

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

LOUISE
PENNY
ALL THE
DEVILS
ARE HERE

A NOVEL

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CHAPTER 1



Hell is empty, Armand,” said Stephen Horowitz.
“You’ve mentioned that. And all the devils are here?” asked Armand Gamache.

“Well, maybe not here, here”—Stephen spread his expressive hands—“exactly.”

“Here, here” was the garden of the Musée Rodin, in Paris, where Armand and his godfather were enjoying a quiet few minutes. Outside the walls they could hear the traffic, the hustle and the tussle of the great city.

But here, here, there was peace. The deep peace that comes not just with quiet, but with familiarity.

With knowing they were safe. In the garden. In each other’s company.

Armand passed his companion a *tartelette au citron* and glanced casually around. It was a warm and pleasant late-September afternoon. Shadows were distancing themselves from the trees, the statues, the people. Elongating. Straining away.

The light was winning.

Children ran free, laughing and racing down the long lawn in front of the château. Young parents watched from wooden benches, their planks turned gray over the years. As would they, eventually. But for now they relaxed, grateful for their children, and very grateful for the few minutes away from them in this safe place.

A less likely setting for the devil would be hard to imagine.

But then, Armand Gamache thought, where else would you find darkness but right up against the light? What greater triumph for evil than to ruin a garden?

It wouldn't be the first time.

"Do you remember," Stephen began, and Armand turned back to the elderly man beside him. He knew exactly what he was about to say. "When you decided to propose to Reine-Marie?" Stephen patted their own bench. "Here? In front of that."

Armand followed the gesture and smiled.

It was a familiar story. One Stephen told every chance he got, and certainly every time godfather and godson made their pilgrimage here.

It was their best-loved place in all of Paris.

The garden on the grounds of the Musée Rodin.

Where better, the young Armand had thought many years earlier, to ask Reine-Marie to marry him? He had the ring. He'd rehearsed the words. He'd saved up six months of his measly salary as a lowly agent with the Sûreté du Québec for the trip.

He'd bring the woman he loved best, to the place he loved best. And ask her to spend the rest of her life with him.

His budget wouldn't stretch to a hotel, so they'd have to stay in a hostel. But he knew Reine-Marie wouldn't mind.

They were in love and they were in Paris. And soon, they'd be engaged.

But once again, Stephen had come to the rescue, lending the young couple his splendid apartment in the Seventh Arrondissement.

It wasn't the first time Armand had stayed there.

He'd practically grown up in that gracious Haussmann building, with its floor-to-ceiling windows looking out over the Hôtel Lutetia. The vast apartment had herringbone wood floors and marble fireplaces and tall, tall ceilings, making each room light and airy.

It was an inquisitive child's paradise, with its nooks and crannies. The armoire with the fake drawers made, he was sure, just for a little boy to hide in. There were assorted treasures to play with, when Stephen wasn't looking.

And furniture perfect for jumping on.

Until it broke.

Stephen collected art, and each day he'd choose one piece and tell his godson about the artists and the work. Cézanne. Riopelle and Lemieux. Kenojuak Ashevak.

With one exception.

The tiny watercolor that hung at the level of a nine-year-old's eye. Stephen never talked about it, mostly because, he'd once told Armand, there wasn't much to say. It wasn't exactly a masterpiece, like the others. Yet there was something about this particular work.

After a day out in the great city, they'd return exhausted, and while Stephen made *chocolat chaud* in the cramped kitchen, young Armand would drift over to the paintings.

Inevitably, Stephen would find the boy standing in front of the small watercolor, looking into the frame as though it was a window. At the tranquil village in the valley.

"That's worthless," Stephen had said.

But worthless or not, it was young Armand's favorite. He was drawn back to it on every visit. He knew in his heart that anything that offered such peace had great value.

And he suspected his godfather thought so, too. Otherwise he'd never have hung it with all the other masterpieces.

At the age of nine, just months after both Armand's parents had been killed in a car accident, Stephen had brought the boy to Paris for the first time. They'd walked together around the city. Not talking, but letting the silent little boy think his thoughts.

