

LOUISE
PENNY

*The Nature of
the Feast*



RECIPES FROM THE WORLD OF
THREE PINES



Dear Reader

When I first started thinking about the books that would become the Chief Inspector Gamache novels there was a great deal I did not know. But, there were a few things I knew with certainty.

I knew I wanted you to not so much read the story, as to become a part of it. To walk beside Clara and Gabri and Ruth and Armand. To sit at the same table. To engage in the conversation. To pass the bread and take ladles of soup from the tureen.

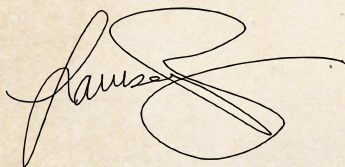
I wanted you to feel what it's like to live in Québec. And to do that I needed to make the books sensuous, to engage all your senses. So that you smell the musky woodsmoke and feel the scape of the cold against your cheeks. You hear the rustle of the leaves and see with clarity the village green.

And you taste the food. That glorious Québécois cuisine.

What better way to engage not simply the senses but the soul, than by including you in the meals shared by the friends in Three Pines? The lunches at the bistro in front of the fireplace. The dinners at Clara's, with the baskets of fresh baguettes and Myrna's extravagant bouquets. And those meals sitting at the long pine table in the Gamaches' kitchen.

It is with immeasurable pleasure that, many years on from imagining that first book and those first meals in Three Pines, I present to you this small collection of recipes. This is a heartfelt thank you, my friend. For finding the table, and sitting down. And enjoying the feast with Armand and Clara and Myrna and all the villagers.

Bon appétit!



“LOUISE PENNY’S COURTLY, POETRY-LOVING INSPECTOR GAMACHE PEERS INTO SUSPECTS’
SOULS OVER MEALS SO MOUTHWATERING YOU’LL WANT TO BOOK A FLIGHT.”

— PEOPLE

The Recipes

A SELECTION OF RECIPES FEATURED WITHIN EACH BOOK
IN THE #1 BESTSELLING SERIES, AS INDICATED BY TITLE.

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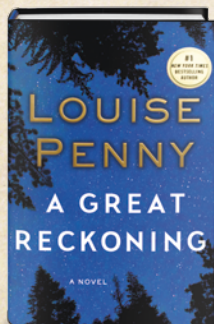
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EVERY MYSTERY IS NOT A CRIME.
BUT EVERY CRIME STARTS WITH A MYSTERY.
SOMETIMES THERE IS JUSTICE.
OTHER TIMES...

A GREAT RECKONING

Coming 8·30·16



Still Life

THEY ATE BY CANDLELIGHT, THE CANDLES OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES FLICKERING AROUND THE KITCHEN. THEIR PLATES WERE PILED HIGH WITH **TURKEY AND CHESTNUT STUFFING**, CANDIED YAMS AND POTATOES, PEAS AND GRAVY.



ROAST TURKEY AND CHESTNUT STUFFING

MAKES 8 GENEROUS SERVINGS, WITH LEFTOVERS



FOR BRINING AND ROASTING THE TURKEY (SEE NOTES)

- One 12- to 14-pound (5.5-kg) fresh turkey
- 1½ cups (240 g) kosher salt
- ¼ cup (50 g) granulated sugar
- 1 large bunch fresh sage leaves (save a few for the stuffing)
- 3 carrots, peeled and left whole
- 3 celery stalks, trimmed and left whole
- 3 large yellow onions, peeled and cut into quarters through the core
- 2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter

FOR THE STUFFING

- One 1-pound (450-g) loaf of coarse-textured country bread, crusts left on, whole loaf cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) dice (about 8 cups/2 liters; see Notes)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely diced
- 2 celery stalks, trimmed and finely diced
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh sage leaves
- ½ teaspoon minced fresh thyme leaves
- 5 to 6 ounces (150 g) dried chestnuts (about 1 cup), coarsely chopped
- 1 cup (230 ml) chicken broth, preferably homemade
- ½ cup (120 ml) light or heavy cream
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Prep and brine the turkey: Remove the turkey from its wrapping and remove the package containing the gizzards, liver, etc. Also, look for the neck (sometimes left loose in the cavity) and check the “crop” (the opening on the neck end). Refrigerate the gizzards and neck. Reserve the liver separately if you plan to use it for something else, as it will not be part of the gravy. Rinse the turkey well, inside and out, under cold running water and let drain thoroughly in the sink.
2. Choose a large (10-quart/10-liter or so) pot and pour in 8 cups (2 liters) of room-temperature water. Stir in the kosher salt, sugar, and all but a few of the sage leaves. Make sure the salt and

ROAST TURKEY AND CHESTNUT STUFFING (CONT'D)

- sugar have dissolved, then put the turkey in the pot. Pour in additional water, if needed, to completely cover the turkey. Refrigerate at least 12 hours and up to 18 hours.
3. While the turkey is brining, make the stuffing: Put the bread into a large bowl. Heat the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the diced onion and celery, the sage and thyme, and the chestnuts. Cook, stirring often, until the onion and celery have softened, about 8 minutes. Scrape the chestnut mixture over the bread in the bowl, slowly pour in the chicken broth and cream while tossing to moisten the bread evenly. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer the stuffing to a heavy baking dish (a 14-inch (36-cm) oval dish works well). Refrigerate until you remove the turkey from the refrigerator and brine to bring it to room temperature, and preheat the oven.
 4. Scatter the whole carrots and celery, the onion wedges, and the neck and gizzards (no liver!) over the bottom of a roasting pan large enough to hold the turkey comfortably. Carefully drain the turkey in the sink. Pat it dry, inside and out, with paper towels and set on the bed of vegetables and gizzards in the pan. Season inside and out with black pepper and smear the skin with the butter. (Don't worry about covering the skin evenly; the butter is mostly to enrich the pan sauce later.)
 5. With the rack set in the lower third of the oven, preheat the oven to 400°F (204°C). Let the turkey come up to room temperature while the oven is preheating. Roast the turkey until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh away from the bone reads 170°F (80°C). To be sure the turkey is fully cooked, test both thighs and also the joint where the wing connects to the breastbone. Remove from the oven and let stand for about 30 minutes. As soon as the turkey comes out of the oven, put in the stuffing; it will take about 30 minutes to brown and cook.
 6. Transfer the turkey to a carving board, first tipping the turkey slightly so the juices inside dribble into the pan. (A sturdy wooden spoon and large metal spatula or fork are helpful for tipping the turkey and transferring it to the board.)
 7. Pour the chicken broth into the pan and heat over low heat, stirring, until the little brown bits stuck to the pan have loosened. Strain the sauce into a small saucepan and keep warm over low heat.
 8. After the turkey has rested for about 30 minutes, and the stuffing is ready, carve the turkey and arrange it on a platter. Pass the stuffing and pan gravy separately.

NOTES:

- The entire brining process can be omitted. Instead, season the turkey well, inside and out, with sea salt in addition to the pepper and butter. Roast on a “rack” of vegetables and gizzards as described above.
- A mix of country bread and soft bread, such as challah, can be nice, too.



Still Life

CLARA AND MYRNA STOOD IN LINE AT THE BUFFET TABLE, BALANCING MUGS OF STEAMING FRENCH CANADIAN PEA SOUP AND PLATES WITH WARM ROLLS FROM THE BOULANGERIE.



FRENCH CANADIAN PEA SOUP

MAKES ABOUT 10 CUPS (2.5 LITERS)

2 large ham shanks (about 1½ pounds/700 g)
6 cups (1.4 liters) chicken broth, preferably homemade, or water, plus more as needed
3 celery stalks, trimmed and coarsely chopped
2 small leeks, trimmed of roots and dark green leaves, white and light green parts coarsely chopped and washed well (about 3 cups/750 ml)
2 medium carrot, peeled and coarsely chopped
1 pound (450 g) split yellow peas, lightly rinsed and checked for stones
Freshly ground black pepper
Sea salt, if necessary

FOR THE HERB BUTTER (OPTIONAL)

6 tablespoons (3 oz/85 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
¼ cup packed finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley or mint leaves
Finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

1. Put the ham hocks in a large (6-quart/6-liter) soup pot. Pour in the chicken broth or water. There should be enough liquid to cover the hocks; if not, pour in water as needed. Bring to a boil, and then adjust the heat to achieve a simmer. Cover and cook until the hocks are barely tender when poked with a fork or paring knife, about 45 minutes. Transfer the hocks to a plate and let them cool as you continue with the soup.
2. Add the celery, leeks, carrots, and split peas to the hock cooking liquid. Return to a boil, adjust the heat to achieve a simmer, and cover the pot. Cook until the peas are tender, about 30 minutes. There should always be enough liquid to cover the peas by about 1 inch (3 cm). If not, add more broth or water as necessary.
3. As soon as the ham hocks are cool enough to handle, pull off all the meat and shred it very coarsely. If you like, return the bones and skin to the pea soup while the soup finishes cooking.
4. Make the herb butter: In a bowl, beat the butter, parsley or mint, lemon zest, and lemon juice together until smooth. Set aside at room temperature.
5. When the peas and vegetables are tender, you may leave them as they are—chunky—or use an immersion blender to smooth out the soup a little. (If you returned the ham bones and skin to the soup, remove them before blending.) Alternatively, ladle some of the soup into a regular blender and blend until smooth. Add the shredded ham and season with salt and pepper to taste. The soup can be made up to 2 days in advance. To reheat, bring to a simmer over low heat, adding water to thin it out if necessary. Whisk in the herb butter, if using, just before serving, or pass it separately. Very thin slices of pumpernickel or rye toast would be welcome.

A Fatal Grace

LITTLE ROSE LÉVESQUE STARED UP AT THE BÛCHE DE NOËL, THE TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS LOG, MADE OF RICH CAKE AND COATED WITH THE THICKEST OF ICING, HER TINY, CHUBBY FINGERS CURLING OVER THE TABLECLOTH EMBROIDERED WITH SANTA CLAUS AND REINDEER AND CHRISTMAS TREES.



BÛCHE DE NOËL (TRADITIONAL "YULE LOG" CHRISTMAS CAKE) MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

FOR THE CHOCOLATE SPONGE ROLL

Nonstick cooking spray
¼ cup (66 g) all-purpose flour, plus more for coating the pan
6 large eggs, separated
¼ cup (50 g) plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
½ teaspoon salt
¼ cup (36 g) unsweetened cocoa powder
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

FOR THE CHESTNUT FILLING

1 cup (5 ounces/150 g) peeled and roasted chestnuts
¼ cup (27 g) powdered sugar
1 cup (250 ml) heavy (whipping) cream
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract or 1 tablespoon Cointreau or other orange liqueur

FOR THE QUICK CHOCOLATE FROSTING

4 ounces (110 g) semisweet chocolate
2½ cups (269 g) powdered sugar
8 tablespoons (4 oz/113 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
2 to 3 tablespoons light or heavy cream, or as needed

1. Make the cake: With the rack in the center position, preheat the oven to 350°F/ 177°C. Spray a 13 × 17-inch/33 × 43-cm jelly-roll or half-sheet pan with nonstick cooking spray. Line the pan with parchment paper (be sure that part of the parchment paper extends over one of the long sides of the pan). Spray the parchment paper with more cooking spray and dust it lightly with flour.
2. Put the egg yolks and the ¼ cup granulated sugar in a large bowl and beat with a handheld mixer until they turn a light yellow, the sugar is dissolved, and the yolks form a ribbon when they fall from the beaters. Wash the beaters thoroughly. In a clean smaller bowl, beat the whites, the remaining 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, and the salt together until the whites hold stiff peaks when the beaters are lifted from them. Sift the flour and cocoa over the beaten yolks, add one-quarter of the beaten whites, and start folding it all together with a large metal whisk or rubber spatula until just a few streaks of the egg whites remain. Add the remaining beaten whites and fold in completely. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and smooth out the top. Bake until the cake is firm when poked in the center and the edges are nearly crisp and pull away from the pan, about 12 minutes. Transfer the cake to a cooling rack and cool to room temperature, about 10 minutes.
3. While the cake is cooling, make the chestnut filling: Grind the chestnuts with the powdered sugar in a food processor until the chestnuts are finely ground and the sugar is blended in. In a chilled bowl, beat the heavy cream with a handheld mixer or a whisk until the cream holds stiff peaks when you lift the beaters or whisk from the cream. Gently whisk or mix in the chestnut mixture.
4. Using the overhanging parchment paper along one of the long sides of the cake, remove the cake from the pan onto a flat surface. Spread the chestnut-cream filling over the entire surface of the barely cooled cake. Let the coated cake sit for a few minutes to soften up. If the pan you baked the cake in is relatively clean, you can reuse it to store the filled cake roll. If not, wash it and dry it while the filling softens the cake.
5. Starting at one of the long ends, roll up the cake jelly-roll style. If the cake sticks to the paper in places, loosen it gently using a long, thin metal spatula. (In any event, the cake will most likely crack in places as you roll it. All of these "imperfections" will be inside the roll where no one can see them or will be covered with frosting.) When the cake is about halfway rolled, move the cake over the baking sheet and finish rolling the cake so it ends up—diagonally—on the baking sheet. Cover the cake with plastic wrap and chill for at least 4 hours and up to 1 day.
6. Up to 4 hours before serving the cake, make the frosting and assemble the cake: To make the frosting, put the chocolate in the top of a double boiler (or in a heatproof bowl that sits well above the bottom of a saucepan filled with about 2 inches of simmering water). With the heat on low, melt the chocolate, stirring from time to time. Remove the container of chocolate from over the boiling water once melted. Beat the powdered

BÛCHE DE NOËL (CONT'D)

sugar, butter, and vanilla together in a bowl with a handheld electric mixer until the butter is fully incorporated into the sugar. Scrape in the melted chocolate, add the vanilla, and beat until smooth. Add enough of the cream to make a smooth, soft, spreadable frosting. Hold at room temperature.

