



## A Trick of the Light (Chief Inspector Gamache, Book 7) (Chief Inspector Gamache Novel)

By Louise Penny

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A *New York Times* Notable Crime Book for 2011

"Hearts are broken," Lillian Dyson carefully underlined in a book. "Sweet relationships are dead."

But now Lillian herself is dead. Found among the bleeding hearts and lilacs of Clara Morrow's garden in Three Pines, shattering the celebrations of Clara's solo show at the famed Musée in Montreal. Chief Inspector Gamache, the head of homicide at the Sûreté du Québec, is called to the tiny Quebec village and there he finds the art world gathered, and with it a world of shading and nuance, a world of shadow and light. Where nothing is as it seems. Behind every smile there lurks a sneer. Inside every sweet relationship there hides a broken heart. And even when facts are slowly exposed, it is no longer clear to Gamache and his team if what they've found is the truth, or simply a trick of the light.

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## **A Trick of the Light (Chief Inspector Gamache, Book 7) (Chief Inspector Gamache Novel) By Louise Penny Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

Review

Marilyn Stasio's Notable Crime Books of 2011, *New York Times Book Review*

*Seattle Times* Best Mysteries of 2011

*The Globe and Mail* Best of 2011 Mystery/Thriller List

*Publishers Weekly* Top Ten Mystery of 2011

“Stellar... with her smart plotting and fascinating, nuanced characters, Penny proves again that she is one of our finest writers.”

?*People Magazine*

“[A] deceptively charming whodunit... delivering acute insights into the complicated motives of complex characters.”

?Marilyn Stasio, *The New York Times Book Review*

“Penny writes mysteries that cover a lot more than the actual crime, dealing as well with the emotions, thoughts and internal struggles that people go through... Penny's subplots are always as interesting as her main story, and *A Trick Of The Light* is no exception. Penny captures readers in many ways, including with her characters and settings. And of course, a gripping mystery.”

?Mary Foster, *Associated Press*

“Louise Penny elevates the small-town murder mystery to new heights in this seventh installment of her psychologically piercing series featuring Chief Inspector Gamache.”

?*Parade*

“The twist of beauty into death and back again is the heart of Louise Penny's seventh and best mystery... This is a beautiful book, gorgeously written and carefully constructed. Penny's fans will adore it and those who haven't already discovered her should begin here.”

?Margaret Cannon, *The Globe and Mail*

“The traditional mystery, when steeped in intelligence, sympathy, rich characters and lucid prose, has a stalwart champion in Louise Penny... The interplay of opposites light and dark, friendship and bitterness is an insistent and powerful motif in this heartbreaker.”

?Adam Woog, *Seattle Times*

“Penny's writing shimmers?with subtle humor, a deep understanding of human dynamics, and a knack for creating memorable images in just a few words. She artfully constructs a warm, multidimensional world.”

?Diana Pinckley, *Times-Picayune*

“Superb... Penny continues to amaze with each novel. Wrapped in exciting plots and domestic details, her characters are people we want to follow through their very real joys and sorrows.”

?Michele Ross, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

“Penny’s characters are, to a one, rich and multifaceted, her plotting is intricately laced with backstory and her depiction of modern-day Quebec is spot on. *A Trick Of The Light*, like all the Gamache novels that precede it, is simply not to be missed.”

?Bruce Tierney, *BookPage*

“Penny, elevating herself to the pantheon that houses P.D. James, Ruth Rendell and Minette Walters, demonstrates an exquisite touch with characterization, plotting and artistic sensitivity. And there could be no better explanation of A.A. than you will find here.”

?*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

“Outstanding....With her usual subtle touch and timely injections of humor, Penny effectively employs the recurring motif of the chiaroscuro, the interplay of light and dark, which distinguishes Morrow's artwork and which resonates symbolically in the souls of the author's characters.”

?*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

“Like P. D. James, Penny shows how the tight structure of the classical mystery story can accommodate a wealth of deeply felt emotions and interpersonal drama.”

?*Booklist*

“Penny’s characters are sharply drawn, realistically complicated and heartbreakingly real. Wonderful, complex characters and sophisticated plotting makes this a perfect book. Do not miss it.”

