

# Baker's Dozen

## *Penny publishes 13<sup>th</sup> Gamache Suspense Tale*

---

### *Suspended Sentences*

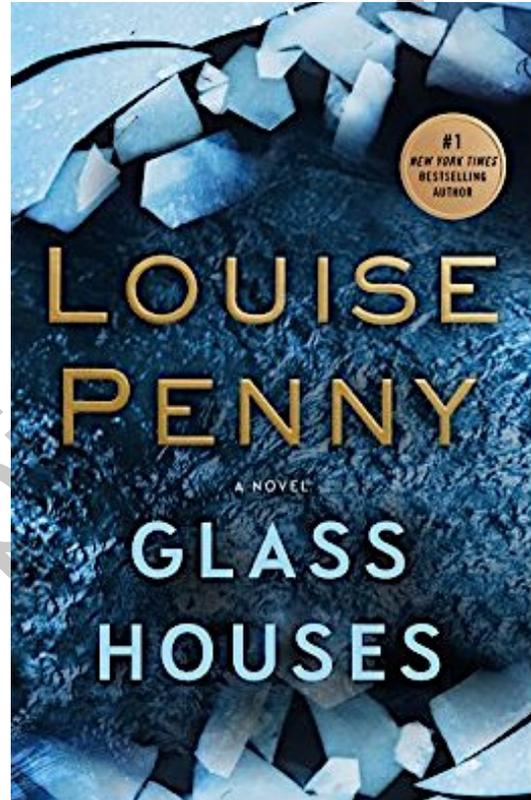
---

by Jim Napier

Louise Penny's latest novel featuring Armand Gamache begins in a Quebec courtroom at the Palais de Justice in Old Montreal. Someone is on trial for murder, but just who is initially unclear. Chief Superintendent Armande Gamache is in the witness box, but he seems almost to be treated as the accused, subjected to intense, even aggressive, examination by the Chief Crown Prosecutor. The judge is aware of the strange dynamic, but inclined to give the prosecutor leeway; she is new to the bench, and this is her first homicide case.

An exceptional turn of events, and altogether fitting to a case in which a mysterious robed figure suddenly appears on the village green in Three Pines. The appearance had aroused the curiosity of the local residents. It had been the night of a Halloween party at the local bistro, and it was perhaps natural for folks to assume that the hooded creature was somehow involved. But it was unnerving, nonetheless: a figure dressed in dark clothing, positioned on the village green where no one could possibly miss it, silent and unmoving, suggesting to some the personification of Death itself.

Before long the villagers are unnerved. They ask Gamache to see



what the mysterious figure wants, and somehow to get it to move on. But the person (thing?) remains immobile, and, breaking no laws, Gamache is powerless to prevail.

But people fear the unknown, and the good citizens of Three Pines are no different. Before long the figure on the green moves from being regarded as "he" to being seen as "it," and references are unearthed reaching back centuries, of a legion of similar creatures that were the agents of cosmic justice, reaching out to accuse

those guilty of transgressions but somehow beyond the reach of the law, and force them to atone for their sins. Events seem to be spiraling out of control, and they reach a climax when the mysterious visitor suddenly disappears, and a body is found in the most sacred place in Three Pines.

While these uncanny events are taking place Gamache must also wrestle with another issue, more of this world: an epidemic of drug trafficking is taking over Quebec, reaching into the US and involving even the village of three Pines. The problem is so serious that to Gamache it threatens the very rule of law throughout the province. He and his team must somehow prevail over this menace, while coming to grips

with the deadly events surrounding the mysterious figure on the village green.

*Glass Houses* caps Louise Penny's best-selling and award-winning series based in Three Pines. The usual suspects are all there: Myrna and Clara, Olivier and Gabri, Reine Marie, Ruth and her x-rated duck, Jean-Guy and Isabelle Lacoste, and new visitors to Three Pines as well. The mysterious events in the sequestered village are leavened, as we have come to expect, by Penny's enticing allusions to *la bonne cuisine*. But underlying all of the charm of Three Pines is the promise of a well-told tale, deftly wrapping suspense around a devilish plot that will delight Louise Penny's many fans.

---

Previously published in the *Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph*, August, 2017.

Since 2005 more than 500 of Jim Napier's reviews and interviews have appeared in several Canadian newspapers and on such websites as *Spinetingler*, *The Rap Sheet*, *Shots Magazine*, *Crime Time*, *Reviewing The Evidence*, *January* magazine, the *Montreal Review of Books*, the *Ottawa Review of Books*, and *Amazon.com*, as well as on his own award-winning crime fiction site, *Deadly Diversions*. His own crime novel, *Legacy*, was published in April of 2017. He can be reached at [jnapier@deadlydiversions.com](mailto:jnapier@deadlydiversions.com)

