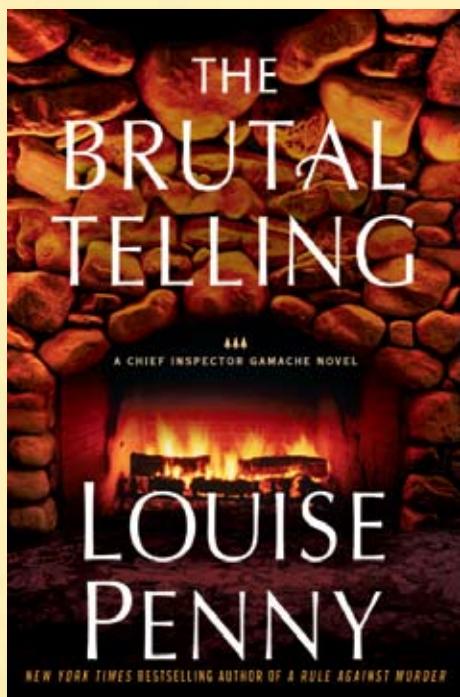




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PREVIOUS SELECTIONS INCLUDE:

THE THIRTEENTH TALE
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Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

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THE VANISHING ACT OF ESME LENNOX
Maggie O'Farrell

PRAYERS FOR SALE
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BELONG TO ME
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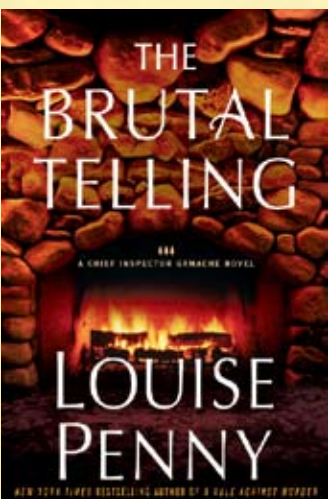
THE PHYSICK BOOK OF DELIVERANCE DANE
Katherine Howe

CHILD 44
Tom Rob Smith

THE DAY THE FALLS STOOD STILL
Cathy Marie Buchanan

A Body in a Bistro, A Treasure in the Forest, and A Tale of Murder Beyond the Pale.

The village in Quebec where Louise Penny's Chief Inspector Gamache novels are set is home to a bistro, a bookstore, a bed-and-breakfast, and a boulangerie. Tantalizing aromas seem to waft from every room, and friendship warms the homes of the eccentric collection of people that populates the town, a potpourri of escaping urbanites, artists, carpenters, and an outlandish poet with a pet duck.



And yet, as Penny's fifth novel unfolds, it isn't long before murder disturbs the tranquility of the community watched over by the graceful trees that give Three Pines its name. One Sunday morning, the body of a stranger is discovered on the floor of the town's commercial and spiritual center: the bistro run by Olivier Brulé and his partner, Gabri. The victim appears to be a stranger—but is he? The answer to that question, and to the more pressing mystery of his killer's identity, soon rests in the hands of Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec.

Arriving in Three Pines, a town of old friends and, sadly, new suspects, the commanding yet kind Gamache deploys his crew of detectives to gather evidence in the apparently clueless case. Each discovery—a corpse that won't stay still, a house whose restoration can't erase the aura of its haunted past, a log cabin located deep in the woods that holds an astonishing collection of priceless artifacts—ties another enigmatic knot in the intricate web of secrets and deceptions Gamache must unravel.

Tellingly blending the social pleasures of a cozy with the escalating terror of a psychological thriller, Penny traces

Gamache's investigation as it expands to encompass cultural treasures that range from pieces of the fabled Amber Room to the china of Catherine the Great, from a first edition of *Jane Eyre* to the violin of the great Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů, from the modern art of the museums of Montreal to Haida totem poles on the mist-enshrouded Queen Charlotte Islands of British Columbia. With breathless anticipation, the reader follows Gamache as he pursues the shocking and brutal truth hidden in the heart of a seemingly loving community.

An Excerpt from *The Brutal Telling*

People lied all the time in murder investigations. If the first victim of war was the truth, some of the first victims of a murder investigation were people's lies. The lies they told themselves, the lies they told each other....

Gabri approached carrying a tray with four steaming plates. Within minutes they were sitting around the fireplace eating fettuccini with shrimp and scallops sautéed in garlic and olive oil. Fresh bread was produced and glasses of dry white wine poured.

As they ate, they talked about the Labor Day long weekend, about the chestnut trees and conkers. About kids returning to school and the nights drawing in.

The bistro was empty, except for them. But it seemed crowded to the Chief Inspector. With the lies they'd been told, and the lies being manufactured and waiting.

About the Author

The Brutal Telling is Louise Penny's fifth Chief Inspector Armand Gamache novel. The series' debut, *Still Life*, which introduced readers to the quaint village of Three Pines and the distinguished sleuth who solves its mysteries, announced the arrival of a major talent, winning the New Blood Dagger, Arthur Ellis, Barry, Anthony, and Dilys awards. Penny's second and third novels, *A Fatal Grace* and *The Cruellest Month*, each won Agatha Awards for Best Novel in the tradition of Agatha Christie. Her fourth Gamache novel, *A Rule Against Murder*, has been named one of *Booklist's* Top Ten Crime Novels for 2009.