7. Cut two pieces from one end of the chilled cake roll to use as “limbs” on the log. Make a diagonal cut about 2 inches (5 cm) at the thinner end. Make a second cut of the same size. Use a large

dab of the frosting to “glue” these two “limbs” to opposite sides and ends of the cake roll. Using about one-third of the frosting, lightly coat the entire top, sides, and limbs of the cake. Be sure to leave the ends of the log and limbs unfrosted, so the “tree rings” remain exposed. Don’t worry if this crumb layer picks up crumbs or smears with some of the chestnut filling—that is its purpose. The final frosting will cover all imperfections. Chill the crumb-coated cake for about 1 hour.

8. Apply the rest of the frosting to the cake in an even layer, again leaving the ends of the log and limbs unfrosted. Lightly scrape a fork lengthwise along the main part of the log and along the limbs to simulate tree bark. Serve the cake right away or refrigerate for up to 8 hours. If refrigerated, bring to room temperature 1 hour before serving. Cut into fairly thin ($\frac{3}{4}$ -inch/2-cm) slices and serve.



A Fatal Grace

“A STEAK FRITES WAS PLACED IN FRONT OF BEAUVOIR, SIZZLING FROM THE CHARCOAL FIRE, THE FRENCH FRIES THIN AND SEASONED, A SMALL DISH OF MAYONNAISE WAITING FOR THEM ON THE SIDE. BEAUVOIR SIPPED HIS WINE, SWIRLING THE DARK LIQUID AROUND LAZILY AND LOOKED INTO THE FIRE. THIS WAS HEAVEN.”



STEAK FRITES WITH MAYONNAISE

MAKES 2 SERVINGS



FOR THE HOMEMADE MAYONNAISE

1 egg yolk
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
¼ cup (60 ml) vegetable oil
¼ cup (60 ml) olive oil
Sea salt
Cayenne pepper

FOR THE FRITES AND STEAK

1 large Russet or Yukon Gold potato (10 ounces/280 g)
2 cups (.5 liter) peanut or vegetable oil, or as needed
2 sirloin or New York strip steaks, each about 6 ounces (170 g) and ¾ inch (1½ cm) thick
Sea salt
Coarsely ground black pepper

1. Make the mayonnaise: Whisk the egg yolk, lemon juice, mustard, and 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil together in a small bowl until very well blended. Combine the remaining 3 tablespoons vegetable oil with the olive oil and then dribble, almost drop by drop, into the egg-mustard mixture very slowly while whisking vigorously and constantly to emulsify. (Rest the mixing bowl on a coil of a well-dampened kitchen towel to keep the bowl steady while whisking.) When about half the oil has been added, you may begin adding the remaining oil in a slow, steady stream.
2. When all the oil has been added, season the mayonnaise with salt and cayenne. Refrigerate the mayonnaise until needed, up to 1 day.
3. Cut and blanch the fries: Using a mandoline cutting tool or a knife, cut the potato into ½ × ¼-inch (.3 × .3-cm) strips. (Leave the peel on if you like. Don't worry, if working with a knife, that the strips are not perfectly even. Double frying will make sure they all come out perfectly cooked.)
4. Pour enough oil into a deep, wide, heavy skillet or pot (cast iron works very well) to fill by about 2 inches. Heat over medium heat to 275°F (135°C). If you don't have a deep-frying thermometer, use this simple test to tell whether the oil is ready: Dip the end of one of the potato sticks into the oil; it should give off a slow, steady stream of bubbles—it should not just sit there or sizzle wildly. Add about half the potato sticks

STEAK FRITES WITH MAYONNAISE (CONT'D)

- and cook, stirring often, until they are limp and tender, about 4 minutes. Remove the potatoes with a slotted spoon and transfer to a paper towel-lined baking sheet. Wait a minute or two for the oil to reheat and fry and drain the remaining potatoes. Turn the heat off under the oil. The oil and potatoes can be left at room temperature for 1 to 2 hours.
5. Season the steak: Rub a generous amount of coarse sea salt (Maldon Sea Salt works beautifully) and coarsely ground pepper into both sides of the steak. Leave at room temperature for up to 30 minutes, or refrigerate for up to 2 hours, but, if refrigerated, remove the steaks about 30 minutes before cooking and allow to come to room temperature.
6. Bring it all together: Spoon the mayonnaise into little serving dishes and set aside. Heat a lightly oiled cast-iron or grill pan for the steak over medium-high heat. At the same time, reheat the oil for the *frites* to 350°F (177°C).
7. When the steak pan is good and hot, add the steaks and cook, turning only once, until well marked (grill pan) or seared (cast-iron pan) on both sides and cooked to medium-rare (quite pink but cooked in the center). It is difficult to measure steaks this thin for doneness with an instant-read thermometer, but 3 to 4 minutes on each side should give you a medium-rare steak; test for doneness by poking the steaks in a couple of places. They should feel somewhat firm but springy when done. Resist the urge to move the steaks around as they cook. They will take on more color and flavor if left alone while they cook.
8. Transfer the steaks to serving plates. By now the oil for the *frites* should be heated to about 375°F (191°C). While the steaks are resting, carefully slip about half of the blanched potatoes into the hot oil. Stir them gently until they are crisp and golden brown, about 3 minutes. Transfer them to a paper towel-lined baking sheet to drain and fry the remaining potatoes.
9. Salt the fried potatoes while hot and pile them alongside the steaks. Serve with the homemade mayonnaise.

NOTE:

You may use a countertop deep fryer to make the fries. Simply follow the manufacturer's directions.



The Cruelest Month

RUTH STOOD ON THE STEP OF THE CHURCH, BALANCING A PLATE OF THICK MAPLE-CURED HAM SANDWICHES ON SARAH'S BREAD, STILL STEAMING FROM THE BOULANGERIE, HOMEMADE POTATO SALAD WITH EGGS AND MAYO, AND A HUGE SLICE OF SUGAR PIE.



SUGAR PIE MAKES 8 SERVINGS



One 9-inch (23-cm) unbaked pie shell, homemade or store-bought
1 cup (250 ml) heavy cream
¾ cup (85 g) packed dark muscovado or dark brown sugar
¼ cup (60 ml) maple syrup
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 large eggs

1. Prebake the pie shell: Whether using homemade or store-bought, be sure the rolled out shell is chilled, not frozen. With the rack in the center position, preheat the oven to 375°F (191°C). Poke the bottom of the shell with the tines of a fork at least 20 times. Bake the shell until the edges are light golden brown and the bottom is very lightly browned, about 15 minutes. Many recipes suggest lining the shell with foil and filling it with beans or pie weights. This is unnecessary if you check the pie shell halfway through baking and use the same fork to poke down any bubbles that have formed during baking. Remove the shell and cool to room temperature. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F (177°C).
2. Make the filling: Pour the heavy cream into a small saucepan and over medium-low heat just until the edges are bubbling. Pour the cream into a bowl, add the sugar, and whisk until smooth. Add the maple syrup, flour, and eggs and whisk until smooth.
3. Pour the filling into the prebaked shell and bake at 350°F (177°C) oven just until the center barely jiggles when you shake the pie pan, about 40 minutes. Let cool in the pan on a cooling rack completely before serving. The pie can be stored at room temperature for up to 1 day.

The Cruellest Month

ON THE STOVE STOOD A BROWN EARTHENWARE JAR WITH HANDLES ON EITHER SIDE. BEANS BAKED IN MOLASSES AND BROWN SUGAR AND PORK RINDS. A CLASSIC QUÉBÉCOIS DISH. THE ROOM WAS FILLED WITH THE RICH, SWEET AROMA.



BAKED BEANS IN MOLASSES AND PORK RINDS

1 pound (454 g) small white pea beans, navy beans, or baby lima beans
1 large yellow onion, coarsely chopped
¾ cup (180 ml) pure maple syrup
¼ cup (60 ml) dark unsulfured molasses
½ cup (80 ml) ketchup
3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 tablespoon dry mustard
2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
½ pound (250 g) salt pork or “streaky lean,” preferably with skin attached
Sea salt

1. Pick over the beans and remove any stones or damaged beans. Transfer the beans to a 2-quart (2-liter) or so bowl and pour in enough cool water to cover by 3 inches (8 cm). Refrigerate and soak for at least 8 and up to 12 hours.
2. With the rack in the center position, preheat the oven to 275°F (135°C). Drain the beans and rinse them thoroughly under cold water.
3. Stir the onion, maple syrup, molasses, ketchup, vinegar, mustard, and pepper together in a 4-quart (4-liter) bean pot with lid (or in any heavy ovenproof pot—enameled cast-iron, for example). Add the rinsed beans and pour in enough cold water to cover by 1½ inches (4 cm). If there is skin attached to the salt pork or streaky lean, cut it off, then cut the pork itself into ½-inch (1.25-cm) cubes. Tuck the piece(s) of skin into the beans and scatter the diced pork over the top of the beans. Bring to a simmer over medium-low heat without stirring. Cover the pot and bake until the beans are tender and the level of liquid

more or less meets the top of the beans, about 5 hours. The time can vary somewhat based on the type of beans, saltiness of the pork, how old the beans were when you bought them, etc. The trick is to check the beans every hour both for doneness and to top up the liquid if it dips below the level of the beans.

4. Remove the beans when they are tender. If you've kept the liquid topped up, most likely the beans will seem a little watery. Taste for salt, add a little if needed, and let the beans sit, covered, off the heat until they soak up the liquid, about 30 minutes. Taste again for salt and, while you're at it, the mustard, pepper, vinegar, and maple syrup and add more if needed. The beans will stay warm enough to serve for about an hour but can be refrigerated for a day or two. Reheat on the stovetop, adding small amounts of water as necessary.

The Cruellest Month

GAMACHE'S COQ AU VIN FILLED THE TABLE WITH A RICH, EARTHY AROMA
AND AN UNEXPECTED HINT OF MAPLE...

BEAUVOIR COULD HAVE DIED HAPPILY RIGHT THERE AND THEN,
BUT HE'D HAVE MISSED THE CRÈME BRÛLÉE FOR DESSERT.



COQ AU VIN WITH A HINT OF MAPLE

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

3 tablespoons olive oil
1 pound (450 g) medium white mushrooms
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ pound (225 g) small white (pearl) onions, peeled
15 fresh sage leaves
¼ pound (110 g) slab bacon, preferably maple-cured
and with skin attached (see Note)
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons maple syrup
4 carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch (5-cm) lengths
One 4½-pounds (2-kg) chicken, cut into eighths
Flour, for dredging
One 750-ml bottle dry red wine
¾ cups (1 liter) homemade chicken or veal stock
One 1-pound (450-g) loaf firm-textured bread,
crusts removed, cut into 1-inch (3-cm) cubes
(about 8 cups/2 liters)
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 tablespoon unsalted butter

1. Roast the onions and mushrooms: Preheat the oven to 425°F (218°C). Pour ½ tablespoons of the olive oil into a bowl. Add the mushrooms, season lightly with salt and pepper, and toss quickly until all the oil is absorbed. Spread them out on a baking sheet. Pour the remaining ½ tablespoons olive oil into the same bowl, add the pearl onions and sage leaves, season lightly with salt and pepper, and toss until coated. Spread the onions out on a baking sheet. Roast the

vegetables until well browned and tender, about 15 minutes for the mushrooms and 25 minutes for the onions. When the vegetables are finished, leave the oven on and scrape the mushrooms onto the pan with the onions. You will use the mushroom pan again for the croutons.

