



BURY YOUR DEAD **Chapter 1**

Up the stairs they raced, taking them two at a time, trying to be as quiet as possible. Gamache struggled to keep his breathing steady, as though he was sitting at home, as though he had not a care in the world.

“Sir?” came the young voice over Gamache’s headphones.

“You must believe me, son. Nothing bad will happen to you.”

He hoped the young agent couldn’t hear the strain in his voice, the flattening as the Chief Inspector fought to keep his voice authoritative, certain.

“I believe you.”

They reached the landing. Inspector Beauvoir stopped, staring at his Chief. Gamache looked at his watch.

47 seconds.

Still time.

In his headphones the agent was telling him about the sunshine and how good it felt on his face.

The rest of the team made the landing, tactical vests in place, automatic weapons drawn, eyes sharp. Trained on the Chief. Beside him Inspector Beauvoir was also waiting for a decision. Which way? They were close. Within feet of their quarry.

Gamache stared down one dark, dingy corridor in the abandoned factory then down the other.

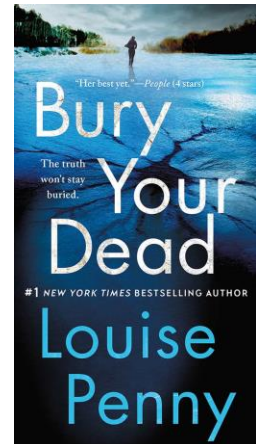
They looked identical. Light scraped through the broken, grubby windows lining the halls and with it came the December day.

43 seconds.

He pointed decisively to the left and they ran, silently, toward the door at the end. As he ran Gamache gripped his rifle and spoke calmly into the headset.

“There’s no need to worry.”

“There’s forty seconds left, sir.” Each word was exhaled as though the man on the other end was having difficulty breathing.





“Just listen to me,” said Gamache, thrusting his hand toward a door. The team surged ahead.

36 seconds.

“I won’t let anything happen to you,” said Gamache, his voice convincing, commanding, daring the young agent to contradict. “You’ll be having dinner with your family tonight.”

“Yes sir.”

The tactical team surrounded the closed door with its frosted, filthy window. Darkened. Gamache paused, staring at it, his hand hanging in the air ready to give the signal to break it down. To rescue his agent.

29 seconds.

Beside him Beauvoir strained, waiting to be loosed.

Too late, Chief Inspector Gamache realized he’d made a mistake.

Give it time, Armand.”

“*Avec le temps?*” Gamache returned the older man’s smile and made a fist of his right hand. To stop the trembling. A tremble so slight he was certain the waitress in the Quebec City café hadn’t noticed. The two students across the way tapping on their laptops wouldn’t notice. No one would notice.

Except someone very close to him.

He looked at Émile Comeau, crumbling a flaky croissant with sure hands. He was nearing eighty now, Gamache’s mentor and former chief. His hair was white and groomed, his eyes through his glasses a sharp blue. He was slender and energetic, even now. Though with each visit Armand Gamache noticed a slight softening about the face, a slight slowing of the movements.

Avec le temps.

Widowed five years, Émile Comeau knew the power, and length, of time.

Gamache’s own wife, Reine-Marie, had left at dawn that morning after spending a week with them at Émile’s stone home within the old walled city of Québec. They’d had quiet dinners together in front of the fire, they’d walked the narrow snow- covered streets. Talked. Were silent.



Read the papers, discussed events. The three of them. Four, if you counted their German shepherd, Henri.

And most days Gamache had gone off on his own to a local library, to read.

Émile and Reine-Marie had given him that, recognizing that right now he needed society but he also needed solitude.

And then it was time for her to leave. After saying good-bye to Émile she turned to her husband. Tall, solid, a man who preferred good books and long walks to any other activity, he looked more like a distinguished professor in his mid-fifties than the head of the most prestigious homicide unit in Canada. The Sûreté du Québec. He walked her to her car, scraping the morning ice from the windshield.

"You don't have to go, you know," he said, smiling down at her as they stood in the brittle, new day. Henri sat in a snow bank nearby and watched.

"I know. But you and Émile need time together. I could see how you were looking at each other."

"The longing?" laughed the Chief Inspector. "I'd hoped we'd been more discreet."

