



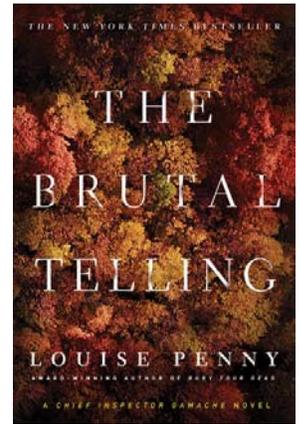
The Brutal Telling

By Louise Penny

St. Martin's Griffin

ISBN: 978-0-312-66168-7

Trade Paperback



About the Book:

Chaos is coming, old son.

With those words the peace of Three Pines is shattered. Everybody goes to Olivier's Bistro—including a stranger whose murdered body is found on the floor. When Chief Inspector Gamache is called to investigate, he is dismayed to discover that Olivier's story is full of holes. Why are his fingerprints all over the cabin that's uncovered deep in the wilderness, with priceless antiques and the dead man's blood? And what other secrets and layers of lies are buried in the seemingly idyllic village?

Gamache follows a trail of clues and treasures—from first editions of *Charlotte's Web* and *Jane Eyre* to a spiderweb with a word mysteriously woven in it—into the woods and across the continent, before returning to Three Pines to confront the truth and the final, brutal telling.

Reading Group Guide Questions:

1. A theme in this book, and many of Louise's books, is the difference between "truth" and "opinion." Is it always important to tell the truth, no matter how brutal it may be?
2. Was Olivier really wrong to give Madame Poirier less money for her furniture than he knew it was worth? Isn't that what we all hope we'll find at antique shops or flea markets? A treasure? Would you do differently?
3. When Superintendent Thérèse Brunel asks Clara what she fears, she says, "I'm afraid of not recognizing Paradise." Thérèse responds, "So am I." Why do you think they are both worrying about this, and can you connect such concerns to your own life?
4. How do you view the various assertions that Vincent Gilbert is a saint, especially when Gamache points out that "most saints were martyrs, and they took a lot of people down with them"? How would you feel about living with a saint?
5. For a moment Gamache himself feels the tug of greed and would love to slip one of the first editions into his pocket. What do you think of Gamache at that moment? Does it remind you of any temptations you yourself have faced?"
6. In the book Brunel and Gamache discuss where the finest example of a Haida totem pole is standing. Where is that, and what is the irony?
7. What was the final monster? The thing even the Mountain ran from, and that kept the Hermit hiding in his cabin? How do you think this applies to the various characters in the book?
8. Ruth puts Rosa into clothing. Why?
9. Was the Hermit happy, finally? Had he found peace? Could you live in the Hermit's cabin?
10. In the book Gamache quotes Thoreau's *Walden*: "I had three chairs in my house. One for solitude, two for friendship, three for society." How many chairs would you have in your house?
11. What is the role of storytelling throughout the novel? What about poetry and other forms of art, from painting to sculpture and totem poles?
12. If Three Pines existed, would you move there? How do you think the community will weather the events of this story?