2. Remove the skin from the bacon. Roll up the skin tightly and secure it with two or three lengths of butchers' twine. Cut the skinless bacon into ¾-inch (2-cm) cubes. Heat the vegetable oil and bacon cubes together in a heavy 4-quart (4-liter) casserole over medium heat, stirring often, until the bacon is lightly browned but still quite soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in the maple syrup to coat. Transfer the bacon to a bowl and pour off and reserve about half of the fat. Add the carrots to the fat left in the pot and cook, stirring, over medium heat just until slightly softened, about 5 minutes. Scoop the carrots into the bowl with the bacon. Remove the pot from the heat.

3. Dry the chicken pieces and season them well with salt and pepper. Dredge very well in flour and then bounce them back and forth in your hands to remove excess flour. Return the pot with the fat to medium heat. Add the chicken pieces and brown on all sides, turning them often, about 15 minutes. Adjust the heat so the chicken pieces are equally well browned.

4. Pour the red wine into the casserole and bring to a boil. Add the bacon skin and cook until the wine has reduced to about 1 cup. Pour in the stock and bring to a simmer. Cook, adjusting the heat as necessary to maintain a steady simmer, until the chicken is very tender, about 35 minutes. After about 20 minutes of cooking, add the browned mushrooms, onions, and carrots.

5. While the chicken is cooking, add the parsley and melted butter to the reserved fat in the bowl. Toss the bread cubes well to coat them evenly. Season the bread with salt and pepper and toss again. Spread out the seasoned bread cubes on the reserved baking sheet. Toast, turning one or two times, until they are golden brown on all sides, about 12 minutes.

6. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the chicken, vegetables, and bacon to a deep serving platter. Discard the pork skin. Ladle the sauce over the chicken and vegetables. Scatter the croutons over the coq au vin. Serve at once.

NOTE:

If you cannot find slab bacon with the skin attached, simply use skinless slab bacon and omit adding the skin to the pot as directed above.

A Rule Against Murder

“ALL YEAR GAMACHE’S MOUTH WATERED FOR THE HOMEMADE MANOIR BELLECHASSE LEMONADE. IT TASTED FRESH AND CLEAN, SWEET AND TART. IT TASTED OF SUNSHINE AND SUMMER.”



HOMEMADE LEMONADE

MAKES 5 TO 6 TALL GLASSES LEMONADE



½ cup (101 g) granulated sugar
½ cup (120 ml) water
6 ripe, juice lemons, or as needed
Still water, club soda or sparkling water as needed
(about ½ cup/125 ml) per serving

1. Bring the sugar and water to a simmer, stirring, over low heat. Remove from the heat and continue stirring until the sugar has dissolved. Pour the simple syrup into a heatproof jar with a lid (a canning jar works well). Cool to room temperature.
2. Meanwhile, squeeze the lemons; there should be about 1 cup juice. Squeeze 1 or 2 more if you think the juice isn't tart enough or if you like lemonade with a little kick. When the simple syrup is cool, pour in the lemon juice and refrigerate until well chilled, for at least 4 hours and up to 2 days.
3. To serve: Fill a tall glass with ice. Pour in about ½ cup (75 ml) of the lemon juice mix. Top up the glass with about ½ cup still or sparkling water. Serve very cold.

A Rule Against Murder

CHEF VÉRONIQUE HAD CUT THEM EACH A WEDGE OF POIRE HÉLÈNE. BEAUVOIR WATCHED AS SHE PUT PLUMP ALMOST PURPLE RASPBERRIES AND COULIS ON EACH PLATE.



TARTE POIRE HÉLÈNE

MAKES ONE 11-INCH (28-CM) TART. 8 TO 10 SERVINGS

FOR THE PASTRY

- 2¼ cups (281 g) all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup (31 g) slivered almonds
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 8 tablespoons (4 oz/113 g) unsalted butter, well chilled and cut into 1-tablespoon pieces
- 7 to 9 tablespoons ice water

FOR THE FILLING

- One 15-ounce (425-g) can pear halves in natural juice
- 8 tablespoons (4 oz/113 g) unsalted butter
- 1¼ cups (254 g) granulated sugar
- ¼ cup (31 g) all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (45 g) unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 large eggs
- ¼ cup (62 ml) heavy cream
- ¼ cup (60 ml) reserved liquid from pears
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1. Make the pastry: Put the flour, almonds, sugar, and salt in a food processor. Process until the almonds are finely ground. Add the cold butter and pulse just until the pieces of butter are the size of small peas (10 to 12 pulses—more or less depending on your food processor). Sprinkle 7 tablespoons of the ice water over the flour mixture and pulse 3 or 4 times. If the dough doesn't stick together when you pinch a little bit of it, add 1 to 2 tablespoons more of water and pulse a few times. The finished pastry should be slightly crumbly in appearance, but stick together when you form a small amount of the pastry into a little ball. Scrape the pastry onto a sheet of plastic wrap, form it into a rough disk, wrap it well, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to 1 day.
2. Bake the pastry shell: On a lightly floured surface, roll out the pastry to a 13-inch (33-cm) circle. Fold the pastry circle in half and lay it into an 11-inch (28-cm) tart pan (preferably one with a removable bottom). Unfold the pastry and move it gently to center it over the pan. Gently, press the pastry into the corners of the pan and along the sides. Trim any overhanging pastry by simply pressing it against the top edge of the pan. Use these scraps to patch any parts of the pastry shell that don't reach all the way up the sides, or any cracks or tears that may have happened while fitting the dough into the pan. Refrigerate the pastry shell, uncovered, for at least 30 minutes or up to 3 hours.
3. Preheat the oven to 375°F (191°C). Put the tart pan onto a baking sheet large enough to hold it comfortably. Poke the bottom of the pastry shell about 20 times with a fork. Line the shell with aluminum foil, pressing the foil gently into the corners and around the sides. Spread 1 pound of dried beans or pie weights in an even layer over the bottom of the foil-lined tart pan. Bake until light golden brown around the very edges of the top, about 25 minutes. Very carefully remove the foil and beans, return the shell, still on the baking sheet, to the oven and bake until the bottom is a light golden brown, about 10 minutes. Cool the shell completely.
4. Make the filling: Drain the pears and reserve ¼ cup of the liquid. Blot the pears dry with paper towels and cut them lengthwise into ½-inch (1.25-cm) slices. Lay the pear slices out on paper towels to drain them further.
5. Cream the butter and sugar with a hand-held mixer on high speed until very well blended. Beat in the flour and cocoa powder at low speed until no trace of flour remains. On medium speed, beat in the eggs one at a time, then beat in the heavy cream, reserved pear liquid, and vanilla.
6. Scrape the chocolate filling into the cooled tart shell and smooth out the top. Arrange the pear slices in an attractive manner over the filling. (Try using the shorter slices in a pinwheel pattern in the center of the filling, then use the larger slices to make one or two more pinwheel patterns closer to the edges of the pan.)
7. Bake the tart until set in the center and the edges of the crust are a rich golden brown, 45 to 50 minutes. The pear slices will sink a little into the filling, but will still be visible after the tart is baked. Cool the tart at room temperature for at least 2 hours (for a fudgy texture), or up to 6 hours for a firmer texture. Either way, the tart is best served at room temperature and without refrigerating.

A Rule Against Murder

BEFORE LONG THEY WERE WALKING HAND IN HAND ON THE VILLAGE GREEN, WAVING TO THE PEOPLE TENDING THE GLOWING EMBERS AROUND THE STUFFED LAMB AU JUS WRAPPED IN HERBS AND FOIL AND BURIED BEFORE DAWN. THE MESHOU, THE TRADITIONAL QUÉBÉCOIS CELEBRATORY MEAL.



MESHOU

MAKES ABOUT 5 CUPS (1.25 LITERS). 6 SERVINGS

This traditional dish probably made its way from Morocco to Québec and, as such, has as many versions as there are in both countries who make it. Meshoui is traditionally cooked in a pit filled with slow-burning coals, but a sturdy Dutch oven makes a fine substitute.

FOR THE LAMB

- 1 boned, rolled, and tied shoulder of lamb, about 3 pounds (1.5 kg)
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander (see Note)
- 1 teaspoon sea salt, plus more for seasoning
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 3 cups (750 ml) chicken or beef broth, preferably homemade
- 8 whole fresh thyme sprigs, leaves picked
- 6 whole rosemary sprigs
- Zest of 1 lemon, removed with a vegetable peeler, avoiding the white pith
- 10 peeled garlic cloves

FOR THE SALAD AND GARNISHES

- 4 navel or cara cara oranges
- 1 small (or half a larger) red onion, very thinly sliced
- 1 to 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Whole wheat naan or other flatbread
- Plain Greek or other thick yogurt
- ¾ cup pomegranate seeds
- 1 bunch scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced
- Good-quality store-bought harissa (optional)

1. Bring the lamb shoulder to room temperature about 30 minutes before you plan to start cooking it. Mix about half of the cumin and half of the coriander, and the salt and pepper together in a small bowl. Stir the remaining cumin and coriander together in a separate small bowl and set aside.
2. Rub the spice-salt mixture into all sides of the lamb, coating it well. Heat the butter and vegetable oil over medium heat in a medium (4- to 5-quart/4- to 5-liter) Dutch oven or heavy pot with a tight-fitting lid. When the butter has stopped foaming, add the seasoned lamb and cook, turning with tongs, until well browned on all sides, about 20 minutes.
3. Pour in the broth, and add the thyme, rosemary, lemon zest, and garlic. Bring the liquid to a boil, then adjust the heat to achieve a simmer. Cover and cook until the lamb is very tender when poked with a kitchen fork or long knife, about 2½ hours (better more cooked than less).
4. As soon as you are comfortable with moving the roast, lift it, using large tongs and a kitchen fork, and transfer to a large plate. Let rest until cool enough to handle, about 1 hour. Meanwhile, strain the cooking liquid into a smaller pot (but one that is still large enough to hold the liquid and the lamb after shredding). Most of the garlic will have “melted” into the cooking liquid. Remove the rest of the garlic cloves with the tongs, and mash them into the liquid. Discard the thyme, lemon zest, and rosemary.
5. While the lamb is cooling, Make the orange salad and pull together the garnishes. Remove the peel and white pith from the oranges and cut the oranges in half, then into ½-inch (1-cm) slices, putting them into a serving bowl as you go. Add the sliced red onion and drizzle lightly with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper, toss gently, and set aside.
6. Line the flatbread up on a serving plate, tearing it into large (about 3-inch/8-cm) pieces. Spoon the yogurt, pomegranate seeds, scallions, and harissa, if using, into small serving dishes.
7. Once the lamb is cool enough to handle, using two forks, or latex-gloved hands, shred the lamb coarsely into the pot with the strained cooking liquid, getting rid of bits of fat and gristle as you shred. Rewarm the lamb and sauce over medium heat.
8. To serve: Make the lamb the centerpiece of the table, and pass the flatbread (warmed or not), the orange salad, yogurt, scallions, pomegranate seeds, harissa (if using), and the reserved ground cumin-coriander mix. Let each person pile the seasoned lamb onto flatbreads and top with any or all of the garnishes they like.

NOTE:

For extra flavor, start with whole cumin and coriander seeds. Toast them slowly in a small skillet over low heat until fragrant, about 6 minutes. Cool them and grind them in a spice mill or pound them to a fine powder using a mortar and pestle. Also, if you like, warm up the flatbread in a 300°F/149°C oven for about 8 minutes before serving.

The Brutal Telling

PETER HANDED GAMACHE A **SHORTCAKE**, WHICH HE CUT IN HALF, AND PETER PILED SLICED RIPE STRAWBERRIES IN THEIR OWN BRILLIANT RED JUICE ON TOP OF IT...



STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

FOR THE BERRIES

1 lemon
Two 1-pint baskets luscious red strawberries,
hulled, and sliced
¼ cup (50 g) granulated sugar or demerara sugar
2 teaspoons brandy or pure vanilla extract
Pinch of sea salt

FOR THE SHORTCAKE

2 cups (250 g) all-purpose flour
2½ teaspoons baking powder
¼ cup (50 g) plus 2 teaspoons granulated sugar
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
6 tablespoons (3 oz/85 g) cold unsalted butter,
cut into 8 pieces
1 cup (250 ml) buttermilk

TO FINISH

1 cup (250 ml) heavy cream

1. Set the oven rack in the center position and preheat the oven to 425°F (218°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Put a metal bowl and whisk or beaters for a handheld mixer in the refrigerator to chill.
2. Prepare the berries: Grate the zest of the lemon into a bowl large enough to hold the berries. Squeeze in the lemon juice. Add the strawberries, sugar, brandy or vanilla, and salt. Toss gently until the sugar starts to melt. Let them stand at room temperature, tossing gently a few times while you bake the shortcake.
3. Make the shortcakes: Whisk the flour, baking powder, the ¼ cup of sugar, and the salt together in a large bowl. Cut the butter into the dry ingredients with a pastry blender until the butter pieces are the size of small peas. Drizzle in the buttermilk and toss with a fork just until the dough holds together. It will be slightly crumbly and moister in some places than others.
4. Turn the dough out onto a dry, clean surface and work in any stray pieces with your hands, being careful not to overwork the dough. Cut the dough into 6 even pieces. Working gently and with floured hands, form each piece into a circle of dough roughly 4 inches (10 cm) wide by 1 inch (3 cm) thick. The tops should be very uneven. Line the shortcakes up on the prepared baking sheet and sprinkle the remaining 2 teaspoons sugar over the tops.
5. Bake until the shortcakes are puffed and the tops are golden and flecked with brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer the shortcakes to a wire rack (or leave them on the pan) to cool slightly.
6. Meanwhile, using the chilled bowl and whisk or beaters, beat the heavy cream until it forms medium-stiff peaks, 2 to 3 minutes.
7. Prepare 6 small serving plates. Split the shortcakes in half horizontally (a fork works well for this) and set the bottoms on the plates. Evenly divide the reserved strawberries over the cakes, then top the berries with whipped cream. Top with the shortcake tops and serve.

The Brutal Telling

GAMACHE TRIED THE DOOR TO THE BISTRO AND WAS SURPRISED TO FIND IT OPEN. EARLIER THAT MORNING, OVER BREAKFAST OF PAIN DORÉ, SLICED STRAWBERRIES AND BANANAS, MAPLE SYRUP AND BACK BACON, GABRI HAD ADMITTED HE DIDN'T KNOW WHEN OLIVIER MIGHT REOPEN THE BISTRO.



PAIN DORÉ

MAKES 4 SERVINGS



Eight 1-inch (3-cm) slices challah, brioche, or other eggy, soft-textured dough (see note)
1 cup dry-textured muesli
½ cup (120 ml) milk
1 large egg
2 tablespoons maple syrup
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons unsalted butter

TO SERVE (CHOOSE ANY OR ALL)

Fresh blueberries
Powdered sugar
Maple syrup

1. Arrange the bread slices on a cooling rack (or a plate) and let them get slightly stale overnight. This will give the finished pain doré an almost custardy texture.
2. Grind the muesli in a food processor to the texture of very coarse sand. Spread out the ground muesli on a wide plate.
3. In a bowl, whisk together the milk, egg, maple syrup, vanilla, and cinnamon until smooth. Pour into a square 9×9-inch (23×23-cm) baking pan. Add the bread slices and soak for 4 minutes; turn and soak the second side for another 4 minutes. There should be very little egg mix left after soaking.
4. Heat the butter in a large 10-inch (25-cm) or so nonstick pan over medium-low heat until the butter is foaming. Carefully dredge both sides of the soaked bread slices in the ground muesli. Add the bread slices to the pan as you dredge them and cook, turning only once, until golden brown on both sides, about 8 minutes. Serve warm with blueberries, powdered sugar, and/or additional maple syrup.

NOTE:

If the challah or other bread you are using is large, say 4 inches (10 cm) high, you may only need 4 slices; one slice per serving. The rest of the ingredients will remain the same.

Bury Your Dead

A BUBBLING FRENCH ONION SOUP SAT IN FRONT OF ÉMILE AND GAMACHE WAS GIVEN A HOT BOWL OF PEA SOUP.

‘I MET A FELLOW THIS MORNING WHO’S TRAINING FOR THE RACE,’ SAID GAMACHE.

‘BET HE’S IN GOOD SHAPE,’ SAID ÉMILE, LIFTING HIS SPOON ALMOST OVER HIS HEAD, TRYING TO GET THE STRINGY, MELTED CHEESE TO BREAK.’



FRENCH ONION SOUP

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS (1 LITER); (2 MAIN-COURSE SERVINGS OR 4 FIRST-COURSE SERVINGS)



4 tablespoons (2 oz/57 g) unsalted butter
2 pounds (1 kg) yellow onions (about 5 medium onions),
peeled and sliced ¼ inch/70 mm thick
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
½ cup (80 ml) white wine or 3 tablespoons (45 ml) dry
sherry
3 cups (750 ml) beef or chicken broth,
preferably homemade
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
Half a French baguette, cut into ½-inch slices
Olive oil
1 cup (3 oz/90 g) grated Gruyère cheese

1. Heat the butter in a medium (4-quart/4-liter) heavy-bottomed pot over low heat until bubbling. Add the onions and cook, stirring often, until very well browned, about 45 minutes.
2. Add the flour and cook, stirring, for 4 minutes. Add the wine or sherry and cook, stirring, until almost evaporated. Add the broth, bring to a boil, and adjust the heat so the soup is barely simmering. Season with salt and pepper. Cover the pot and cook until the onions are very tender, about 15 minutes.
3. While the soup is simmering, make the toasts: Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C). Lightly brush both sides of each slice of bread with olive oil. Arrange the bread on a baking sheet and bake until golden brown and crisp, about 12 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.
4. Position the oven rack about 8 inches (20 cm) from the broiler and preheat the broiler. Ladle the soup into 2 ovenproof crocks. Cover the top of the soup with a layer of toasts, then spread a layer of the cheese over the toasts. Place the crocks on a baking sheet and broil until the cheese is golden brown and bubbly, about 5 minutes. Let the crocks sit for a few minutes before serving, handling them carefully.

VARIATION:

If you don't have ovenproof crocks, make the cheese toasts and float them on top of the soup: Preheat the oven to 400°F (204°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or aluminum foil. Make the toasts as described above and line them up on the sheet. Top with the grated Gruyère. Bake until the cheese is golden brown and the toasts are very crisp, about 12 minutes. Ladle the hot soup into bowls and top with the cheese toasts.

A Trick of the Light

“THE INSPECTOR HAD RETURNED WITH A CHILLED CUCUMBER SOUP WITH MINT AND MELON, A SLICED TOMATO AND BASIL SALAD DRIZZLED WITH BALSAMIC, AND COLD POACHED SALMON...”



CHILLED CUCUMBER SOUP WITH MINT AND MELON

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS (1 LITER): 4 FIRST-COURSE SERVINGS

1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 leek, dark green parts and roots trimmed, light green and white parts coarsely chopped and washed
1 cup (240 ml) water
1 cup (240 ml) freshly made or purchased cucumber juice
4 Kirby or 2 larger cucumbers, peeled, cut lengthwise into quarters, seeded and coarsely chopped
Juice of 1 lemon
Sea salt
2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves, plus some whole sprigs for garnish
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (170 g) plain Greek or other thick yogurt
1 cup finely diced (about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch/1.25 cm), peeled and seeded cantaloupe or muskmelon (look for pre-cut melon in the produce section of your supermarket and cut that into smaller dice if you don't want to commit to a whole melon.)

1. Heat the butter in a medium (about $3\frac{1}{2}$ quart/3.5 liter) heavy-bottomed pot over low heat. Add the cleaned leeks. Cook, stirring often, until the leeks are very soft, about 15 minutes. Add the water and cucumber juice and bring to a simmer. Remove from the heat and stir in the cucumbers and lemon juice. Season lightly with sea salt. Cool to room temperature.
2. While the soup is cooling, stir the chopped mint and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the yogurt together and add a pinch of sea salt and a few drops of lemon juice if you think it needs it. Cover and refrigerate.
3. Add the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup yogurt to the soup and puree the soup in a blender, starting at low speed and gradually increasing the speed to full to make a very smooth puree. Pour into a bowl and chill until serving time, at least 2 hours and up to 1 day.
4. Ladle the soup into individual bowls and top each serving with a dollop of mint yogurt, diced melon, and a mint sprig.

A Trick of the Light

ON GAMACHE'S PLATE WERE GRILLED GARLIC SHRIMP AND QUINOA-MANGO SALAD. THE BARBEQUE WAS WORKING OVERTIME FOR THE HUNGRY LUNCH CROWD, PRODUCING CHAR-GRILLED STEAKS AND BURGERS, SHRIMP, AND SALMON.



GRILLED GARLIC SHRIMP AND QUINOA-MANGO SALAD

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

1 pound (450 g) medium shrimp (about 24 per pound/
half kilo), shelled and deveined
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons olive oil (or a blend of 1 tablespoon each
olive and sesame oil)
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
¾ cup (128 g) quinoa
1¼ cups (300 ml) cold water
Juice of 2 limes
2 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro or scallions
2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil or olive oil
1 ripe mango, peeled, pit removed, and flesh cut into
¾ × ¼-inch (2 × .5-cm) matchsticks
¼ cup (23 g) toasted sliced almonds (see Note)
Lime wedges, for serving (optional)

1. Toss the shrimp, minced garlic, olive oil, (or olive oil–sesame oil blend, if using) together in a bowl. Season generously with salt and pepper and toss again. The shrimp may be marinated up to several hours before cooking. Cover and refrigerate.
2. Place the quinoa in a sieve and rinse thoroughly under cold running water for at least 3 minutes. Drain. Bring the 1¼ cups water and a large pinch of sea salt to a boil in a small saucepan. Stir in the quinoa and return to a boil. Stir once thoroughly, then reduce the heat to the lowest setting. Cover the pan and cook for 18 minutes.
3. While the quinoa is cooking, stir the lime juice, cilantro or scallions, and the 2 tablespoons of sesame or olive oil together in a serving bowl. Add the mango and let stand, tossing once or twice while the shrimp cook.
4. When the quinoa is cooked, remove it from the heat and uncover it. Fluff a few times with a fork.
5. Thread 3 shrimp onto each of 8 short (5- to 6-inch/ 13- to 15-cm) skewers. Preheat a grill pan or large heavy skillet (cast iron is ideal for either type of pan) over medium-high heat. Lay the shrimp into the hot pan and cook, turning once, until they are cooked through, about 4 minutes.
6. Stir the still-warm quinoa into the dressed mango and toss well. Add more salt and/or pepper if needed. Pile some of the salad in the center of four salad plates. Scatter the almonds over the salad, and arrange the shrimp skewers around the salad. Pass extra lime wedges if you like.

NOTE:

To toast sliced almonds: Preheat an oven to 350°F (177°C). Spread the almonds out on a baking sheet and bake, stirring around once, until lightly toasted, about 10 minutes.

A Trick of the Light

“THE WAITER HAD BROUGHT THEM FROTHY BOWLS OF CAFÉ AU LAIT...
GAMACHE LOWERED THE PAGE AND TOOK OFF HIS READING GLASSES JUST
AS THE WAITER ARRIVED WITH THEIR FOOD. TOAST AND HOMEMADE CONFITURE
FOR BEAUVOIR. PEAR AND SPICED BLUEBERRY CREPES FOR LACOSTE.”



PEAR AND SPICED BLUEBERRY CREPES

MAKES 4 SERVINGS: TWO 8-INCH CREPES PER PERSON, WITH (PROBABLY) SOME LEFTOVER CREPES

Two quick notes about crepes: The first two or three crepes won't come out perfectly—consider it one of life's little mysteries. That is why this recipe makes slightly more batter than needed. Also, these crepes are made slightly thicker than traditional crepes to soak up the syrupy fruit filling.