"A wife always knows." She smiled, looking into his deep brown eyes. He wore a hat, but still she could see his graying hair, and the slight curl where it came out from under the fabric. And his beard. She'd slowly become used to the beard. For years he'd had a moustache, but just lately, since it happened, he'd grown the trim beard.

She paused. Should she say it? It was never far from her mind now, from her mouth. The words she knew were useless, if any words could be described as that. Certainly she knew they could not make the thing happen. If they could she would surround him with them, encase him with her words.

"Come home when you can," she said instead, her voice light.

He kissed her. "I will. In a few days, a week at the most. Call me when you get there."

"*D'accord.*" She got into the car.

"*Je t'aime,*" he said, putting his gloved hand into the window to touch her shoulder.

Watch out, her mind screamed. Be safe. Come home with me. Be careful, be careful, be careful.

She put her own gloved hand over his. "*Je t'aime.*"



And then she was gone, back to Montreal, glancing in the rear-view mirror to see him standing on the deserted early morning street, Henri naturally at his side. Both watching her, until she disappeared.

The Chief Inspector continued to stare even after she'd turned the corner. Then he picked up a shovel and slowly cleared the night's fluffy snowfall from the front steps. Resting for a moment, his arms crossed over the handle of the shovel, he marveled at the beauty as the first light hit the new snow. It looked more pale blue than white, and here and there it sparkled like tiny prisms where the flakes had drifted and collected, then caught, remade, and returned the light. Like something alive and giddy.

Life in the old walled city was like that. Both gentle and dynamic, ancient and vibrant.

Picking up a handful of snow, the Chief Inspector mashed it into a ball in his fist. Henri immediately stood, his tail going so hard his entire rear swayed. His eyes burning into the ball.

Gamache tossed it into the air and the dog leapt, his mouth closing over the snowball, and chomping down. Landing on all fours Henri was once again surprised that the thing that had been so solid had suddenly disappeared.

Gone, so quickly.

But next time would be different.

Gamache chuckled. He might be right.

Just then Émile stepped out from his doorway, bundled in an immense winter coat against the biting February cold.

"Ready?" The elderly man clamped a tuque onto his head, pulling it down so that it covered his ears and forehead, and put on thick mitts, like boxing gloves.

"For what? A siege?"

"For breakfast, *mon vieux*. Come along, before someone gets the last croissant."

He knew how to motivate his former subordinate. Hardly pausing for Gamache to replace the shovel, Émile headed off up the snowy street. Around them the other residents of Quebec City were waking up. Coming out into the tender morning light to shovel, to scrape the snow from their cars, to walk to the boulangerie for their morning baguette and *café*.

The two men and Henri set out along rue St- Jean, past the restaurants and tourist shops, to a tiny side street called rue Couillard, and there they found Chez Temporel.



They'd been coming to this café for fifteen years, ever since Superintendent Émile Comeau had retired to old Quebec City, and Gamache had come to visit, to spend time with his mentor, and to help with the little chores that piled up. Shoveling, stacking wood for the fireplace, sealing windows against drafts. But this visit was different. Like no other in all the winters Chief Inspector Gamache had been coming to Quebec City.

This time it was Gamache who needed help.

"So," Émile leaned back, cupping his bowl of *café au lait* in slender hands. "How's the research going?"

"I can't yet find any references to Captain Cook actually meeting Bougainville before the Battle of Québec, but it was 250 years ago. Records are scattered and weren't well kept. But I know they're in there," said Gamache. "It's an amazing library, Émile. The volumes go back Centuries."

Comeau watched his companion talk about sifting through arcane books in a local library and the tidbits he was unearthing about a battle long ago fought, and lost. At least, from his point of view lost. Was there a spark in those beloved eyes at last? Those eyes he'd stared into so often at the scenes of dreadful crimes as they'd hunted murderers. As they'd raced through woods and villages and fields, through clues and evidence and suspicions. *Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears*, Émile remembered the quote as he remembered those days. Yes, he thought, that described it. *Chasmed fears*. Both their own, and the murderers. Across tables across the province he and Gamache had sat. Just like this.