Penny's bestselling mysteries skillfully savor the details of daily life in a small community inhabited by an attractive and unpredictable cast of idiosyncratic souls, while the character of the captivating and magnanimous Gamache prompted fellow crime novelist Reginald Hill to draw a comparison with Georges Simenon's legendary Maigret.

Born in Toronto in 1958, Penny began her career as a journalist and radio host with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. She believes that her years as a reporter, which took her across Canada from Thunder Bay to Quebec City and finally to Montreal, provided solid training for her work as a novelist. "A good interviewer rarely speaks, she listens. Closely and carefully. I think the same is true of writers." As his fans have learned, the same is true as well of Chief Inspector Armand Gamache.

Louise Penny currently lives outside a small village south of Montreal, close to the American border, with her husband Michael and their two golden retrievers.

Get the most out of *The Brutal Telling* with these reading group discussion questions.

1. The legend of the boy and the mountain is a powerful tale. How did you interpret it when it was first introduced into the narrative? How did your understanding of it change as the novel progressed?
2. Was Olivier wrong to give Madame Poirier less money for her furniture than he knew it was worth? Don't we all hope to find hidden gems at antique shops or flea markets? How would you have handled the transaction?
3. Discuss how the characters reveal their personal desires, and how these threaten to be transformed into greed. What is the difference between desire and greed? Who succeeds in containing his or her impulses toward greed? Who fails?
4. How do you view the sudden appearance of Vincent Gilbert and his status as a "saint"? Would you agree with Gamache when he points out, "Most saints were martyrs, and they took a lot of people down with them"?
5. Discuss the character of the poet, Ruth. How much do you think she knows about the murderer? What is the significance of her companion, Rosa?
6. Did the Hermit finally find peace in the wilderness? Could you live contentedly in the Hermit's cabin?
7. Towards the end of the book, Gamache thinks, "This murder was about fear. And the lies it produced. But, more subtly, it was about stories." What does he mean? Are the poetry and other forms of art featured in the book, from painting to sculpture to the Haida carvings, also forms of storytelling?
8. How do you think the community of Three Pines will weather the revelations of *The Brutal Telling*?

Further Reading:

Louise Perry's four previous Chief Inspector Gamache Novels:

STILL LIFE | FATAL GRACE | THE CRUELEST MONTH | A RULE AGAINST MURDER

FROM OUR BOOKSELLERS

Praise for *The Brutal Telling*

"Thank you for introducing me to a terrific new mystery writer. Why hadn't I discovered this series before? Inspector Gamache is magnifique! I can't wait to read the first four books. This is the perfect autumn curl-up-on-your-couch-with-a-café-au-lait read."

Margie Turkett, Annapolis, MD

"A riveting story that unfolds like a chain of paper dolls, until it reaches its startling conclusion."

Kelly Yauk, East Lansing, MI

"A perfect 10!"

Donald Kendall, Troy, MI

"So much more than a simple 'whodunit,' *The Brutal Telling* is a multi-layered, intriguing story with lots of suspects and possible motives. I came to love the characters in the charming Canadian village of Three Pines, and didn't want to believe that one of them was a murderer. The author does a superb job of revealing just a little at a time—until the guilty party becomes unglued and the truth comes to the surface."

Jill Borage, St. Louis, MO

Praise for Previous Barnes & Noble Recommends Main Selections

"Definitely the best book I've read this year! I could almost feel the mist wafting from Niagara Falls!"

Suzzé Tiernan, Bloomfield Hills, MI
on *The Days the Falls Stood Still*

"Howe hit the perfect balance between spine-tingling thriller and thoughtful questioning of the Salem witch trials. I couldn't, and didn't, put it down."

Doug Britt, Chicago, IL
on *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane*

"*Dog On It* was not only unputdownable, it was 'stay-up-all-night-reading, but-save-the-last-few-chapters-for-the-next-day-because-you-don't-want-it-to-be-over' good."

Angela Corpus, Washington, DC
on *Dog On It*

"What a story! The war, the possibility of romance in the most unlikely of places, and best of all, the glowing love of reading and of books—all of it wrapped up in such lovely, unpretentious prose that after every chapter I wanted to hand it to strangers."

Steve Donoghue, Boston, MA
on *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*

BARNES & NOBLE
RECOMMENDS

— *The Brutal Telling* —

Publisher Price \$24.99

B&N Price \$17.49

Member Price \$14.99



Join a Book Discussion

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and author appearances in your store.

Start Your Own Reading Group

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or visit www.bn.com/recommends.

Share the Experience Online

Watch a video interview with Louise Penny
and join our interactive discussions of this and
other recommended books at www.bn.com/recommends.

Prices effective through 10/??/09.