?RT Book Reviews

“The superbly gifted Louise Penny is on my secret shortlist of must-read authors, and *A TRICK OF THE LIGHT* proves why. Artist Clara Morrow is about to have a prestigious show of her paintings when her childhood friend is found murdered, and the finger of suspicion points to Clara. Chief Inspector Gamache is called to investigate, and using his trademark powers of deduction and his intuitive knack for the right question at the right time, he exposes the darkness that underlies the bright stars of Montreal's art world, where competition between friends, and even between husband and wife, can turn lethal. Ultimately, of course, it's Louise Penny who steals the show, and *A TRICK OF THE LIGHT* will not only keep you engrossed from start to finish, it will teach you something new about love, truth, and the human heart.”

?Lisa Scottoline

About the Author

**LOUISE PENNY** is the author of the #1 *New York Times* and *Globe and Mail* bestselling series of Chief Inspector Armand Gamache novels. She has won numerous awards, including a CWA Dagger and the Agatha Award (five times), and was a finalist for the Edgar Award for Best Novel. In 2017, she received the Order of Canada “for her contribution to Canadian culture.” Louise lives in a small village south of Montréal. Visit her on Facebook or at [www.louisepenny.com](http://www.louisepenny.com).

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*A TRICK OF THE LIGHT* (Chapter 1)

Oh, no, no, no, thought Clara Morrow as she walked toward the closed doors.

She could see shadows, shapes, like wraiths moving back and forth, back and forth across the frosted glass.

Appearing and disappearing. Distorted, but still human.

Still the dead one lay moaning.

The words had been going through her head all day, appearing and disappearing. A poem, half remembered. Words floating to the surface, then going under. The body of the poem beyond her grasp.

What was the rest of it?

It seemed important.

Oh, no no no.

The blurred figures at the far end of the long corridor seemed almost liquid, or smoke. There, but insubstantial. Fleeting. Fleeing.

As she wished she could.

This was it. The end of the journey. Not just that day's journey as she and her husband, Peter, had driven from their little Québec village into the Musée d'Art Contemporain in Montréal, a place they knew well. Intimately. How often had they come to the MAC to marvel at some new exhibition? To support a friend, a fellow artist? Or to just sit quietly in the middle of the sleek gallery, in the middle of a weekday, when the rest of the city was at work?

Art was their work. But it was more than that. It had to be. Otherwise, why put up with all those years of solitude? Of failure? Of silence from a baffled and even bemused art world?

She and Peter had worked away, every day, in their small studios in their small village, leading their tiny lives. Happy. But still yearning for more.

Clara took a few more steps down the long, long, white marble hallway.

This was the "more." Through those doors. Finally. The end point of everything she'd worked toward, walked toward, all her life.

Her first dream as a child, her last dream that morning, almost fifty years later, was at the far end of the hard white hallway.

They'd both expected Peter would be the first through those doors. He was by far the more successful artist, with his exquisite studies of life in close-up. So detailed, and so close that a piece of the natural world appeared distorted and abstract. Unrecognizable. Peter took what was natural and made it appear unnatural.

People ate it up. Thank God. It kept food on the table and the wolves, while constantly circling their little home in Three Pines, were kept from the door. Thanks to Peter and his art.

Clara glanced at him walking slightly ahead of her, a smile on his handsome face. She knew most people, on first meeting them, never took her for his wife. Instead they assumed some slim executive with a white wine in her elegant hand was his mate. An example of natural selection. Of like moving to like.

The distinguished artist with the head of graying hair and noble features could not possibly have chosen the woman with the beer in her boxing glove hands. And the pâté in her frizzy hair. And the studio full of sculptures made out of old tractor parts and paintings of cabbages with wings.

No. Peter Morrow could not have chosen her. That would have been unnatural.

And yet he had.

And she had chosen him.

Clara would have smiled had she not been fairly certain she was about to throw up.

Oh, no no no, she thought again as she watched Peter march purposefully toward the closed door and the art wraiths waiting to pass judgment. On her.

Clara's hands grew cold and numb as she moved slowly forward, propelled by an undeniable force, a rude mix of excitement and terror. She wanted to rush toward the doors, yank them open and yell, "Here I am!"

But mostly she wanted to turn and flee, to hide.

To stumble back down the long, long, light-filled, art-filled, marble-filled hallway. To admit she'd made a mistake. Given the wrong answer when asked if she'd like a solo show. At the Musée. When asked if she'd like all her dreams to come true.

She'd given the wrong answer. She'd said yes. And this is where it led.

Someone had lied. Or hadn't told the whole truth. In her dream, her only dream, played over and over since childhood, she had a solo show at the Musée d'Art Contemporain. She walked down this corridor. Composed and collected. Beautiful and slim. Witty and popular.

Into the waiting arms of an adoring world.

