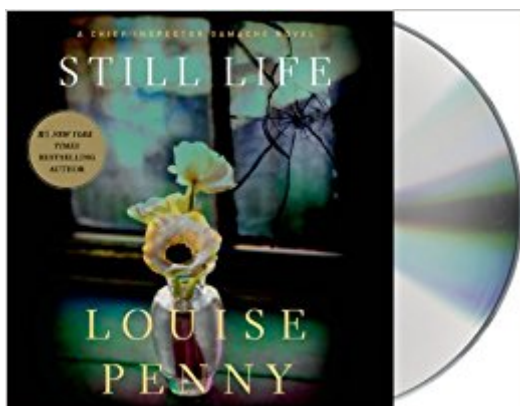


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# Still Life: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel Novel



## Synopsis

Winner of the New Blood Dagger, Arthur Ellis, Barry, Anthony, and Dilys awards. Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec and his team of investigators are called in to the scene of a suspicious death in a rural village south of Montreal. Jane Neal, a local fixture in the tiny hamlet of Three Pines, just north of the U.S. border, has been found dead in the woods. The locals are certain it's a tragic hunting accident and nothing more, but Gamache smells something foul in these remote woods, and is soon certain that Jane Neal died at the hands of someone much more sinister than a careless bowhunter. Still Life introduces not only an engaging series hero in Inspector Gamache, who commands his forces---and this series---with integrity and quiet courage, but also a winning and talented new writer of traditional mysteries in the person of Louise Penny.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Canadian Penny's terrific first novel, which was the runner-up for the CWA's Debut Dagger Award in 2004, introduces Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec. When the body of Jane Neal, a middle-aged artist, is found near a woodland trail used by deer hunters outside the village of Three Pines, it appears she's the victim of a hunting accident. Summoned to the scene, Gamache, an appealingly competent senior homicide investigator, soon determines that the woman was most likely murdered. Like a virtuoso, Penny plays a complex variation on the theme of the clue hidden in plain sight. She deftly uses the bilingual, bicultural aspect of Quebecois life as well as arcane aspects of archery and art to deepen her narrative. Memorable characters include

Jane; Jane's shallow niece, Yolande; and a delightful gay couple, Olivier and Gabri. Filled with unexpected insights, this winning traditional mystery sets a solid foundation for future entries in the series. (July) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** The residents of a tiny Canadian village called Three Pines are shocked when the body of Miss Jane Neal is found in the woods. Miss Neal, the village's retired schoolteacher and a talented amateur artist, has been a good friend to most of the townsfolk, so her loss is keenly felt. At first, her death appears to be a tragic accident--it's deer-hunting season, and it looks a stray hunter's arrow killed her. But some folks are suspicious, and Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Montreal Surete is called in to investigate. Accompanying Gamache are his loyal assistant Beauvoir and Yvette Nichol, a new addition to Gamache's team. The trio soon finds that the seemingly peaceful, friendly village hides dark secrets. The truth is both bizarre and shocking, even to the jaded Gamache and his team. This is a real gem of a book that slowly draws the reader into a beautifully told, lyrically written story of love, life, friendship, and tragedy. And it's a pretty darn good mystery too. This belongs in the same league with such other outstanding Canadian mysteries as Eric Wright's Charlie Salter series. Emily Melton Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

When the body of an elderly woman is discovered in the woods outside the idyllic hamlet of Three Pines, the first assumption is that this is the result of a tragic hunting accident. Unfortunately, in the world of mystery novels, nothing is ever as cut and dried as it seems. *Still Life* is the first novel by Louise Penny. The book was published in 2007, and the twelfth book in the series will be published in August of this year. This should give you some indication of both the series' success, and the work ethic of the author. The book introduces the title character, Armand Gamache, a chief inspector of the Sûreté du Québec, as he seeks to solve a murder in a small village near Montreal. The village itself, and its eclectic denizens, becomes a character in the book, quirky and unique, always providing some background movement to draw the eye. The setting in a small village in the Canadian province of Quebec also adds interest, as Penny delves (a little bit) into the tensions, and friendships, between francophone and anglophone Québécois. The supporting characters are also incredibly well done. From the strange and eccentric citizens of Three Pines, to the police officers tasked with solving the murder, each character is uniquely realized and speaks with a distinct voice. However, Penny tends to rely heavily