Eventually, Armand had lifted his head and begun to notice his surroundings. The wide boulevards, the bridges. Notre-Dame, the Tour Eiffel, the Seine. The brasseries, with Parisians sitting at round marble-topped tables on the sidewalks, drinking espresso or beer or wine.

At each corner, Stephen took his hand. Holding it firmly. Until they were safe on the other side.

And slowly young Armand realized he was safe, would always be safe, with this man. And that he would get to the other side.

And slowly, slowly, he'd returned to life.

Here. In Paris.

Then one morning his godfather had said, "Today, *garçon*, we're going to my very favorite place in all of Paris. And then we'll have an ice cream at the Hôtel Lutetia."

They'd strolled up boulevard Raspail and turned left onto rue de Varenne. Past the shops and patisseries. Armand lingered at the windows, looking at the mille-feuilles and madeleines and *pains aux raisins*.

They stopped at one, and Stephen bought them each a *tartelette au citron*, giving Armand the small paper bag to carry.

And then they were there. At an opening in a wall.

After paying the admission, they went in.

Armand, his mind on the treat in the bag, barely registered his surroundings. This felt like duty, before the reward.

He opened the bag and looked in.

Stephen put his hand on the boy's arm and said, "Patience. Patience. With patience comes choice, and with choice comes power."

The words meant nothing to the hungry little boy, except to say that he couldn't yet have the pastry.

Reluctantly, Armand closed the bag, then looked around.

"What do you think?" Stephen asked when he saw his godson's eyes widening.

He could read the boy's mind. It wasn't, in all honesty, all that difficult.

Who'd have thought such a place existed anywhere, never mind tucked, essentially hidden, behind tall walls, in the middle of the city? It was a world unto itself. A magic garden.

Had he been alone, Armand would have walked right by, mind on the uneaten pastry, never discovering what lay inside. Never seeing the beautiful château with its tall windows and sweeping terrace.

While not at all jaded, the child was by now used to magnificent buildings in Paris. The city was thick with them. What astonished him were the grounds.

The manicured lawns, the trees shaped like cones. The fountains.

But unlike the huge jardin du Luxembourg, created to impress, this garden was almost intimate.

And then there were the statues. Come upon here and there among the greenery. As though they'd been waiting patiently. For them.

Now and then the wail of a siren could be heard, coming from the world outside. The blast of a horn. A shout.

But all that did was intensify, for Armand, the sense of extreme peace he'd found, he felt, in the garden. A peace he hadn't known since that quiet knock on the door.

They walked slowly around, Stephen, for the first time, not leading but following, as Armand stopped in front of each of Rodin's statues.

But the boy kept glancing over his shoulder. To the cluster of men at the entrance, and exit, to the garden.

Eventually, Armand led them back there, and stood transfixed in front of the statue.

"*The Burgbers of Calais*," Stephen had said, his voice hushed, soothing. "In the Hundred Years' War, the English King, Edward, laid siege to the French port of Calais."

He looked at Armand to see if he was listening, but there was no indication either way.

"It was a crisis for the citizens. No food, no provisions could get past the English blockade. The French King, Philip, could have parleyed. Could have negotiated, to relieve the city. But he did nothing. He left them to starve. And they did. Men, women, children began to die."

Now Armand turned and looked up at Stephen. The boy might not really understand war. But death he understood.

"The King did that? He could've done something, but he let them die?"

"Both kings did. Yes. In order to win. Wars are like that." He could see the confusion, the upset, in the boy's deep brown eyes. "Do you want me to go on?" Stephen asked.

"*Oui, s'il vous plaît.*" And Armand turned back to the statue and the men frozen in time.

“Just as complete catastrophe threatened, King Edward did something no one expected. He decided to have mercy on the people of Calais. But he asked one thing. He’d spare the town if the six most prominent citizens would surrender. He didn’t say it exactly, but everyone knew they’d be executed. As a warning to anyone else who might oppose him. They’d die so that the rest could live.”

Stephen saw Armand’s shoulders rise, then fall.