But now it was time to rest from murder. No more killing, no more deaths. Armand had seen too much of that lately. No, better to bury himself in history, in lives long past. An intellectual pursuit, nothing more.

Beside them Henri stirred and Gamache instinctively lowered his hand to stroke the shepherd's head and reassure him. And once again Émile noted the slight tremble. Barely there now. Stronger at times. Sometimes it disappeared completely. It was a tell-tale tremble, and Émile knew the terrible tale it had to tell.

He wished he could take that hand and hold it steady and tell him it would be all right. Because it would, he knew.

With time.



Watching Armand Gamache he noticed again the jagged scar on his left temple and the trim beard he'd grown. So that people would stop staring. So that people would not recognize the most recognizable police officer in Québec.

But, of course, it didn't matter. It wasn't them Armand Gamache was hiding from.

The waitress at Chez Temporel arrived with more coffee.

"*Merci, Danielle,*" the two men said at once and she left, smiling at the two men who looked so different but seemed so similar.

They drank their coffees and ate *pain au chocolat* and *croissants aux amandes* and talked about the Carnaval de Québec, starting that night. Occasionally they'd lapse into silence, watching the men and women hurrying along the icy cold street outside to their jobs. Someone had scratched a three-leaf clover into a slight indent in the center of their wooden table. Émile rubbed it with his finger.

And wondered when Armand would want to talk about what happened.

It was ten thirty and the monthly board meeting of the Literary and Historical Society was about to start. For many years the meetings had been held in the evening, when the library was closed, but then it was noticed that fewer and fewer members were showing up.

So the Chairman, Porter Wilson, had changed the time. At least, he thought he'd changed the time. At least, it had been reported in the board minutes that it had been his motion, though he privately seemed to remember arguing against it.

And yet, here they were meeting in the morning, and had been for some years. Still, the other members had adjusted, as had Porter. He had to, since it had apparently been his idea. The fact the board had adjusted at all was a miracle. The last time they'd been asked to change anything it had been the worn leather on the Lit and His chairs, and that had been sixty- three years ago. Members still remembered fathers and mothers, grandparents, ranged on either side of the upholstered Mason- Dixon Line. Remembered vitriolic comments made behind closed doors, behind backs, but before children. Who didn't forget, sixty-three years later, that devious alteration from old black leather to new black leather.

Pulling out his chair at the head of the table Porter noticed it was looking worn. He sat quickly so that no one, least of all himself, could see it.



Small stacks of paper were neatly arranged in front of his and every other place, marching down the wooden table. Elizabeth MacWhirter's doing. He examined Elizabeth. Plain, tall and slim. At least, she had been that when the world was young. Now she just looked freeze-dried. Like those ancient cadavers pulled from glaciers. Still obviously human, but withered and gray. Her dress was blue and practical and a very good cut and material, he suspected. After all, she was one of those MacWhirters. A venerable and moneyed family. One not given to displays of wealth, or brains. Her brother had sold the shipping empire about a decade too late. But there was still money there. She was a little dull, he thought, but responsible. Not a leader, not a visionary. Not the sort to hold a community in peril together. Like him. And his father before him. And his grandfather.

For the tiny English community within the walls of old Quebec City had been in peril for many generations. It was a kind of perpetual peril that sometimes got better and sometimes got worse, but never disappeared completely. Just like the English.

Porter Wilson had never fought a war, being just that much too young, and then too old. Not, anyway, an official war. But he and the other members of his board knew themselves to be in a battle nevertheless. And one, he secretly suspected, they were losing.

At the door Elizabeth MacWhirter greeted the other board members as they arrived and looked over at Porter Wilson already seated at the head of the table, reading over his notes.

He'd accomplished many things in his life, Elizabeth knew. The choir he'd organized, the amateur theater, the wing for the nursing home. All built by force of will and personality. And all less than they might have been had he sought and accepted advice.

The very force of his personality both created and crippled. How much more could he have accomplished had he been kinder? But then, dynamism and kindness often didn't go together, though when they did they were unstoppable.

Porter was stoppable. Indeed, he stopped himself. And now the only board that could stand him was the Lit and His. Elizabeth had known Porter for seventy years, since she'd seen him eating lunch alone, every day, at school and gone to keep him company. Porter decided she was sucking up to one of the great Wilson clan, and treated her with disdain.

