometimes just former ones). Penny does a solid job of bringing new readers into this small village and allowing us to meet the inhabitants naturally and unaffectedly. She doesn't broadcast their histories with awkward exposition, but rather lets pieces of their past unfold with the present events. That takes subtlety and finesse, something that Penny astutely possesses. The truculent poet, Ruth, for example, may be on the periphery of a scene periodically, and then take center stage. Penny juxtaposes scenes and events that progress the various plots and develop the characters with riveting tension.

The murder of septuagenarian, Constance Pineault, who had just recently visited Three Pines bookstore owner, Myrna, brings Gamache back to investigate. This is right before the Christmas holidays, where the deep snow and cold air tends to create gatherings at the warm village bistro. At the same time, Gamache is struggling to keep his decimated homicide department together. He has been undermined by Superintendent Sylvain Françoeur, who has effectively fouled Gamache's reputation and is honing in for the final blow. Armand's relationship with Jean-Guy has also been maimed, thanks to Françoeur and Jean-Guy's torment with his own personal demons.

Penny also devotes ample space to suspenseful cyber hacking, and does it nimbly and accessible to even the low-tech reader. My nails were bitten to the quick! And she demonstrates the truth in human nature, as colleagues claw each other with raw vitriol, and yet show genuine compassion, too.

Treachery; suspense; still voices; moving targets; exquisite plotting--the reader will be satisfied AND nonplussed in equal measure by the end of the book. I don't want to spoil this potent novel for anyone, but I will say that I am glad I read *BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY* first, because I was already involved before this

book began, with a gestating inevitability that has been underpinning much of Gamache's current directives. I am speculating that this is Penny's most heightened and cataclysmic book to date.

As an end note, Penny tells us that the title of this book is based on a Leonard Cohen song called Anthem.

*"Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering,  
There's a crack in everything,  
That's how the light gets in."*

Besides those beautiful words germane to the substance of this book, the title itself is apropos to one of the definitions of anthem: a hymn sung alternately by different sections of a choir or congregation.

An anthem it is.

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### **Margitte says**

*"Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack, a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in".....*

**Leonard Cohen**

*Ingenious and sinister.* These words form part of the official blurb for this ninth book in the Inspector Gamache series. The intrigue and animosity around Chief Inspector Armand Gamache are closing in when his enemies, with his senior manager, Francoeur, as the front runner in the Sureté de Quebec, slowly pulls the plug on his honorable career. They have dismantled his department, spread his agents into every other division, such as Traffic, Serious Crimes, Public Safety, Emergency Response, Cyber Crime and brought in their own people, watching a respected and admired division getting gutted.

He takes it in his stride, not commenting, not reacting. Always polite and calm. He does not get distracted from the latest murder case which brings him back to Three Pines.

Myrna's friend, and also ex-patient, Constance Pineault, has a secret she wishes to share with her after many years. She asks Myrna, the bookstore owner in Three Pines, if she can come back to Three Pines for the Christmas Season, but never returns. Inspector Gamache is called in. Three Pines becomes his safety net - a village so hidden that is not even indicated on any maps and almost non-detectable from space. While the mystery around the famous Constance is investigated, Gamache must deal with the hostile forces bringing his lifelong dedication and reputation to an end. He also follows the destructive path of Inspector Jean-guy Beauvoir as it is opened up for him by the people who are manipulating him to establish Camache's downfall.

The events is kicked off by a metaphoric incident in the Ville-Marie Tunnel that is supporting the city. Audrey Villeneuve, an employee in the department of Transport, discovers a secret which will destroy the city and change the history of Montreal forever.

"She could see it. Hear it. Feel it happening.

The first sign would be a blast as drivers hit their brakes. The truck ahead would veer, skidding, slamming sideways. An unholy shriek would bounce off the hard walls and race towards her, all-consuming. Horns, alarms, brakes, people screaming...

...Audrey's eyes widened. This has never happened before. Moving through the tunnel was bad enough. Stopped in it was inconceivable. Her brain froze.