“The most prominent citizen, Eustache de Saint-Pierre, volunteered first. That’s him, there.” He pointed to one of the statues. A thin, grim man. “Then five others joined him. They were told to strip to their undergarments, put nooses around their necks, and carry the keys to the city and castle to the great gates. Which they did. The Burghers of Calais.”

Armand raised his head and stared up into the eyes of Eustache. Unlike all the other statues he’d seen around Paris, here he didn’t see glory. There were no angels ready to lift these men to Paradise. This was no fearless sacrifice. They were not marching, heads high, into splendid martyrdom.

What the boy saw was anguish. Despair. Resignation.

The burghers of this seaside town were afraid.

But they did it anyway.

Armand’s lower lip began to tremble and his chin pucker, and Stephen wondered if he’d gone far too far in telling this boy this story.

He touched his godson’s shoulder, and Armand swung around and buried his face in Stephen’s sweater, throwing his arms around him, not in an embrace but in a grip. As one might cling to a pillar, to stop from being swept away.

“They were saved, Armand,” said Stephen quickly, dropping to his knees and holding on to the sobbing boy. “They weren’t executed. The King spared their lives.”

It took Armand a few moments to absorb that. Finally pulling away, he dragged his sleeve across his face and looked at Stephen.

“Really?”

“*Oui.*”

“Really truly?” Armand gulped, his breath coming in fits as it caught in his throat.

“Really truly, *garçon*. They all lived.”

The little boy thought, looking down at his sneakers, then up into Stephen’s clear blue eyes. “Would you?”

Stephen, who knew what he was asking, almost said, *Yes, of course*. But stopped himself. This boy deserved the truth.

“Give up my life? For people I love, yes.” He squeezed the thin shoulders and smiled.

“For strangers?”

Stephen, just getting to know his godson, was realizing that he would not be satisfied with the easy answer. There was something quietly relentless about this child.

“I hope so, but honestly? I don’t know.”

Armand nodded, then turning to the statue, he squared his shoulders.

“It was cruel.” He spoke to the burghers. “What the King did. Letting them think they’d die.”

His godfather nodded. “But it was compassionate to spare them. Life can be cruel, as you know. But it can also be kind. Filled with wonders. You need to remember that. You have your own choice to make, Armand. What’re you going to focus on? What’s unfair, or all the wonderful things that happen? Both are true, both are real. Both need to be accepted. But which carries more weight with you?” Stephen tapped the boy’s chest. “The terrible or the wonderful? The goodness or the cruelty? Your life will be decided by that choice.”

“And patience?” asked Armand, and Stephen caught something he hadn’t noticed before. A hint of the mischievous.

The boy listened after all. Took everything in. And Stephen Horowitz realized he’d have to be careful.

There was no bench in front of the burghers, so Stephen had taken Armand over to his own favorite work by Rodin.

They opened the brown paper bag and ate their *tartelettes au citron* in front of *The Gates of Hell*. Stephen talked about the remarkable work while brushing powdery icing sugar off Armand’s sweater.

“I still can’t believe,” Stephen said fifty years later as they sat in front of the same statue, and ate their *tartelettes au citron*, “that you decided to propose to Reine-Marie in front of *The Gates of Hell*. But then the idea did spring from the same mind that thought it was a good idea to take her mother a toilet plunger as a hostess gift the first time you were introduced.”

“You remember that.”

But of course he did. Stephen Horowitz forgot nothing.

“Thank God you came to me for advice before proposing, *garçon*.”

Armand smiled. He hadn’t actually gone up to Stephen’s office, high above Montréal, that spring day thirty-five years ago, for advice. He went there to simply tell his godfather that he’d decided to ask his girlfriend of two years to marry him.

On hearing the news, Stephen had come around his desk and pulled the young man to him, holding him tight. Then Stephen gave a brusque nod and turned away. Bringing out a handkerchief, he glanced, for just a moment, out the window. Over Mount Royal, which dominated the city. And into the cloudless sky.

Then he turned back and considered the man he’d known since birth.