Still, she kept him company. Not because she liked him but because she knew even then something it would take Porter Wilson decades to realize. The English of Quebec City were



no longer the juggernauts, no longer the steamships, no longer the gracious passenger liners of the society and economy.

They were a life raft. Adrift. And you don't make war on others in the raft.

Elizabeth MacWhirter had figured that out. And when Porter rocked the boat, she righted it.

She looked at Porter Wilson and saw a small, energetic, toupéed man. His hair, where not imported, was dyed a shade of black the chairs would envy. His eyes were brown and darted about nervously.

Mr. Blake arrived first. The oldest board member, he practically lived at the Lit and His. He took off his coat, revealing his uniform of gray flannel suit, laundered white shirt, blue silk tie. He was always perfectly turned out. A gentleman, who managed to make Elizabeth feel young and beautiful. She'd had a crush on him when she'd been an awkward teen and he in his dashing twenties.

He'd been attractive then and sixty years later he was still attractive, though his hair was thin and white and his once fine body had rounded and softened. But his eyes were smart and lively, and his heart was large and strong.

"Elizabeth," Mr. Blake smiled and took her hand, holding it for a moment. Never too long, never too familiar. Just enough, so that she knew she'd been held.

He took his seat. A seat, Elizabeth thought, that should be replaced. But then, honestly, so should Mr. Blake. So should they all.

What would happen when they died out and all that was left of the board of the Literary and Historical Society were worn, empty chairs?

"Right, we need to make this fast. We have a practice in an hour."

Tom Hancock arrived, followed by Ken Haslam. The two were never far apart these days, being unlikely team members in the ridiculous upcoming race.

Tom was Elizabeth's triumph. Her hope. And not simply because he was the minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church next door.

He was young and new to the community, having moved to Quebec City three years earlier. At thirty-three he was about half the age of the next youngest board member. Not yet cynical, not yet burned out. He still believed his church would find new parishioners, the English community would suddenly produce babies with the desire to stay in Quebec City. He believed

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the Québec government when it promised job equality for Anglophones. And health care in their own language. And education. And nursing homes so that when all hope was lost, they might die with their mother tongue on caregivers' lips.

He'd managed to inspire the board to believe maybe all wasn't lost. And even, maybe, this wasn't really a war. Wasn't some dreadful extension of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, one which the English lost this time. Elizabeth glanced up at the oddly petite statue of General James Wolfe. The martyred hero of the battle 250 years ago hovered over the library of the Literary and Historical Society, like a wooden accusation. To witness their petty battles and to remind them, in perpetuity, of the great battle he'd fought, for them. Where he'd died, but not before triumphing on that blood-soaked farmers field. Ending the war, and securing Québec for the English. On paper. And now from his corner of the lovely old library General Wolfe looked down on them. In every way, Elizabeth suspected.

"So, Ken," Tom said, taking his place beside the older man. "You in shape? Ready for the race?"

Elizabeth didn't hear Ken Haslam's response. But then she didn't expect to. Ken's thin lips moved, words were formed, but never actually heard.

They all paused, thinking perhaps this was the day he would produce a word above a whisper. But they were wrong. Still, Tom Hancock continued to talk to Ken, as though they were actually having a conversation.

Elizabeth loved Tom for that as well. For not giving in to the notion that because Ken was quiet he was stupid. Elizabeth knew him to be anything but. In his mid-sixties he was the most successful of all of them, building a business of his own. And now, having achieved that Ken Haslam had done something else remarkable.

He'd signed up for the treacherous ice canoe race. Signed on to Tom Hancock's team. He would be the oldest member of the team, the oldest member of any team. Perhaps the oldest racer ever.

Watching Ken, quiet and calm and Tom, young, vital, handsome, Elizabeth wondered if maybe they understood each other very well after all. Perhaps both had things they weren't saying.



Not for the first time Elizabeth wondered about Tom Hancock. Why he'd chosen to minister to them, and why he stayed within the walls of old Quebec City. It took a certain personality, Elizabeth knew, to choose to live in what amounted to a fortress.

"Right, let's start," said Porter, sitting up even straighter.

"Winnie isn't here yet," said Elizabeth.