FOR THE BASIC CREPES

(Makes 1¾ cups/420 ml batter; enough for about fourteen 8-inch/20-cm crepes)
1 cup (240 ml) milk, at room temperature
2 large eggs
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, plus more for cooking the crepes
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup (125 g) all-purpose flour

FOR THE FILLING

Finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 ripe (semisoft and fragrant) Bose or Bartlett pears
One ½-pint basket blueberries
Powdered sugar

1. Make the crepes: Put the milk, eggs, butter, granulated sugar, and salt in a blender. Blend until smooth. Add the flour and blend, using short bursts, just until the batter is smooth. Pour the batter into a covered container and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or up to overnight. (Refrigerating and resting the batter makes for more tender crepes.)
2. Heat an 8-inch (20-cm) crepe pan or a heavy nonstick pan over medium-low heat until a few drops of water flicked into the pan dance for 2 to 3 seconds before evaporating. If the water takes less time to evaporate, lower the heat; any longer, raise it a little. Brush the pan with melted butter or use a folded paper towel dipped in the melted butter. Pour 2 generous tablespoons of the batter for a thickish 8-inch (20-cm) crepe into the center of the pan. Working quickly, lift and move the pan around so the batter coats the bottom of the pan in a thin even layer. Return the pan to the heat and cook until the underside is a lacy golden brown, about 1½ minutes. Turn and cook until the spots on the underside are golden brown, about 2 minutes. (The two sides of a crepe will have distinctly different appearances; when filling or serving, make sure to present them lacy, not spotty, side out.) Transfer to a plate and repeat with the remaining batter, stacking the crepes on the plate. Add more butter to the pan every second or third crepe. The finished crepes can be held at room temperature for up to 30 minutes.
3. While the crepes are cooling, make the filling: Put the grated zest and lemon juice into a small (1.5-quart/1.5-liter) saucepan. Add the granulated sugar, orange juice, cinnamon, ginger, and black pepper. Bring to a simmer over low heat and simmer until the juices are slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Meanwhile, peel and core the pears. Cut them into ½-inch (1-cm) slices.
4. When the juices have reduced, remove the pan from the heat and stir in the pears and blueberries. Cool to room temperature, stirring every once in a while.
5. Assemble the crepes: Spoon about ¼ cup of the pear filling over one side of a crepe. Fold the crepe in half, then in half again to make a triangle. Repeat to make more crepes. Overlap 2 crepes on a serving plate and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

The Beautiful Mystery

“WHEN THE FIRST CASSEROLE, A FRAGRANT CHEESE AND LEEK DISH WITH A CRUNCHY CRUMBLE TOP, CAME BY BEAUVOIR PAUSED, LOOKING AT THE MODEST AMOUNTS EVERYONE ELSE HAD TAKEN.

THEN HE TOOK THE BIGGEST SCOOP HE COULD MANAGE AND PLOPPED IT ONTO HIS PLATE.”



CHEESE AND LEEK DISH WITH A CRUNCHY CRUMBLE TOP

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

4 medium leeks (about 1 pound/450 g)
1 cup (3 oz/90 g) grated Cantal, Swiss,
or Gruyère cheese
½ cup (120 ml) chicken broth
¼ cup (62 ml) heavy cream
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 cup coarsely crumbled day-old white bread
½ cup (1 oz/30 g) grated Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (191°C). Trim the dark green parts and root end from the leeks, leaving just the white and light green parts behind. Halve the leeks lengthwise, then cut each half across into 2-inch (5-cm) or so pieces. Wash thoroughly and drain. Arrange about half the blanched leeks in an even layer in 9×9-inch (23×23-cm) baking dish. Scatter the Cantal cheese over the leeks. Top with the remaining leeks. Pour the broth and cream over the leeks. Season with the salt and pepper. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake until the leeks are tender, about 40 minutes.
2. Pulse the crumbled bread, Parmesan cheese, and olive oil in a food processor just until the bread cubes are broken up and the cheese and oil are blended through. (The pieces of bread should still be quite large.) Taste and add a pinch more of salt and/or pepper if you think it needs it. Uncover the baking dish, sprinkle the bread mixture over the leeks and bake, uncovered, until the leeks are very tender, the liquid is bubbling and the crumbs are browned, about 20 minutes. Serve hot or at room temperature.

The Beautiful Mystery

“SO WHERE’S THE DAMNED MURDER WEAPON? WE SEARCHED OUTSIDE THE WALL AND DIDN’T FIND ANYTHING.”

EXCEPT, BEAUVOIR THOUGHT, **WILD BLUEBERRIES.**
AND THEY PROBABLY WEREN’T LETHAL, UNTIL DIPPED IN DARK CHOCOLATE.”



WILD BLUEBERRIES DIPPED IN DARK CHOCOLATE

MAKES UP TO 35 SKEWERS

1 pint fresh blueberries (wild if possible; choose larger blueberries if possible; they will be easier to skewer and dip in chocolate) (see Note)

4 ounces (100 g) semisweet chocolate (see Note)

35 (or as needed) decorative 4-inch (10-cm) skewers

Powdered sugar

1. Rinse the blueberries very briefly in a colander under cold water. Drain them well, then spread them out on a paper towel-lined baking sheet to dry completely. Pat the blueberries dry and/or change the paper towel after about 15 minutes. It is important that the blueberries are dry so that the chocolate will coat them better.
2. Put the chocolate in a skillet and place the skillet over a smaller (in diameter) deep skillet or pot filled with about 1 inch (3 cm) simmering water. Keep the heat low and stir the chocolate once or twice as it melts.
3. While the chocolate is melting, slide 4 or 5 berries onto each skewer and line them up on a parchment paper- or plastic wrap-lined baking sheet.
4. Remove the skillet of chocolate and set it near the berries. Working with one skewer at a time, dip one side of the skewered berries in the chocolate and shake gently to remove any excess. Place the skewers, undipped side down, on the parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Continue with the rest of the skewers and chocolate. Refrigerate the skewers until the chocolate is firm, at least 15 minutes, or up to 4 hours. Just before serving, sprinkle a little powdered sugar over the skewers and arrange them on a serving plate/platter.

NOTE:

A full pint of blueberries will yield about 35 skewers of 5 blueberries each. The quantity of blueberries and chocolate may be easily reduced to make fewer skewers.

How The Light Gets In

“EVERYONE, EXCEPT RUTH, CLEARED THE TABLE WHILE GABRI TOOK OLIVIER’S TRIFLE OUT OF THE FRIDGE, WITH ITS LAYERS OF LADYFINGERS, CUSTARD, FRESH WHIPPED CREAM, AND BRANDY-INFUSED JAM.

‘THE LOVE THAT DARES NOT SPEAK ITS NAME,’ GABRI WHISPERED AS HE CRADLED IT IN HIS ARMS.”



TRIFLE

MAKES 8 SERVINGS



FOR THE CUSTARD

5 egg yolks
2½ cups (600 ml) whole milk
½ cup (67 g) granulated sugar
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

TO ASSEMBLE THE TRIFLE

1 cup (250 ml) very cold heavy (whipping) cream
1½ cups (432 g) raspberry jam
1 tablespoon brandy, Cointreau, or other orange liqueur
2½ to 3 packages (3.5 oz/100 g each) ladyfingers
(see Notes)

1. Make the custard: Put the egg yolks in a heatproof bowl. Heat the milk and sugar in a 2-quart/2-liter heavy saucepan, stirring to dissolve the sugar, until bubbles form around the edge. Gently and gradually, whisk the hot milk into the egg yolks, then pour everything back into the saucepan. Cook over medium heat, scraping the bottom and sides with a heatproof spatula to prevent sticking until the custard is steaming and thick enough to lightly coat the spatula. If you have an instant-read thermometer, the custard is ready when the temperature registers 185°F/85°C. Strain the custard into a bowl and stir in the vanilla. Cover with a piece of plastic wrap pressed directly on the surface of the custard to prevent a skin from forming. Refrigerate until cool or thoroughly chilled, 2 to 4 hours.

2. Assemble the trifle: With a whisk or electric hand mixer, beat the heavy cream until it forms soft peaks. Set aside. In a wide, shallow bowl, stir together the jam and brandy. Have at hand an 8×11-inch (20×28-cm), or other more decorative glass 2-quart (2-liter) dish. This will be a little messy: working with your hands, turn each ladyfinger in the jam mixture and line the bottom of the dish. The ladyfingers may have to run in different directions or you may have to snap them in half to get the right fit to cover the bottom of the dish snugly. Pour about half the custard over the ladyfingers. Spoon about half the whipped

cream over the ladyfingers and spread it out into a more or less even layer. (This is a rustic dish, don't worry if some of the jam gets mixed in with the custard or whipped cream or is smeared against the inside of the glass dish—that is part of the charm.) Repeat with another layer of jam-dipped ladyfingers, custard, and whipped cream.

3. Cover the dish tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate until the ladyfingers have soaked up all the custard and the trifle is soft but spoonable, 12 to 24 hours. Serve chilled, spooning the trifle into coupes or onto dessert plates.

NOTES:

The ladyfingers should be very dry, (not the spongy type of cookie), typically packed about 20 per box. If you find your ladyfingers are soft rather than dry, simply spread them out on a cooling rack or baking sheet and let them dry out overnight.

The trifle needs at least 12 hours and up to a full day for the ladyfingers to soak up the custard and for the trifle to firm up. That will give you a trifle with a spoonable yet still soft texture.

While the above recipe calls for an 8×11-inch (20×28-cm) dish, any shape dish with close to a 2-quart (2-liter) capacity will do. Glass is better—you can see the pretty layers and jam from the sides.

The Long Way Home

ARMAND GAMACHE LOOKED DOWN AT HIS PLATE. EMPTY. ALL THE WONDERFUL FOOD GONE. HE WAS SURE IT MUST HAVE BEEN DELICIOUS, BUT HE COULDN'T REMEMBER EATING A SINGLE BITE.

AFTER A DESSERT OF **RASPBERRY AND CHOCOLATE MOUSSE** THEY WENT HOME.



CHOCOLATE AND RASPBERRY MOUSSE

MAKES 6 SERVINGS



10 ounces (280 g) good-quality semisweet or extra bittersweet (about 70%) chocolate
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 large eggs, separated (see Note)
1 cup (250 ml) heavy cream, very cold
1 tablespoon raspberry liqueur, such as Chambord, or 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
Additional whipped cream (optional)
One ½-pint basket fresh raspberries

1. Break up or chop the chocolate into small chunks. Melt the chocolate and butter in the top of a regular or improvised double boiler (set a heatproof bowl into a saucepan with simmering water; the size of the bowl should be large enough to easily hold the chocolate, fit the top of the saucepan with simmering water, and keep the bottom of the bowl at least 2 to 3 inches above the water). Stir occasionally until the chocolate has completely melted, about 10 minutes. Keep the water at a bare simmer.
2. Remove the chocolate mixture from the heat and beat in the egg yolks, one at a time. Beat the egg whites in a separate bowl with an electric mixer just until they hold soft peaks. Fold the egg whites into the chocolate mixture, one-half at a time, using a rubber spatula. Fold gently, making sure to scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl. Stop folding when the whites have been halfway incorporated into the chocolate. Whip the 1 cup of heavy cream with an electric mixer just until it holds soft peaks. Add the liqueur to the chocolate mixture. Fold in about three-quarters of the whipped cream just until no white streaks remain. Set 12 raspberries aside. Mash the remaining berries into the reserved whipped cream until the cream takes on a light pink color.
3. Spoon about ⅓ cup into a champagne flute or other tall, clear glass (a white ramekin will work in a pinch). Spoon in a tablespoon or so of the raspberry cream, and then top up the glass (or ramekin) with another ⅓ cup of mousse. Cover each serving with a small piece of plastic wrap and refrigerate until completely set, at least 3 hours or up to 1 day. Serve with additional whipped cream, if you like, and a couple of the reserved fresh berries.

NOTE:

Eating raw eggs may lead to food-borne illness. You can reduce the risk of illness by washing the eggshells before cracking them. In any case, pregnant women and those with compromised immune systems should refrain from eating raw eggs.

The Nature of the Beast

THEIR DINNER GUESTS HAD ALREADY ARRIVED AND WERE SIPPING DRINKS AND EATING **APPLE AND AVOCADO SALSA** BY THE TIME ARMAND RETURNED...



APPLE AND AVOCADO SALSA WITH HONEY-LIME DRESSING

MAKES 1½ CUPS SALSA. ABOUT 8 SERVINGS

Finely grated zest and juice of 1 lime
1 teaspoon light honey
½ teaspoon sea salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 small Hass avocado, peeled, pitted,
and cut into ½-inch (1-cm) dice (see Note)
Half a red apple, peeled, seeded,
and cut into ½-inch (1-cm) dice (see Note)
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro
Chips of choice

Put the lime zest and juice into a bowl. Whisk in the honey, salt, and pepper. Fold in the avocado and apple until coated with the dressing. Add the cilantro, if using. Taste and add a little pinch more of salt and pepper, if needed. Spoon the salsa onto the chips. The salsa is best eaten when freshly made, but can be stored in the refrigerator for up to a few hours. If refrigerating, gently press a sheet of plastic wrap directly on the top of the salsa, then cover the container. Bring the salsa to room temperature about 15 minutes before serving.

