



## *How the Light Gets In by Louise Penny*

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### **About the author:**

Louise Penny is the #1 New York Times and Globe and Mail bestselling author of more than ten 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. She lives in a small village south of Montréal.

Source: Macmillan Publishers (<http://us.macmillan.com/>)

### **About this book:**

The #1 New York Times Bestseller

"There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." --Leonard Cohen

Christmas is approaching, and in Québec it's a time of dazzling snowfalls, bright lights, and gatherings with friends in front of blazing hearths. But shadows are falling on the usually festive season for Chief Inspector Armand Gamache. Most of his best agents have left the Homicide Department, his old friend and lieutenant Jean-Guy Beauvoir hasn't spoken to him in months, and hostile forces are lining up against him. When Gamache receives a message from Myrna Landers that a longtime friend has failed to arrive for Christmas in the village of Three Pines, he welcomes the chance to get away from the city. Mystified by Myrna's reluctance to reveal her friend's name, Gamache soon discovers the missing woman was once one of the most famous people not just in North America, but in the world, and now goes unrecognized by virtually everyone except the mad, brilliant poet Ruth Zardo.

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As events come to a head, Gamache is drawn ever deeper into the world of Three Pines. Increasingly, he is not only investigating the disappearance of Myrna's friend but also seeking a safe place for himself and his still-loyal colleagues. Is there peace to be found even in Three Pines, and at what cost to Gamache and the people he holds dear?

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### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Louise Penny has said that Three Pines isn't just the setting for *How the Light Gets In*; it is a main character and plays a pivotal role. How do you view that character and that role?
2. The title is taken from a verse in Leonard Cohen's "Anthem." What meaning do the lyrics have in the story—and perhaps in your own experience?  

*Ring the bells that still can ring,  
Forget your perfect offering,  
There's a crack in everything.  
That's how the light gets in.*
3. We meet Constance Ouellet only briefly, at the start of this novel, yet by the end we understand a great deal about her life. What do you make of that life? How about Audrey Villeneuve's?
4. How do you view the relationship between Gamache and Beauvoir throughout the book? What do you ultimately think of both men?
5. On her website, Louise says, "If you take only one thing away from any of my books I'd like it to be this: Goodness exists." How is goodness manifested in this book? What about evil?



6. On page 124, we are told that the birth “was a miracle, but it was also a mess.” What else, in the novel and in life, can be described in that way?

7. On page 200, “Chief Inspector Gamache walked over to one of the maps of Québec tacked to a wall. He smiled. Someone had placed a tiny dot south of Montreal....Written there, in a small perfect hand, was one word. Home. It was the only map in existence that showed the village of Three Pines.” What does this passage—and the concept of home—mean to you?

8. Page 236 describes “the stained-glass window made after the Great War, showing bright young soldiers walking forward. Not with brave faces. They were filled with fear. But still they advanced.” What does this image, along with the events in the novel, say about courage?

9. If you have read any (or all) of Louise's previous novels, what changes have you seen in the characters and in the books themselves?

10. Many readers have said that they wish they could move to Three Pines. Do you feel that way? What appeals to you (or does not) about the place and the people there?

11. If there was another chapter, after the end of this book, what would happen in it?

*Source: Macmillan Publishers (<http://us.macmillan.com/>)*

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