"We can't wait."

"Why not?" Tom asked, his voice relaxed. But still Porter heard a challenge.

"Because it's already past ten thirty and you're the one who wanted to make this quick," Porter said, pleased at having scored a point.

Once again, thought Elizabeth, Porter managed to look at a friend and see a foe.

"Quite right. Still, I'm happy to wait," smiled Tom, unwilling to take to the field.

"Well, I'm not. First order of business?"

They discussed the purchase of new books for a while before Winnie arrived. Small and energetic, she was fierce in her loyalty. To the English community, to the Lit and His, but mostly to her friend.

She marched in, gave Porter a withering look, and sat next to Elizabeth.

"I see you started without me," she said to him. "I told you I'd be late."

"You did, but that doesn't mean we had to wait. We're discussing new books to buy."

"And it didn't occur to you this might be an issue best discussed with the librarian?"

"Well, you're here now."

The rest of the board watched this as though at Wimbledon, though with considerably less interest. It was pretty clear who had the balls, and who would win.

Fifty minutes later they'd almost reached the end of the agenda. There was one oatmeal cookie left, the members staring but too polite to take it. They'd discussed the heating bills, the membership drive, the ratty old volumes left to them in wills, instead of money. The books were generally sermons, or lurid Victorian poetry, or the dreary daily diary of a trip up the Amazon or into Africa to shoot and stuff some poor wild creature.

They discussed having another sale of books, but after the last debacle that was a short discussion.



Elizabeth took notes and had to force herself not to lip-synch to each board member's comments. It was a liturgy. Familiar, soothing in a strange way. The same words repeated over and over every meeting. For ever and ever. Amen.

A sound suddenly interrupted that comforting liturgy, a sound so unique and startling Porter almost jumped out of his chair.

"What was that?" whispered Ken Haslam. For him it was almost a shout.

"It's the doorbell, I think," said Winnie.

"The doorbell?" asked Porter. "I didn't know we had one."

"Put in in 1897 after the Lieutenant Governor visited and couldn't get in," said Mr. Blake, as though he'd been there. "Never heard it myself."

But he heard it again. A long, shrill bell. Elizabeth had locked the front door to the Literary and Historical Society as soon as everyone had arrived. A precaution against being interrupted. Though since hardly anyone ever visited it was more habit than necessity. She'd also hung a sign on the thick wooden door. Board Meeting in *Progress*. *Library will reopen at noon*. *Thank you. Merci*.

The bell sounded again. Someone was leaning on it, finger jammed into the button.

Still they stared at each other.

"I'll go," said Elizabeth.

Porter looked down at his papers, the better part of valor.

"No," Winnie stood. "I'll go. You all stay here."

They watched Winnie disappear down the corridor and heard her feet on the wooden stairs. There was silence. Then a minute later her feet on the stairs again.

They listened to the footsteps clicking and clacking closer. She arrived but stopped at the door, her face pale and serious.

"There's someone there. Someone who wants to speak to the board."

"Well," demanded Porter, remembering he was their leader, now that the elderly woman had gone to the door. "Who is it?"

"Augustin Renaud," she said and saw the looks on their faces. Had she said "Dracula" they could not have been more startled. Though, for the English, startled meant raised eyebrows.



Every eyebrow in the room was raised, and if General Wolfe could have managed it, he would have.

“I left him outside,” she said into the silence.

As if to underscore that the doorbell shrieked again.

“What should we do?” Winnie asked, but instead of turning to Porter she looked at Elizabeth. They all did.

“We need to take a vote,” Elizabeth said at last. “Should we see him?”

“He’s not on the agenda,” Mr. Blake pointed out.

“That’s right,” said Porter, trying to wrestle back control. But even he looked at Elizabeth.

“Who’s in favor of letting Augustin Renaud speak to the board?” Elizabeth asked.

Not a hand was raised.

Elizabeth lowered her pen, not taking note of the vote. Giving one curt nod she stood.

“I’ll tell him.”

“I’ll go with you,” said Winnie.

“No, dear, you stay here. I’ll be right back. I mean, really?” She paused at the door, taking in the board and General Wolfe above. “How bad could it be?”

But they all knew the answer to that. When Augustin Renaud came calling it was never good.