There was no terror. No nausea. No creatures glimpsed through the frosted glass, waiting to devour her. Dissect her. Diminish her, and her creations.

Someone had lied. Had not told her something else might be waiting.

Failure.

Oh, no no no, thought Clara. Still the dead one lay moaning.

What was the rest of the poem? Why did it elude her?

Now, within feet of the end of her journey all she wanted to do was run away home to Three Pines. To open the wooden gate. To race up the path lined with apple trees in spring bloom. To slam their front door shut behind her. To lean against it. To lock it. To press her body against it, and keep the world out.

Now, too late, she knew who'd lied to her.

She had.

Clara's heart threw itself against her ribs, like something caged and terrified and desperate to escape. She realized she was holding her breath and wondered for how long. To make up for it she started breathing rapidly.

Peter was talking but his voice was muffled, far away. Drowned out by the shrieking in her head, and the

pounding in her chest.

And the noise building behind the doors. As they got closer.

“This’s going to be fun,” said Peter, with a reassuring smile.

Clara opened her hand and dropped her purse. It fell with a plop to the floor, since it was all but empty, containing simply a breath mint and the tiny paint brush from the first paint-by-number set her grandmother had given her.

Clara dropped to her knees, pretending to gather up invisible items and stuff them into her clutch. She lowered her head, trying to catch her breath, and wondered if she was about to pass out.

“Deep breath in,” she heard. “Deep breath out.”

Clara stared from the purse on the gleaming marble floor to the man crouched across from her.

It wasn’t Peter.

Instead, she saw her friend and neighbor from Three Pines, Olivier Brulé. He was kneeling beside her, watching, his kind eyes life preservers thrown to a drowning woman. She held them.

“Deep breath in,” he whispered. His voice was calm. This was their own private crisis. Their own private rescue.

She took a deep breath in.

“I don’t think I can do it.” Clara leaned forward, feeling faint. She could feel the walls closing in, and see Peter’s polished black leather shoes on the floor ahead. Where he’d finally stopped. Not missing her right away. Not noticing his wife was kneeling on the floor.

“I know,” whispered Olivier. “But I also know you. Whether it’s on your knees or on your feet, you’re going through that door.” He nodded toward the end of the hall, his eyes never leaving hers. “It might as well be on your feet.”

“But it’s not too late.” Clara searched his face. Seeing his silky blond hair, and the lines only visible very close up. More lines than a thirty-eight-year-old man should have. “I could leave. Go back home.”

Olivier’s kindly face disappeared and she saw again her garden, as she’d seen it that morning, the mist not yet burned off. The dew heavy under her rubber boots. The early roses and late peonies damp and fragrant. She’d sat on the wooden bench in their backyard, with her morning coffee, and she’d thought about the day ahead.

Not once had she imagined herself collapsed on the floor. In terror. Longing to leave. To go back to the garden.

But Olivier was right. She wouldn’t return. Not yet.

Oh, no no no. She’d have to go through those doors. They were the only way home now.

“Deep breath out,” Olivier whispered, with a smile.

Clara laughed, and exhaled. “You’d make a good midwife.”

“What’re you two doing down there?” Gabri asked as he watched Clara and his partner. “I know what Olivier usually does in that position and I hope that isn’t it.” He turned to Peter. “Though that might explain the laughter.”

“Ready?” Olivier handed Clara her purse and they got to their feet.

Gabri, never far from Olivier’s side, gave Clara a bear hug. “You OK?” He examined her closely. He was big, though Gabri preferred to call himself “burly,” his face unscored by the worry lines of his partner.

“I’m fine,” said Clara.

“Fucked up, insecure, neurotic and egotistical?” asked Gabri.

“Exactly.”

“Great. So’m I. And so’s everyone through there.” Gabri gestured toward the door. “What they aren’t is the fabulous artist with the solo show. So you’re both fine and famous.”

“Coming?” asked Peter, waving toward Clara and smiling.

She hesitated, then taking Peter’s hand, they walked together down the corridor, the sharp echoes of their feet not quite masking the merriment on the other side.

They’re laughing, thought Clara. They’re laughing at my art.

And in that instant the body of the poem surfaced. The rest of it was revealed.

Oh, no no no, thought Clara. Still the dead one lay moaning.

I was much too far out all my life

And not waving but drowning.

\* \* \*

From far off Armand Gamache could hear the sound of children playing. He knew where it was coming from. The park across the way, though he couldn’t see the children through the maple trees in late spring leaf. He sometimes liked to ...

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Sonja Johnson:**

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