NOTE:

Choose a slightly firmer (but still ripe) avocado than you would for guacamole and a naturally soft red apple such as a McIntosh. The quantities may be easily doubled to serve a larger crowd

The Nature of the Beast

“WHEN UPSET, REINE-MARIE LIKED TO CHOP, TO MEASURE, TO STIR.
TO FOLLOW A RECIPE. EVERYTHING IN ORDER. NO GUESSING, NO SURPRISES...”

DINNER WAS SERVED, STARTING WITH **PARSNIP AND APPLE SOUP**,
WITH A DRIZZLE OF WALNUT-INFUSED OIL ON TOP.”



PARSNIP AND APPLE SOUP WITH A DRIZZLE OF WALNUT-INFUSED OIL

MAKES 6 SERVINGS

FOR THE WALNUT-INFUSED OIL

- ½ cup (60 g) walnut pieces
- ¼ cup (60 ml) walnut or vegetable oil

FOR THE SOUP

- 1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 2 medium leeks, dark green tops and roots trimmed off and discarded; light green and white parts cut into 1-inch (3-cm) lengths and washed
- 1 large celery stalk, coarsely chopped
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 parsnips (about 12 ounces/340 g total), peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 firm green or red apples (such as Granny Smith or Gala), peeled, cored, and coarsely chopped
- 3 cups (750 ml) chicken broth (vegetable broth if you prefer)
- 2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
- Juice of 1 lemon
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- ½ teaspoon ground cardamom
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Yogurt or sour cream
- ¼ cup thinly sliced fresh chives

1. Make the walnut-infused oil: Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C). Spread the walnuts out on a baking sheet and bake until well toasted, about 12 minutes. While still warm, add them along with the walnut or vegetable oil to a food processor. Process until the walnuts are very smooth. Scrape the walnut oil into a small bowl. Cover tightly and let stand at room temperature for at least 1 hour or up to 6 hours (but no longer).
2. Make the soup: Heat the olive oil and butter in a 5-quart (5-liter) pot over medium-low heat just until the butter is foaming. Stir in the leeks and celery. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring often, just until the leeks have softened, but not browned, about 8 minutes.
3. Add the parsnips and apples, reduce the heat to very low, and cover the pot. Cook, stirring every few minutes, until the parsnips and apples have softened, about 10 minutes.
4. Add the broth, orange juice, lemon juice, turmeric, cardamom, and cinnamon. Bring to a boil and adjust the heat so the soup is simmering. Cover and cook until all the vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes. Set the soup aside to cool slightly. Puree the cooled soup well in a conventional or high speed blender, or through a food mill fitted with the fine disk. The soup may be made to this point up to 2 days in advance. Return the soup to the pot and reheat gently until simmering. Stir in the yogurt or sour cream and chives just before serving. Spoon into warm soup bowls and drizzle some of the walnut oil over each serving.

A Great Reckoning

‘PROBABLY BEST TO HAVE A MORE PRIVATE DISCUSSION,’ SAID ARMAND, LEADING HIM INTO THE KITCHEN WHERE HE SLICED FRESH BREAD FROM SARAH’S BOULANGERIE AND GÉLINAS HELPED HIM GRILL SANDWICHES OF BROME LAKE DUCK, BRIE AND FIG CONFIT.



DUCK, BRIE, AND FIG CONFIT SANDWICH

MAKES 2 SERVINGS



FOR THE FIG CONFIT

- 1 cup dried Turkish figs, finely chopped
- ½ cup (128 ml) dry red wine
- ½ cup (120 ml) water
- 3 tablespoons dark brown sugar, firmly packed
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary, finely minced

FOR THE SEARED DUCK AND SANDWICH ASSEMBLY

- 1 boneless, skin-on duck breast
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 slices sourdough bread
- 2 teaspoons softened butter
- ¼ to ½ cup (5 to 10 g) baby arugula
- ¼ cup (50 g) Kalamata olives, pitted coarsely chopped
- 2 ounces Brie cheese, sliced

1. Prepare the fig confit: In a 1½-quart (1.5 liter) saucepan, mix together all of the ingredients and bring the liquid to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for approximately 20 minutes. Remove the lid and continue to gently simmer the mixture, stirring occasionally to ensure that nothing is sticking to the sides or bottom of the pan, until the excess liquid has evaporated and mixture has thickened like jam. Cool completely before use. The confit may be made 5 days ahead and chilled, covered.
2. Sear the duck breast: Rinse the duck breast thoroughly under cold running water and pat dry with a paper towel. Place the meat on a cutting board with the skin side facing up. Use a sharp knife to score the skin and underlying fat in a crosshatch pattern, being careful not to cut all the way through to the meat. This will help ensure that the fat can render out properly and render the skin perfectly crisp. Season all sides thoroughly with salt and pepper.
3. Set a large, heavy skillet over high heat and allow it get very hot. Place the duck breast in the center, skin side down. Reduce the heat to medium and allow the meat to cook, undisturbed, for 8 to 10 minutes, to ensure an even sear. Using tongs, carefully flip the meat, and cook for an additional 5 to 6 minutes on the opposite side. Once crisp and golden all over, remove the meat from the pan, and let rest for at least 10 minutes before slicing thinly. The meat should remain light pink inside.
4. To assemble the sandwich: Place a large skillet or grill pan over moderate heat. Meanwhile, spread ½ teaspoon of the butter on 2 slices of bread. Place the buttered sides down in the pan and quickly top with an even layer of fig confit, Brie, olives, arugula, and sliced duck. Divide the remaining butter between the 2 remaining slices of bread, placing the butter sides facing up. Apply gentle pressure to bring the sandwich together. Once the brie begins to melt and the bottom slice of bread is evenly browned, carefully flip the sandwiches. Toast the opposite sides to your desired shade of brown, continuing to press lightly as they cool.
5. Remove the sandwiches from the heat, slice in half, and serve immediately.



An exquisite sampling of the new novel from

#1 Bestselling Author **LOUISE PENNY**

A GREAT RECKONING

CHAPTER 1

Armand Gamache sat in the little room and closed the dossier with care, squeezing it shut, trapping the words inside.

It was a thin file. Just a few pages. Like all the rest surrounding him on the old wooden floor of his study. And yet, not like all the rest.

He looked at the slender lives lying at his feet. Waiting for his decision on their fate.

He'd been at this for a while now. Reviewing the dossiers. Taking note of the tiny dots on the upper right corner of the tabs. Red for rejected. Green for accepted.

He had not put those dots there. His predecessor had.

Armand placed the file on the floor and leaned forward in his comfortable armchair, his elbows on his knees. His large hands together, fingers intertwined. He felt like a passenger on a transcontinental flight, staring down at fields below him. Some fertile, some fallow and ripe with potential. And some barren. The topsoil masking the rock beneath.

But which was which?

He'd read, and considered, and tried to drill down past the scant information. He wondered about these lives, and he wondered about the decisions of his predecessor.

For years, decades, as head of homicide for the Sûreté du Québec, his job had been to dig. To collect evidence. To review facts, and question feelings. To pursue and arrest. To use his judgment, but never to judge.

But now he was judge and jury. The first and final word.

And Armand Gamache realized, without great surprise, that it was a role he was comfortable with. Even liked. The power, yes. He was honest enough to admit that. But mostly he appreciated that he was now in a position not simply to react to the present, but to actually shape the future.

And at his feet was the future.

Gamache leaned back and crossed his legs. It was past midnight, but he wasn't tired. A cup of tea sat on his desk beside a couple of chocolate chip cookies. Uneaten.

The curtains of his study fluttered and he could feel a cold draft coming in through the slightly open window. And he knew if he drew back the curtains and turned on the porch light, he would see the first snow of the season swirling in the light. Falling softly and landing on the roofs of the homes in this tiny village of Three Pines.

It would cover the perennial gardens and leave a thin layer on cars and porches, on the bench in the middle of the village green. It would be landing, softly, on the forests and mountains and the Rivière Bella Bella that flowed past the homes.

It was the beginning of November and this was an early snow even by Québec standards. A tease, a portent. And not enough, yet, for children to play in.

But soon, he knew. It would come soon enough. And the gray November would be transformed into a bright, sparkling wonderland of skiing and skating. Of snowball fights, and snow forts and snowmen, and angels made in snow that had fallen from the heavens.

But for now the children slept and their parents slept. Everyone in the small Québec village slept, while the snow fell and Armand Gamache considered the young lives that lay at his feet.

Through the open door of his study, he saw the living room of the home he shared with his wife, Reine-Marie.

Oriental rugs were scattered about the wide-plank flooring. A large sofa sat on one side of the large stone hearth and two faded armchairs on the other. Side tables were piled with magazines and books. Bookcases lined the walls and lamps filled the room with pleasant light.

It was an inviting room and now Gamache stood up, stretched, and walked out into it, their shepherd Henri following him. He poked the fire and sat in one of the armchairs. His work wasn't done yet. Now he needed to think.

He'd made up his mind about most of the files. Except that one.

When he'd first seen it, he'd read the contents then set it aside, in the rejected pile. Agreeing with the red dot of his predecessor.

But something had niggled at him and he kept returning to that one file. Reading and rereading it.

Trying to work out why this one dossier, this one young woman out of all of them, was troubling him.

Gamache had brought the file with him, and now he opened it. Again. Her face stared at him. Arrogant, challenging. Pale. Her hair jet black, shaved in places, spiked in others. There were unmistakable piercings through her nose and brows and cheek.

She claimed to read ancient Greek and Latin, and yet she'd barely scraped by in high school and had spent the past few years doing, from what he could tell, nothing.

She'd earned the red dot.

So why did he keep going back to it? To her? It wasn't her appearance. He knew enough to look beyond that.

Was it her name? Amelia?

Yes, he thought, that might be it. She shared the name with Gamache's mother, who'd been named for the aviator who'd lost her way and disappeared.

Amelia.

And yet, when he held the file he didn't feel any warmth. In fact, he felt vaguely revolted.

Finally Gamache took off his reading glasses and rubbed his eyes before taking Henri outside for a last walk of the night, in the first snow of the season.

Then it was upstairs to bed for both of them.

* * *

The next morning Reine-Marie invited her husband to breakfast at the bistro. Henri came along and lay quietly under their table as they sipped bowls of *café au lait* and waited for their maple-cured bacon with scrambled eggs and Brie.

The fireplaces on either end of the long beamed room were lit and cheerful, conversation mingled with the scent of woodsmoke, and there was the familiar thudding of patrons knocking snow from their boots as they entered.

The flurries had stopped in the night, leaving just a thin layer barely covering the dead autumn leaves. It seemed a netherworld. Neither fall nor winter. The hills that surrounded the village and seemed to guard it from an often hostile world themselves looked hostile. Or, if not actually hostile, at least inhospitable. It was a forest of skeletons. Their branches, gray and bare, were raised as though begging for a mercy they knew would not be granted.

But on the village green itself stood the three tall pines from which the village took its name. Vibrant, straight and strong. Evergreen. Immortal. Pointing to the sky. Daring it to do its worst. Which it planned to do.

The worst was coming. But so was the best. The snow angels were coming.

"*Voilà*," said Olivier, placing a basket of warm almandine croissants on their table. "While you wait for breakfast."

A price tag hung from the basket. And from the chandelier above their heads. And the wing chairs they sat on. Everything in Olivier's bistro was for sale. Including, he'd intimated more than once, his partner, Gabri.

"A bag of candy and he's yours," Olivier was heard to offer patrons when Gabri turned up in his frilly apron.

"That is how he got me," Gabri would admit, smoothing the apron he only wore, they all knew, to piss off Olivier. "A bag of allsorts."

When they were alone, Armand slid a file across the table to his wife. "Could you read this, please?"

"Of course," she said as she put on her glasses. "Is there a problem?"

"No, I don't think so."

"Then why...?" She gestured toward the folder.

He'd often discussed cases with her, before his early retirement from the Sûreté. He was not yet sixty and this was more of a retreat, really. To this village, to recover from what lay beyond the ridge of mountains.

He watched her over the rim of his strong, fragrant coffee, holding the warm bowl between his hands. They no longer trembled, Reine-Marie noted. Or at least not often. She always looked, in case.

And the deep scar near his temple wasn't quite so deep. Or perhaps familiarity and relief had filled it in.

He limped still, sometimes, when he was tired. But besides that, and the scar, there were no outward signs of what had happened. Though she did not need any signs. It was the sort of thing she would never forget.

Almost losing him.

But instead, they'd found themselves here. In the village that managed to be welcoming even on the dullest day.

Reine-Marie had known, even as they'd bought the home and unpacked, that the time would come when he'd want and need to go back to work. The only question had been, what next? What would Chief Inspector Armand Gamache, the head of the most successful homicide department in the country, choose to do?