Taller than him now. Sturdy. Clean-shaven, with wavy dark hair, and deep brown eyes, both solemn and kind. With, yes, still that hint of the mischievous.

Armand had been to Cambridge to learn English, but instead of taking law, or business, as his godfather had advised, young Armand had, upon his return to Québec, entered the Sûreté academy.

He’d made his choice.

And he’d found wonderment. It came in the form of a junior librarian at the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales in Montréal named Reine-Marie Cloutier.

Stephen had taken his godson out for lunch at the nearby Ritz, to celebrate.

“Where will you propose?” Stephen had asked.

“Can you guess?”

“Paris.”

“*Oui*. She’s never been.”

Armand and his godfather had returned to Paris every year. Exploring the city, discovering new haunts. Then ending the day eating ice cream at the Hôtel Lutetia, which was just across the street from Stephen’s apartment. The waiters always made a fuss of the boy, even when he grew into a man.

Armand’s adopted grandmother, Zora, who raised him, didn’t approve of his going to the hotel, though it would be years before Armand understood why.

“It’ll be our little secret,” Stephen had said.

Zora also did not approve of Stephen. Though, again, it would be many years before Armand learned the reason. And learned that *crème glacée* at the Lutetia was the least of his godfather’s secrets.

Over a glass of champagne in the Ritz in Montréal, Armand had told Stephen his plans for the proposal.

When he’d finished, his godfather stared at him.

“Jesus, *garçon*,” Stephen had said. “*The Gates of Hell*? Dear God, and they gave you a gun?”

Stephen had been in his late fifties by then and at the height of his powers. The business magnate intimidated all around him. Armand suspected even the furniture cowered when Stephen Horowitz entered a room.

It wasn’t simply the force of his personality and the immense wealth he was busy acquiring and wielding, but his willingness to use both power and money to destroy those he felt were crooks.

Sometimes it took him years, but eventually, he brought them down. Power. And patience. Stephen Horowitz had command of both.

He was genuinely kind and openly ruthless. And when he turned those intense blue eyes on a quarry, they quaked.

But not Armand.

Not because he’d never been in the crosshairs, but because what Armand was most afraid of wasn’t being hurt by Stephen. He was afraid of hurting him. Disappointing him.

He’d argued with Stephen. Explaining that he loved Reine-Marie, and loved the tranquil garden in the middle of Paris.

“Where better to propose?”

“I don’t know,” Stephen had said, the clear blue eyes challenging Armand. “The métro? The catacombs? The morgue? For God’s sake, *garçon*, anywhere but *The Gates of Hell*.”

And after a moment’s pause, Armand had chuckled. Seeing Stephen’s point.

He hadn’t actually thought of that bench as being in front of *The Gates of Hell*. He thought of it as the place where he’d found a measure of freedom from crushing grief. Where he’d found the possibility of peace. Where he’d found happiness, with lemon curd on his chin and icing sugar down his sweater.

He’d found sanctuary with his godfather just outside *The Gates of Hell*.

“I’ll tell you where you need to do it,” said Stephen. And did.

That had been thirty-five years earlier.

Armand and Reine-Marie had two grown children now. Daniel and Annie. Three grandchildren. The imminent arrival of Annie’s second child was what had brought them to Paris.

Armand was now the same age Stephen had been when they’d had that conversation about the proposal. Over six feet tall, and stolidly built, Armand now had mostly gray hair, and his face was lined from the passage of time and the weight of difficult choices.

A deep scar at his temple spoke of the toll his job had taken. The wages of being a senior officer in the Sûreté du Québec.

But there were other lines. Deeper lines. That radiated from his eyes and mouth. Laugh lines.

They, too, spoke of the choices Armand had made. And the weight he gave them.

Stephen was now ninety-three and, while growing frailer, was still formidable. Still going in to work every day, and terrorizing those who needed the fear of, if not God, then this godfather put into them.

It would come as no surprise to his business rivals that Stephen Horowitz’s favorite statue was Rodin’s *Gates of Hell*. With the famous image of *The Thinker*. And, below it, the souls tumbling into the abyss.

