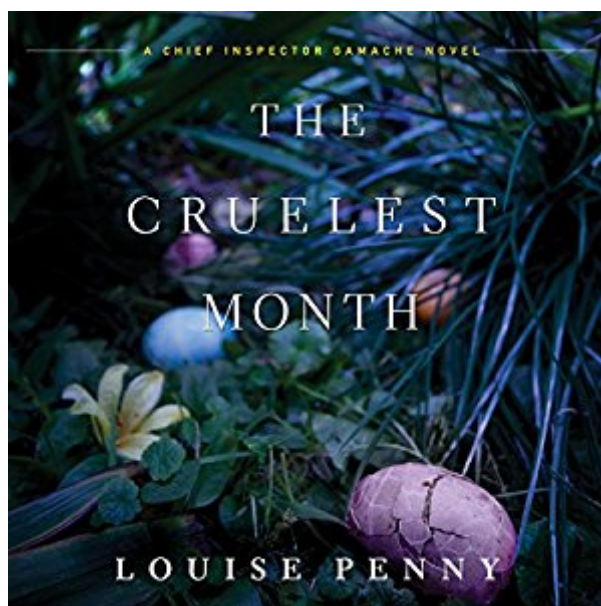


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The Cruellest Month: A Chief Inspector Gamache Novel, Book 3



Synopsis

Welcome to Three Pines, where the cruelest month is about to deliver on its threat. It's spring in the tiny, forgotten village; buds are on the trees, and the first flowers are struggling through the newly thawed earth. But not everything is meant to return to life.... When some villagers decide to celebrate Easter with a dance at the Old Hadley House, they are hoping to rid the town of its evil - until one of their party dies of fright. Was this a natural death, or was the victim somehow helped along? Brilliant, compassionate Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec is called to investigate in a case that will force him to face his own ghosts as well as those of a seemingly idyllic town where relationships are far more dangerous than they seem.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 11 hours and 46 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Macmillan Audio

Audible.com Release Date: September 1, 2015

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B014Q77HEY

Best Sellers Rank: #12 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers > British

Detectives #86 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > British Detectives #825

in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature

Customer Reviews

Ms. Penny always does a masterful job developing both the mystery and the characters involved, including the secondary people. Story grabs you while the suspense builds. The plot has many twists, with several characters having unique motives for murdering the original victim. The Morrow family is one of the most dysfunctional with Claire's husband Peter one of the emotionally lost. I do get a bit amused by the constant descriptions of what everyone is eating, however.

Choosing between Dark and Thoughtful to best describe the mood of this novel is difficult. There is a very sad undertone to the plot, fueled by reference to witchcraft, which borders on dark, but Louise Penny's tales of Inspector Gamache describe life surrounding a murder, so in that sense it is

not a dark novel. Quite apart from the plot being surprising, Penny's characters are both thoughtfully developed and surprising in themselves. As you read through the series about the inhabitants of Three Pines, you think you have them pegged, but then they do or say something out of character. They are human. The Cruellest Month references T.S. Eliot's poem 'The Wasteland'. It is a clever choice of title because during April, at the same time as Gamache is investigating a murder, his own situation is being undermined by people he trusts...or does he?

A murder at a seance brings Inspector Gamache back to Three Pines and the dark, forbidding Hadley House. He and his team work to uncover the truth, while becoming more familiar with the interesting inhabitants of the small village. Be sure to start with the first book in the series; you'll enjoy every one of them.

Not a light read. The layers of the book are best understood by reading all three books but can be gleaned from just the one. There is depth, literature references, and poetry that are important. The books have questions for book club discussion and that indicates this is no easy beach read. Worth the effort.

This is the third and best Inspector Gamache novel I've read so far. I stayed up late into the night until I finished. Next time I will have to start earlier in the evening! The novels are really ensemble pieces, and as they progress, the reader discovers new information about the characters and their fears, hopes, desires and secrets. Ms. Penny gets the reader to care about her unique, quirky characters and their lives, and in this novel, the seeds are sown for the next storyline. Much is revealed about the Arnot case, unusual alliances and twists, small betrayals which portend larger betrayals to come, and more of Ruth's development and growth. There are always a number of stories that somehow get connected, and in this one, the intertwined stories make for a powerful ending. While it is a murder mystery, there is so much more going on under the surface to keep the reader engaged. I look forward to read the next book in the series.

I have read most of Louise Penny's books and each one leads into the next but not in such a manner that impacts the plot. I love the way the characters are described and how you don't want to put the book down until the end. The violence is mild and acceptable. The main characters are also growing older.

This is a good book, and features all the characters we have learned to love in Three Pines. Still, I am a little tired of the back story of all the problems of the Police department and all against brave inspector Gamache. I think it has even done to death and time to give it a rest.

Pick up your best croissant and coffee (pretend Olivier and Gabri served them fresh from the boulangerie next door) and prepare to enter the magical village of Three Pines. Louise Penny has created such memorable, layered characters that the reader enjoys getting to know them better. Especially the remarkable Inspector Gamache. Kudos for shadowing them with light and dark, with human frailty as well as courage and kindness.

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