He'd had plenty of offers. Their study was filled with envelopes marked "Confidential." He'd taken plenty of meetings. From heads of major corporations, to political parties anxious for him to run for office, to police organizations, national and international. Discreet vehicles had pulled up outside their

white clapboard home and discreetly dressed men and women had knocked on the door. And sat in their living room, discussing “what next.”

Armand had listened politely, often offering them lunch or dinner or a place to stay if it was late. But never tipping his hand.

Reine-Marie herself had found her dream job, after leaving her post at the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec as one of the head librarians. She’d volunteered to sort years of donations to the regional historical society.

It was a post her former colleagues no doubt viewed as a significant step down. But Reine-Marie wasn’t interested in steps. She’d arrived at where she wanted to be. No more steps. She’d stopped. Reine-Marie had found a home in Three Pines. She’d found home in Armand. And now she’d found her intellectual home, investigating the rich and disorganized collection of documents and furniture and clothing and oddities left to the region in wills.

For Reine-Marie Gamache, each day felt like Christmas, as she sorted through the boxes and boxes. And boxes.

And then, after much discussion between them, Armand had decided on his next step.

For weeks after, while she pored over piles of letters and old documents, he pored over his files, studying confidential reports, schematics, curricula vitae. Across from each other in their comfortable living room, they’d gone through their separate boxes, while the fire mumbled and the coffee perked and late autumn turned into an early winter.

But while she was opening up the world, he was in many ways doing the opposite. Armand was whittling down, honing, shaving, taking out the dead wood, the unnecessary, the unwanted. The rot. Until what he had in his hands was something very sharp. A spear of his own creation. And he’d need it. There could be no doubt who was in charge, and who held the power. Or that he was willing to use it.

He was almost there, she knew. But there seemed one thin obstacle. They looked down at it now, sitting innocently on the table among the croissant flakes.

Armand opened his mouth to speak, then closed it and exhaled sharply, in irritation.

“There’s something that’s bothering me about this file and I don’t know what it is.”

Reine-Marie picked it up and read. It didn’t take long. After a few minutes she closed the cover, laying a hand softly on top as a mother might on the chest of a sick child. Making sure of the heartbeat.

“She’s an odd one, I’ll give her that.” She looked at the red dot in the corner. “You’re rejecting her, I see.”

Armand lifted his hands in a noncommittal gesture.

“You’re considering accepting her?” she asked. “Even if it’s true that she reads ancient Greek and

Latin, that's not much use in the job. They're dead languages. And she might very well be lying."

"True," he admitted. "But if you're going to lie, why do it about that? Seems an odd sort of fabrication."

"She's not qualified," said Reine-Marie. "Her high school marks are abysmal. I know it's difficult to choose, but surely there are other applicants who deserve the spot more."

Their breakfast came, and Armand placed the file on the pine floor beside Henri.

"I can't tell you how often I've changed that dot," he said with a smile. "Red, green. Green, red."

Reine-Marie took a forkful of the moist scrambled eggs. A long thin string of Brie clung to the plate and she lifted her fork above her head for amusement, to see how long the string could stretch before it broke.

Longer than her arm, it seemed.

Armand, smiling and shaking his head, pulled it apart with his fingers. "There, madame, I set you free."

"From the bondage of cheese," she said. "Oh thank you, kind sir. But I'm afraid the attachment goes deeper than that."

He laughed.

"Do you think it's her name?" asked Reine-Marie. Her husband was rarely so indecisive, though she knew he also took his decisions seriously. They would affect people for the rest of their lives.

"Amelia?" he asked. And frowned. "I wondered the same thing. But it seems a huge overreaction on my part, don't you think? My mother's been gone for almost fifty years. I've met other Amelias—"

"Not many."

"*Non, c'est vrai.* But some. And while the name will always remind me of my mother, the fact is I didn't think of her as Amelia. She was Mama."

He was right, of course. And he didn't seem at all embarrassed to be a grown man talking about "mommy." She knew he was simply referring to the last time he saw his mother and father. When he was nine. When they weren't Amelia and Honoré but Mommy and Daddy. Going out for dinner with friends. Expected back to kiss him good night.

"It could be her name," said Armand.

"But you doubt it. You think it's something else."

"Oh God," said Olivier, coming over to check on them and looking out the window. "I don't think I'm ready."

"Neither are we," admitted Reine-Marie, following his gaze to the snowy village green, now white. "You think you are, but it always comes as an unpleasant surprise."

“And arrives earlier and earlier,” said Armand.

“Exactly. And seems more and more bitter,” said Olivier.

“Still, there’s beauty,” said Armand, and received a stern look from Olivier.

“Beauty? You’re kidding, right?” he said.

“No, it’s there. Of course, it can stick around far too long,” said Armand.

“You’re telling me,” said Olivier.

“It gets old,” said Reine-Marie.

“Gets old?” asked Olivier.

“But having the right tires helps,” she said.

Olivier put the empty croissant basket back down on the table. “What’re you talking about?”

“Winter, of course,” said Reine-Marie. “The first snow.”

“What’re you talking about?” asked Armand.

“Ruth,” said Olivier, pointing out the window at the elderly woman with a cane, and a duck, approaching the bistro. Old, cold and bitter.

She stepped inside and scanned the room.

“Yes,” said Olivier. “The right tires would solve that problem.”

“Fag,” muttered Ruth as she limped by them.

“Hag,” muttered Olivier as they watched the elderly poet take her usual seat by the fireplace. She opened the pine blanket box used as a coffee table and took out a handful of papers.

“She’s helping me sort through the stuff we found in the walls when we renovated,” said Olivier. “You remember?”

Armand nodded. Olivier and his partner, Gabri, had turned an abandoned hardware store into the bistro many years ago, and in updating the electricity and plumbing, they’d opened the walls and found all sorts of things. Mummified squirrels, clothing. But mostly they’d found papers. Newspapers, magazines, advertisements, catalogues used as insulation as though words could keep winter at bay.

Enough heated words had been hurled at the Québec winter, but all had failed to stop the snow.

In the chaos of the renovations, the papers had simply been dumped in the pine blanket box and forgotten. The box had sat in front of the hearth for years, unopened. Countless *cafés au lait*, and glasses of wine, and plates of regional cheese and pâté and baguette, and feet, had rested on top of it, until the papers had been rediscovered a few months earlier.

“I doubt there’s anything valuable,” said Olivier, returning to the Gamaches’ table after taking Ruth

her breakfast of Irish coffee and bacon.

"How is that woman still alive?" asked Reine-Marie.

"Bile," said Olivier. "She's pure bile. It never dies." He looked at Reine-Marie. "I don't suppose you'd be willing to help her?"

"Well, who wouldn't want to work with pure bile?" she said.

"Once she gets a few drinks in her, she becomes simply nasty, as you know," said Olivier. "Please. Please. It's taken Ruth two months to get the pile down an inch. The problem is, she doesn't just scan, she reads everything. Yesterday she spent the whole day on one *National Geographic* from 1920."

"I would too, *mon beau*," said Reine-Marie. "But I tell you what. If Ruth accepts the help, I'd love to do it."

After breakfast, she joined Ruth on the sofa and started on the blanket box, while Armand and Henri walked home.

"Armand," shouted Olivier, and when Gamache turned he saw the owner of the bistro at the door waving something.

It was the dossier.

Armand jogged back to get it.

"Did you read it?" he asked. His voice was just sharp enough for Olivier to hesitate.

"Non."

But under the steady stare, Olivier cracked.

"Maybe. Okay, yes. I glanced at it. Just her picture. And her name. And a bit about her background."

"*Merci*," said Armand, taking the file and turning away.

As he walked home, Armand wondered why he'd snapped at Olivier. The file was marked "Confidential" but he'd shown it to Reine-Marie, and it wasn't exactly a state secret. And who wouldn't be tempted to look at something marked "Confidential"?

If they knew anything about Olivier, it was that he had no immunity to temptation.

Gamache also wondered why he'd left it behind. Had he really forgotten it?

Was it a mistake, or was it on purpose?

* * *

The snow returned by early afternoon, blowing in over the hills and swirling around, trapped there. Turning Three Pines into a snow globe.

Reine-Marie called and said she was having lunch at the bistro. Clara and Myrna had joined the

excavation of the blanket box, and they'd be spending the afternoon eating and reading.

It sounded to Armand pretty much perfect and he decided to do the same himself, at home.

He poked the birch log freshly tossed on the fire in their living room grate and watched as the bark caught and crackled and curled. Then he sat down with a sandwich, a book, and Henri curled up beside him on the sofa.

But Armand's eyes kept drifting back to his study, crowded with impatient young men and women, cheek by jowl, staring at him. Waiting for the old man to decide what next for them, as old men had decided the fate of youth for millennia.

He wasn't old, though he knew he'd look old, perhaps even ancient, to them. The young men and women would see a man in his late fifties. Just over six feet tall, he was substantial rather than heavy, or so he told himself. His hair was more gray than brown and it curled slightly around his ears. While he'd sometimes had a moustache and sometimes a beard, he was now clean-shaven, the lines of his face visible for all to see. It was a careworn face. But most of the lines, if followed back like a trail, would lead to happiness. To the faces a face made when laughing or smiling, or sitting quietly enjoying the day.

Though some of those lines led elsewhere. Into a wilderness, into the wild. Where terrible things had happened. Some of the lines of his face led to events inhuman and abominable. To horrific sights. To unspeakable acts.

Some of them his.

The lines of his face were the longitude and latitude of his life.

The young men and women would also see the deep scar at his temple. It would tell them how close he'd come to dying. But the best of them would see not just the wound, but the healing. And they'd see, deep in his eyes, beyond the scar, beyond the pain, beyond even the happiness, something unexpected.

Kindness.

And perhaps, when their own faces were mapped, kindness would be discovered there too.

That's what he was looking for in the dossiers. In the photographs.

Anyone could be clever. Anyone could be smart. Anyone could be taught.

But not everyone was kind.

Armand Gamache looked into the study at the young men and women assembled there. Waiting.

He knew their faces, or at least their photographs. He knew their stories, or at least as much as they were willing to tell. He knew about their schooling, their grades, their interests.

Among the crowd he spotted her. Amelia. Waiting with the rest. His heart lurched and he stood up.

Amelia Choquet.

He knew then why he was reacting as he was. Why he'd left her behind at the bistro, and why he'd gone back for her.

And why he felt so strongly about her.

He'd shown the dossier to Reine-Marie hoping she'd give him the permission he sought. To do what all reason told him to do. To reject this young woman. To turn his back. To walk away, while he still could.

And now he knew why.

Henri snored and drooled on the sofa, the fire murmured and crackled, the snow tapped the windowpanes.

It wasn't her first name he was reacting to. It was her last. Her family name.

Choquet.

It was unusual, though not unique. The normal spelling would be Choquette.

He strode across to his study and, grabbing her file off the floor, he opened it. Scanning down the pathetically scant information. Then he closed it, his hand trembling.

He glanced at the fire, and briefly considered laying her there. Letting her go up, or down, in flames. A witch for the burning.

But instead he went downstairs, to the basement.

There he unlocked the back room. Where all his files on old cases were kept. And at the very back of the back room, he unlocked a small box.

And there he found it. Confirmed it. Choquet.

Logic told him he could be wrong. What were the chances, after all? But in his heart he knew he was right.

Returning upstairs, his feet heavy on the steps, he stood at the window and watched the snow falling.

Children, in hastily unpacked snowsuits smelling of cedar, were running around the village green, chasing and tackling each other into the soft snow. Pelting anyone in their sights with snowballs. Rolling out snowmen. They shrieked and yelled and laughed.

He went into his study and spent the next hours doing research. And when Reine-Marie arrived back, he greeted her with a large Scotch and the news.

He had to go to the Gaspé.

"The Gaspé?" she asked, making certain she'd heard correctly. It was the last thing she expected him to say. Go to the bathroom. Go to the store. Go to Montréal even, for meetings. But the Gaspé Peninsula? Hundreds of miles away, where the edge of Québec met salt water.

“Are you going to see him?”

When he nodded, she said, “Then I’m coming with you.”

He returned to his study. Staring through the mullioned windows, he saw the exhausted children falling on their backs, one after the other, into the snow, sweeping their arms and legs up and down.

Then they got up and trudged home, squirming as snow melted down their necks and trickled in rivulets down their backs. It stuck to their mitts and the back of their tuques. Their faces were bright red and their noses ran.

They left behind them angels in the snow.