"It'll be all right." But she couldn't hear her voice, so thin was her breath and so great the howl in her head ..."

The cracks.

Dear God, cracks.

And the half-hearted attempts to plaster over them, but hide them ...

The most important aspect in this book is that all the previous threads are pulled together in this one and leaves the devoted readers with a sense of contentment and even happiness. In fact, I could stop reading this series here and now, and live happily ever after on the good memories.

Louise Penny's books can be read as stand-alones, but each one of them picks up a thread from a previous book, developing all the characters. This book, in my opinion, needs the previous two, to fully explain the relationship between Gamache and Beauvoir.

My personal opinion: The intrigue surrounding the scandal of corruption, murder and mayhem in the police department, went a little too far, pulling this saga out of the bucolic, yet high voltage field of all the previous ones in the series. I did not appreciate the new element, of high profile politics and destructive elements in society, bringing Penny's writing into the folds of international bestselling *oeuvre* of high-speed action, mega catastrophes and surreal actions. That is not the reason why I love her books so much, and if she moves more into that direction, my days in Three Pines will be numbered.

When Wilbur Smith left behind his unique stories told in his unique voice, I stopped buying his books. It's as simple as that. The bestselling template used by editors are simply not my style. My loss of devotion to her books will undoubtedly not be a catastrophe since millions of new readers will be gained and that's okay too. For her. One person's loss is another person's gain. I just hope that her unique writing style will not get lost in the newly-acquired fame.

Overall though, this book was a tremendously enjoyable read. Rich in prose and intrigue. Multi-leveled issues is addressed. Harmony and happiness form an underlying thread weaving through the tumult and scandal and mayhem. Honor and dignity's two sides are exposed. Friendships are tested. Sanity wins in the end.

My Three Pines-fix did not disappoint! I am as hooked as I was with *Still Life*, the first book in the series. Louise Penny remains my all-time favorite murder mystery writer with this particular series.

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## Jo says

Louise Penny is my favorite mystery author, and this is the best book yet!

Read my review at on my library page: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

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### **Sharon Redfern says**

I would give this book 10 stars or more if I could. When I was approved for the egalley, being the mature professional librarian that I am, I went up to one of my coworkers who also reads the series and basically said Nya! Nya! I got to read the book early. That is the level of devotion that this entire series inspires in its readers.

After the emotional ending of the previous book, I was prepared for this one to be heavy duty but I had no idea how much this emotion this book would evoke. I literally sat on my couch for hours barely able to take a breath because I was so caught up into the story. Looking back at the previous books, one can see all of the clues leading up to the finish of this book but it is absolutely stunning to see how they all come together.

When this book begins, Gamache is seemingly hanging on by a thread. His agents have been scattered all through the department and he has a group of disrespectful yahoos working for him. But his enemies haven't won the war, only the first skirmish. Gamache still has some fight left in him and he has friends in powerful places. As in all of Ms. Penny's books, there are side stories that seem to have no reflection on the main plot but everything, I mean everything is important!

Inspector Gamache gets involved in the disappearance of a woman who had visited Three Pines and planned to return but never showed up. As he digs deeper into her life, he discovers facts about her life that will surprise all who knew her. Readers over a certain age will remember the actual situation that inspired this story line and what a huge story it was in its day.

Anyone who has followed this series will be crazy while reading this book, so just leave them alone and be prepared for a lot of emotion after they are done. While one part of Gamache's life is resolved, the ending opens up a lot of questions about what the future holds for Gamache and all of us loyal readers!

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### **Tabatha Hibbs says**

While I enjoy a good series, there are few books that are part of a series that leave me with a book hangover when I am finished with them. *How the Light Get In* left me with that hangover. I finished it this afternoon, and since that time I've not wanted to read anything. I've just wanted to live with the emotional reverberations this book created within me. I have read the entire series, and I suspect that some of this reaction is a cumulative effect: I've spent a lot time with these characters, and there are many I care deeply about. I suspect part of the reaction is that the book reads as though it may be the last in the series, and I'm actually okay with that. It ended perfectly, although not without pain and loss, grace and redemption.

