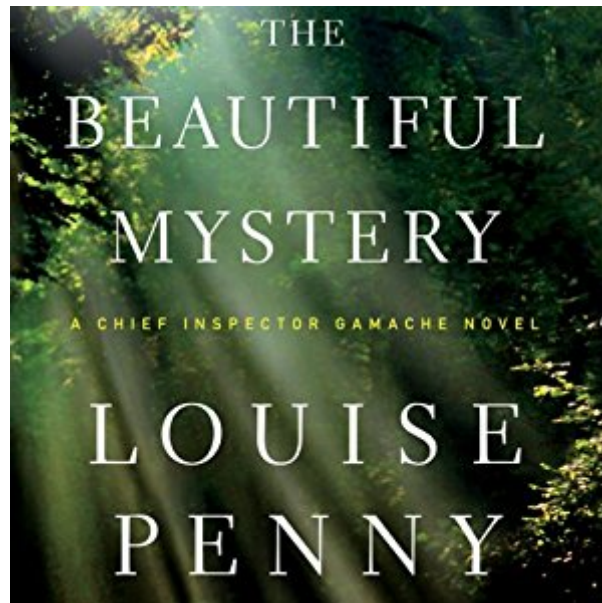




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The Beautiful Mystery: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel



Synopsis

Audie Award Nominee, Mystery, 2013 The brilliant new novel in the New York Times best-selling series by Louise Penny, one of the most acclaimed crime writers of our time. No outsiders are ever admitted to the monastery of Saint-Gilbert-Entre-les-Loups, hidden deep in the wilderness of Quebec, where two dozen cloistered monks live in peace and prayer. They grow vegetables, they tend chickens, they make chocolate. And they sing. Ironically, for a community that has taken a vow of silence, the monks have become world-famous for their glorious voices, raised in ancient chants whose effect on both singer and listener is so profound it is known as "the beautiful mystery." But when the renowned choir director is murdered, the lock on the monastery's massive wooden door is drawn back to admit Chief Inspector Armand Gamache and Jean-Guy Beauvoir of the Sûreté du Québec. There they discover disquiet beneath the silence, discord in the apparent harmony. One of the brothers, in this life of prayer and contemplation, has been contemplating murder. As the peace of the monastery crumbles, Gamache is forced to confront some of his own demons, as well as those roaming the remote corridors. Before finding the killer, before restoring peace, the Chief must first consider the divine, the human, and the cracks in between.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm sorry to have to give this book only 3 stars. It took too long to get anywhere and repeating to much. Wish she would give up on the warehouse tragedy as it is getting boring to keep hearing it

over and over. Couldn't believe it took the entire book for something to happen and then at the very last pages ending with a disappointing finish. Seemed strange to me to have the big boss just appear and never really do anything except to corrupt the egotist Beauvoir to get revenge on Gamache. Had big hopes for the book as it appeared to be a different turn from 3 Pines but could hardly finish it. Had to keep going to see if anything ever happened, but really didn't enjoy the book. Of course, I will continue to read this series as I like Louise Penny and hope there will not be another 3 STAR..

I agree with another reviewer who called this a wordy mystery. The basic premise was good enough - a murder within a monastery. Inspector Armand Gamache and his assistant, Jean-Guy Beauvoir, set off to investigate and end up staying at the monastery while events progress. They find factions and conflicts within, and monks taking vows of silence can convey a lot with looks, turned backs, etc. All is not well, and there is a major disagreement setting them apart as they take sides. As far as reading, my progress was very slow, as the novel did not hold my attention and I found it easy to set aside. I was left with the impression that the author became lost in the plot. Eventually, the main plot becomes secondary as additional characters are introduced; and as the plot takes a new direction. I did not like the change in direction and the eventual outcome. This seems to be one of those cases where an author wants to dispose of characters - maybe becoming tired of them. The novel takes some psychological twists. I much preferred the author's previous novels, such as *A Trick of the Light: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel* (Chief Inspector Gamache Novels)

Perhaps because I adored the early books in this series, I have higher expectations of each new one. I have been disappointed lately, and especially in this one. Perhaps because Ms. Penny is so popular and adored, she is no longer edited...the endless repetitions of ideas, phrases, descriptions that didn't add anything to the atmosphere or the suspense, the endless choppy sentences (that are merely incomplete clauses, which, used judiciously can add dramatic effect, but overused, become melodrama); the unbelievable ending...in television, I believe it's called "jumping the shark." William Faulkner advised writers to kill their darlings. I think Penny is a great writer, but she's so in love with her own prose she can't cut anything, and much needed to be cut in this novel.

There was one good question: How did musical notes develop from Plainchant. But this story makes a mess of the speculation. I like a mystery story to be like a bud developing into a flower. All the parts are present in the beginning; with time and the right conditions the final solution is

revealed. This book is like a group of adolescents telling a continued story. A man appears in the mist at an unknown monastery. Someone has a secret. There may be a hidden room, there may be homosexuality, add in a doomed love affair, a drug addiction problem, a gun fight and so on. Neither characters nor plot has any clarity or integrity. If I were sitting around a campfire at least I could get a marshmallow to break up the monotony.

I absolutely loved this installment in the Three Pines/Inspector Gamache mystery from Louise Penny, even though Three Pines is nowhere to be found. In this one, Gamache and Beauvoir investigate the murder of the prior/choirmaster at a remote Quebec cloistered monastery whose monks are known for their voices. The monks' recording of Gregorian chants has created some dissension, but, until now, dissension had been measured by raised eyebrows and other subtleties. As is usual, Louise Penny's writing is beautiful and full of depth. This is a book to be savored, though I wondered throughout whether the good citizens of Three Pines were enjoying their brief respite from crime. Penny's version of the locked room mystery is an interesting take on the usual kind of locked room puzzles (not only is the monastery locked to outsiders but the location of the murder is not easily accessible even to the monks). Highly, highly recommended!! If you haven't read a Louise Penny, you owe it to yourself to give her a try. However, while this one is different from her usual, I'd recommend starting with the first one, *Still Life* (Chief Inspector Armand Gamache Mysteries, No. 1).

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