on exposition to advance her characters in the story, rather than dialogue. Characters thought lines tend to spell out exactly how they are reacting to situations that arise in the book, rather than letting the subtext of their actions or dialogue advance the plot. The style is clunky and a bit disappointing, but hopefully can be chalked up to inexperience on the author's part. (I certainly hope so, I started the second book in the series, *A Fatal Grace*, yesterday. I'll keep you all posted) The mystery itself is satisfying, red herrings and false flags abound. And while the clues to solving the mystery are there to be found, they don't slap the reader in the face and scream "look at me!" This (I find) is a hard line for mystery writers to walk. Make the resolution too obscure, or the clues happen off screen, and the end is unsatisfying and feels tacked on. Telegraph the important stuff too loudly, and the mystery is solved by the read way too early, and takes a lot of the fun out of the read. Louise Penny does a great job sprinkling bits and pieces around, but blends them expertly into the background. It's only when you go back and think about it that you put the pieces together. In all, this is a satisfying cozy-type mystery, great for an afternoon read (and it is currently beach-reading season). The book is generally well written (barring the clunky exposition I mentioned earlier), and the characters engaging enough to encourage you to jump directly into the sequel. I also have to say that Penny captures the northeastern landscape in fall closely enough to cause some homesickness in this transplanted New Englander. Check out more reviews by checking out my blog! [...]

If you love a mystery series then dig into Louise Penny's Detective Gamache books. Best to start with number one and they do progress in the story lines. These are not Le Carre caliber at all. Think "Agatha Raisin". They are light as a feather and are centered in a delightful town outside Montreal. All of the atmosphere is French Canadian. The descriptions of the food, the town and the characters make me want to move to the fictional Three Pines right now. A murder is the glue that holds each book together. If you want to get your mind off the big, bad world, these do the trick. That's what I used them for. Louise Penny books are a guilty pleasure that serve a good purpose.

I am ordering the next books in the series. Inspector Gamache is sent to a small town to cover the death of an elderly lady - was it an accident or a murder? I loved the characters and the setting of the story. I felt like I really got to know the characters, and I want to take a trip Three Pines and meet them all :) The story is a good mystery - the investigation is well done

These are a little ponderous, but they're gentle mysteries with likable characters--good for a winter

snow storm with a cat curled up in your lap or a dog sleeping at your feet. They're not great literature, but they're pleasant when you're in the mood for something unchallenging and well-told.. You'll figure out whodunit long before the detectives, but they're still comfortable reads Sometimes, you just want to spend time with likable characters who don't make you work too hard.

My first time reading a Louise Penny book. I enjoyed it...so much that I'm now on the 3rd book in the Inspector Gamache series. Her writing is humorous, serious, descriptive and keeps me interested. I'm loving the characters in the books. Also, I've learned some interesting facts that are tied in to the stories. I have a feeling I'm going to continue reading the next and the next and the next book ! When I get myself all comfy and pull out my Kindle, it's like visiting with old friends.

I really enjoyed reading this book about Detective Armond Gamache solving a mysterious death of an elderly, beloved woman in Three Pines, Quebec. Louise Penny has such a nice way of describing the characters in the story that the reader really feels for them and really likes the Detective. It is a page turner as the author keeps you guessing about who done it! I would recommend this book and am looking forward to reading more of Louise Penny's books.

Well-plotted, suspenseful and humane, but with some occasionally hamfisted characterizations. A villain is 'mincing', the bookseller is one of Spike Lee's Magical Negroes, and the gays sing It's Raining Men when they aren't busy antiquing...Still it's a lovely, well-meaning and gripping book and I will probably read more of them. Gamache makes you wish for a SÃfÂ»retÃ© filled with only-Gamaches.

The author's descriptions made me feel like I was actually there in the little town. I liked her character development too. And although I figured out who the murderer was I enjoyed how she built up to the reveal. I'll be reading more of these stories.

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