What has drawn me to Penny's work all along is her profound belief that despite the darkness there is goodness and that there are people in the world who live that goodness even when it costs them much to do so. A friend once bashed Inspector Gamache because he wasn't damaged enough to be interesting. I argued that one does not have to be damaged to be interesting. One only has to be authentic to be interesting, and Gamache is authentic. He is not perfect, but he is true to himself and to his beliefs. All of these elements: darkness, goodness, grace, redemption, the struggle to be the authentic self weave through this book in ways both profound and subtle. While some might say the ending Penny wrote is predictable and treat this predictability as a bad thing, I argue that the ending is one that is authentic to the world that Penny has created in this series and to the seeds of love, kindness, belief, and loyalty that Gamache has shown throughout the series. In Penny's world, the light does get in, and, as always when I've finished one of her

novels, I want to live in that world of light.

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### **Maine Colonial says**

You shouldn't be reading this book unless you're already familiar with the Armand Gamache/Three Pines series, so I'll get right into the setup. It begins shortly after *The Beautiful Mystery* ended, and things are just as grim as you would imagine for Chief Inspector Armand Gamache. His longtime enemies at the Sûrté du Québec are circling, sharklike, and taking bites out of his Homicide team. All of his team members have been moved to other departments, with the exception of Isabelle Lacoste, and the officers moved to his team in their place are slackers, insubordinate and obviously playing for the bad guys.

Gamache's second-in-command, Jean-Guy Beauvoir, has made a complete break with Gamache, is now working for Gamache's arch-enemy, Superintendent Francoeur, and is again hooked on painkillers. The sharks have isolated their prey and are coming in for the kill.

Considering what his office has become, it is almost a relief to Gamache when Myrna Landers, Three Pines's flamboyant bookseller, asks for his help to find a missing friend. This seemingly simple case unexpectedly becomes a last chapter in the story of Québec's most famous baby boomers, the first quintuplets to survive their birth (obviously based on the Dionne quintuplets).

The Sûrté corruption plot that we've been following for this entire series takes center stage in this book, and it's a nail-biter that puts all of the characters under make-or-break stress. For those who have been wondering about the reach of the corruption and what its long-term goals are, this will be a particularly satisfying read.

Though some call Louise Penny's books cozies, those who are familiar with the series know that's completely wrongheaded. She has transformed the police procedural and village mystery genres into not a mash-up, but something unique, original and genuine. There is no distance between the reader and the lives of the characters; their thoughts and emotions, what they eat and drink, how they interact with each other and, most important, how they react when bad things happen.

Penny is such a keen observer that it's all too easy to believe that you can travel to Three Pines, sit down at the Bistro and join in the conversation with all these characters, or walk the green with them and watch the village children playing hockey. My annual visit was all too short and I can't wait to return next year.

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### **Kaye says**

what to say about "How The Light Gets In." Truthfully, it leaves me speechless. It's full of phrasing any writer would die to claim as their own. It made me laugh out loud on one page, only to have me burst into tears of pure emotion two pages later. I know I keep saying her writing just keeps getting better with each book, but I find it to be true. I love her writing, and I love her stories. I feel an attachment to the residents of Three Pines and hope they'll live in the pages of more and more books for many years to come. There's still much to be learned about each of them. My only complaint is having to wait so long in between! (I am such a petty girl).

For fans who prefer their Penny in Three Pines, this book's for you.

For those who just love Penny wherever she takes us, you are going to thank her for this one.

Most of you who have fallen in love with these books know by now that Louise Penny's books are about terror. And, to quote what she says about them, they're also about goodness, and kindness. In this latest entry she gives us a healthy dose of all these things and she touches every emotion with a strength unknown to most writers,, in my most humble opinion.

The title "How The Light Gets In" comes from Leonard Cohen's "Anthem." "Ring the bells that still can ring, Forget your perfect offering, There's a crack in everything, That's how the light gets in."

Louise Penny shows the cracks in heartbreaking clarity. We finish this novel understanding the cracks and bathed in purest light. I love this book more than I have words to share.

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