And in the study, his hand trembling slightly, Armand took a deep breath and changed the dot on Amelia’s file. To green.

CHAPTER 2

Michel Brébeuf could see the car approaching along the cliff highway for quite a distance. At first he watched through his telescope and then with the naked eye. There was nothing to obscure his view. Not a tree, not a house.

The wind had rubbed the land down to its essence. Some rough grass, and rock. Like a worry stone. Inundated in the summer by tourists and part-time residents who came for the rugged beauty of the area and left before the snow moved in, only a rare few appreciated the glories the Gaspé had to offer the rest of the year.

They clung to the peninsula because they had no desire to leave, or nowhere else to go.

Michel Brébeuf was among the latter.

The car slowed and then, to his surprise, it stopped at the foot of his drive, pulling onto the soft shoulder of the provincial highway.

It was true that he had a particularly spectacular view of Percé Rock, out in the bay, but there were better and safer places to pull over for a photograph.

Brébeuf grabbed his binoculars, sitting on the windowsill, and trained them on the car. It was a rental. He could tell by the plates. There were two people in it. Man and woman. Caucasian. Middle-aged, perhaps in their fifties.

Affluent, but not flashy.

He couldn't see their faces, but quickly, instinctively, surmised this by their choice of rental and their clothing.

And then the man in the driver's seat turned to speak to the woman beside him.

And Michel Brébeuf slowly lowered the binoculars and stared out to sea.

The snow that had whacked central Québec had arrived the day before in the Gaspé Peninsula as heavy rain. The sort of dienching common in the Maritimes in November. If it were possible to render sorrow, it would look like a November gale.

But then, like sorrow, it too passed and the new day arrived almost impossibly clear and bright, the sky a perfect blue. Only the ocean held on to the distress. It churned and broke against the stones of the shoreline. Out in the bay, standing all alone, was the magnificent Percé Rock, the Atlantic Ocean hurtling against it.

By the time he dragged his eyes back, the couple had turned the car into his driveway and were almost at the house. As he watched, they got out. And stood there. The man turned his back on the

house and stared out to sea. To the great rock with the great hole worn through it.

The woman went to him and took his hand. And then, together, they walked the last few yards to the house. Slowly. As reluctant, it would appear, to see him as he was to see them.

His heart was throbbing now and he wondered if he might drop dead before the couple arrived at his porch.

He hoped so.

His eyes, trained to these things, went to Armand's hands. No weapon. Then to his coat. Was there a bulge there by the shoulder? But surely he hadn't come to kill him. If he'd wanted to do that, he'd have done it before now. And not in front of Reine-Marie.

It would be a private assassination. And one Michel had, privately, been expecting for years.

What he hadn't expected was a social call.

* * *

After making sure no blood would be spilt, Reine-Marie had gone inside, leaving Armand and Michel to sit on the porch, wrapped in sweaters and jackets, on cedar chairs turned silver by time and exposure. As had they.

"Why are you here, Armand?"

"I've retired from the Sûreté."

"*Oui*, I heard."

Brébeuf looked at the man who'd been his best friend, his best man, his confidant and colleague and valued subordinate. He'd trusted Armand, and Armand had trusted him.

Michel had been right. Armand had not.

Armand stared out at the massive rock in the distance, its center hollowed out, worn away by eons of the relentless sea, until it was a stone halo. Its heart gone.

Then he turned to Michel Brébeuf. The godfather to his daughter. As he was godfather to Michel's first born.

How often had they sat beside each other, as inspectors, discussing a case? And then across from each other, as Michel's star had risen and Armand's had waned? Boss and subordinate at work, but remaining best friends outside.

Until.

"All the way here I was thinking," said Armand.

"About what happened?"

"No. About the Great Wall of China."

Michel laughed. It was involuntary and genuine, and for the brief life of that laugh the bad was forgotten.

But then the laugh died away and Michel again wondered if Armand was there to kill him.

“The Great Wall of China? Really?”

Michel tried to sound disinterested, even irritated. More intellectual bullshit on the part of Gamache. But the truth was, as with all apparently irrelevant things Armand said, Brébeuf was curious.

“HmMMM,” said Armand. The lines around his mouth deepened. Evidence of a very slight smile. “It’s possible I was the only one on the flight thinking about it.”

Brébeuf was damned if he was going to ask why the Great Wall. “Why?”

“It took centuries to build, you know,” said Armand. “They started it in 200 BC, or thereabouts. It’s an almost unbelievable achievement. Over mountains and across gorges, for thousands of miles. And it’s not just a wall. They didn’t just slap it together. Effort was made to make it both a fortification and a thing of beauty. It kept China safe for centuries. Invaders couldn’t get past it. It’s an absolutely astonishing feat.”

“So I’ve heard.”

“But finally in the sixteenth century, fifteen hundred years after it was started, the Manchus broke through the Great Wall. Do you know how they did it?”

“I’m thinking you’re going to tell me.”

But the veneer of weariness and boredom had worn away, and even Michel could hear the curiosity in his voice. Not simply because he wanted to know about the Great Wall of China, something he had not spent a moment thinking about his entire life. But because he wanted to know why Armand was thinking of it.

“Millions of lives were lost building the wall and defending it. Dynasties went bankrupt paying for it and maintaining it,” said Gamache, looking out to sea and feeling the bracing salt air on his face.

“After more than a thousand years,” he continued, “an enemy finally broke through. Not because of superior firepower. Not because the Manchus were better fighters or strategists. They weren’t. The Manchus breached the Great Wall and took Beijing because someone opened a gate. From the inside. As simple as that. A general, a traitor, let them in and an empire fell.” All the fresh air in the world surrounded them, but Michel Brébeuf couldn’t breathe. Armand’s words, their meaning, clogged his passages.

Armand sat with apparently infinite patience, waiting. For Michel to either recover or pass out. He would not hurt his former friend, at least not at the moment, but neither would he help him.

After several minutes, Michel found his voice. “A man’s foes shall be they of his own household,

eh, Armand?"

"I doubt the Manchus would quote the Bible, but it does seem universal. Betrayal."

"Have you come all this way to taunt me?"

"Non."

"Then what do you want?"

"I want you to come work for me."

The words were so ridiculous Brébeuf couldn't understand them. He stared at Gamache in undisguised confusion.

"What? Where?" Brébeuf finally asked.

Though the real question, they both knew, was why.

"I've just taken over as the commander of the Sûreté Academy," said Armand. "The new term starts right after Christmas. I'd like you to be one of the professors."

Brébeuf continued to stare at Armand. Trying to grasp what was being said.

This was no simple job offer. Nor, he suspected, was it a peace offering. There'd been too much war, too much damage, for that. Yet.

This was something else. "Why?"

But Armand didn't answer. Instead he held Brébeuf's eyes, until Michel lowered them. Then Gamache shifted his gaze back out to the view. To the vast ocean and the massive rock it had worn down.

"How do you know you can trust me?" asked Michel, to Armand's profile.

"I don't," said Armand.

"You don't know, or you don't trust me?"

Armand turned then and gave Michel a look he'd never seen before. There wasn't loathing there. Not quite. It wasn't quite contempt. But it was close.

There was certainly knowing. Gamache saw him for what he was.

A weak man. A Percé man. Hollowed out by time and exposure. Worn down and misshapen. Pierced.

"You opened the gate, Michel. You could've stopped it, but you didn't. When corruption came knocking, you let it in. You betrayed everyone who trusted you. You turned the Sûreté from a strong and brave force into a cesspool, and it has taken many lives and many years to clean it out."

"Then why invite me back in?"

Armand got up and Brébeuf rose with him.

“The weakness in the Great Wall wasn’t structural, it was human,” said Gamache. “The strength, or weakness, of anything is primarily human. Including the Sûreté. And it all starts at the academy.”

Brébeuf nodded. “*D’accord*. I agree. But again, even more so, why me? Aren’t you afraid that I might infect them?”

He studied Gamache. Then smiled.

“Or is there already an infection there, Armand? That’s it, isn’t it? Did you come all this way for the antidote? Is that why you need me? I’m the antivirus. The stronger infection sent in to cure the disease. It’s a dangerous game, Armand.”

Gamache gave him a hard, assessing look, then went inside to get Reine-Marie.

Michel accompanied them back down the drive. And watched them drive away, back to the airport and the flight home.

Then he went inside. Alone. No more wife. No more children. No grandchildren. Just a magnificent view, out to sea.

On the flight, Gamache looked down at the fields, and forests, and snow, and lakes and considered what he’d done:

Michel was right, of course. It was dangerous, though it wasn’t a game.

What would happen, he wondered, if he couldn’t control it and the antibiotic, the virus, went viral?

What had he just sent in? What gate had he opened?

* * *

Instead of going back to Three Pines when they landed, Armand drove to Sûreté headquarters. But first he dropped Reine-Marie at their daughter’s home. Annie was four months pregnant with her first child and was showing now.

“Coming in, Dad?” she asked from the door. “Jean-Guy will be home soon.”

“I’ll be back later,” he said, kissing her on both cheeks.

“No rush,” called Reine-Marie, and closed the door.

At headquarters, Armand pressed the top button in the elevator and was swept up to the office of the Chief Superintendent.

Thérèse Brunel looked up from her desk. Behind her, the lights of Montréal spread out. He could see three bridges and the headlights of cars filled with people heading home. It was a commanding view, and behind the desk was a commanding presence.

“Armand,” she said, rising to greet her old friend with an embrace. “Thank you for coming in.”

Chief Superintendent Brunel indicated the sitting area and they both took seats. In her late sixties

now, the slight, elegant woman had come to policing late in life and had taken to it as though she had been born to investigate crime.

She'd risen fast through the ranks, passing her old professor and colleague Chief Inspector Gamache, until she could rise no further.

Her office had been redecorated in soft pastels since the former chief superintendent had been, what? "Replaced" was not really the word.

While she'd been promoted beyond Gamache, they both knew it was a function of the politics within the Sûreté, and not competence. But still, she held the rank and commanded the office and the force with confidence.

Armand handed her his dossiers and watched as she read. He got up and poured them both drinks, giving her one and taking his to the wall of glass.

It was a view that never failed to move him, so much did he love Québec.

"There's going to be hell to pay, Armand," she finally said.

He remained where he was but turned and saw that while her face was serious, stern even, there was no criticism. It was simply a statement of fact.

"Oui," he agreed, and turned back to the view as she returned to the documents.

"I see you've changed some of the students," she said. "I'm not surprised. The problem will come from the faculty. You're replacing at least half of them."

Now he walked back to his chair and sat, placing his almost untouched drink on the coaster and nodding. "How could there be significant change if the same people are in charge?"

"I'm not disagreeing or arguing with you, but are you prepared for the blow-back? These people will lose their pensions, their insurance. And they'll be humiliated."

"Not by me. They've done it to themselves. And if they want to sue, I have the proof." He looked not at all concerned. But neither was he triumphant. This was the tail end of a tragedy. And there was a sting in it.

"I doubt they'll sue," she said, replacing the last file on the pile. "But neither will they go without a fight. It simply won't be in public, or in the courts."

"We'll see," he said, sitting back. His face grim and determined.

Armand watched as she turned to the final stack of dossiers. These were the files on the men and women he planned to invite to teach at the academy. To replace the men and women he was about to fire.

Showing the list to Thérèse was a courtesy on his part. Chief Superintendent Brunel had no authority

over the academy. The academy and the Sûreté were two separate entities, connected theoretically by a common belief in the need for “Service, Integrity, Justice.” The motto of the force.

But the previous head of the school had commanded in name only. The reality was, he bowed to, then bent and finally broke under, the demands of the former head of the Sûreté, who ran the school as his personal training ground.

But Chief Superintendent Francoeur was no longer the head of the Sûreté. No longer with the force. No longer on this earth. Gamache had seen to that.

And now Gamache was cleaning up the *merde* the man left behind. The first step was to establish autonomy, but also a courteous collaboration with his counterpart at the Sûreté.

Commander Gamache watched as Chief Superintendent Brunel made her way down the pile of proposed professors, occasionally making notes or small comments, mumbling to herself. Until she reached the final dossier. She stared at it, then, without even opening it, she looked up at Gamache and held his eyes.

“Is this a joke?”

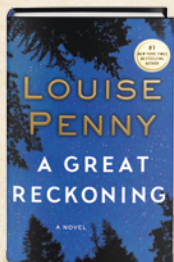
“No.”

She looked back down but didn’t touch the manila file. It was enough to see the name.

Michel Brébeuf.

When she looked up again, there was anger, bordering on rage, on her face.

“This is madness, Armand.”



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