Once again, godfather and godson sat side by side on the bench and ate their pastries in the sunshine.

“Thank God I convinced you to propose in the jardin du Luxembourg,” said Stephen.

Armand was about to correct him. It hadn’t actually been that garden, but another.

Instead, he stopped and regarded his godfather.

Was he slowing down after all? It would be natural, at the age of ninety-three, and yet for Armand it was inconceivable. He reached out and brushed icing sugar off Stephen’s vest.

“How’s Daniel?” Stephen asked as he batted away Armand’s hand.

“He’s doing well. Roslyn’s gone back to work in the design firm, now that the girls are in school.”

“Daniel’s happy in his job here in Paris, at the bank? He plans to stay?”

“*Oui*. He even got a promotion.”

“Yes, I know.”

“How do you know that?”

“I have dealings with the bank. I believe Daniel’s in the venture capital department now.”

“Yes. Did you—”

“Get him the promotion? No. But he and I get together every now and then, when I’m in Paris. We talk. He’s a good man.”

“Yes, I know.” It seemed curious to Armand that Stephen felt the need to tell him that. As though he didn’t know his own son.

And the next thing Stephen said went beyond curious. “Speak to Daniel. Make it up with him.”

The words shocked Armand and he turned to Stephen. “*Pardon?*”

“Daniel. You need to make peace.”

“But we have. Years ago. Everything’s okay between us.”

The sharp blue eyes turned on Armand. “Are you so sure?”

“What do you know, Stephen?”

“I know what you know, that old wounds run deep. They can fester. You see it in others, but miss it in your own son.”

Armand felt a spike of anger, but recognized it for what it was.

Pain. And below that, fear. He'd mended the wounds with his oldest child. Years ago. He was sure of it. Hadn't he? "What're you saying?"

"Why do you think Daniel moved to Paris?"

"For the same reason Jean-Guy and Annie moved here. They got great job offers."

"And everything's been fine between you since?"

"With a few bumps, but yes."

"I'm glad."

But Stephen looked neither glad nor convinced. Before Armand could pursue it further, Stephen asked, "So that's your son. How about your daughter and Jean-Guy? Are they settling into their new lives in Paris all right?"

"Yes. A transition, of course. Annie's on maternity leave from her law firm, and Jean-Guy's adjusting to life in the private sector. Been a bit of a challenge."

"Not surprised. Since he's no longer your second-in-command at the Sûreté, he can't arrest people anymore," Stephen, who knew Jean-Guy Beauvoir well, said with a smile. "That can't have been easy."

"He did try to arrest a colleague who cut into the lunch line, but he learns quickly. No damage done. Thankfully, he told her his name is Stephen Horowitz."

Stephen laughed.

To say going from being Chief Inspector Beauvoir in the Sûreté du Québec to running a department in a multinational engineering firm in Paris was an adjustment would have been a vast understatement.

Having to do it without a gun was even more difficult.

"Daniel and Roslyn being here has helped a lot." As Armand spoke, he examined his godfather, to see his reaction to those words.

As a senior officer in the Sûreté du Québec, and Jean-Guy's boss for many years, Gamache was used to reading faces.

Less a hunter than an explorer, Armand Gamache delved into what people thought, but mostly how they felt. Because that was where actions were conceived.

Noble acts. And acts of the greatest cruelty.

But try as he might, Armand had difficulty reading his godfather.

For a time, he'd thought he was in a position of privilege, and had unique insight into this remarkable man. But as the years went by, he began to wonder if maybe the opposite was true. Maybe he was too close. Maybe others saw Stephen more clearly, more completely, than he could.

He still saw the man who had taken his hand and kept him safe.

Others, like his grandmother Zora, saw something else.

"How's Annie?" asked Stephen. "Are they ready for the baby?"

"As ready as anyone can be, I think."

"It was a big decision."

"*Oui.*" No use denying that. "She's due any day now. You'll see them tonight at dinner. I've made reservations for all of us at Juveniles. Eight o'clock."

"Terrific." Stephen unzipped his inner pocket and showed Armand the note in his slender agenda. "I assumed."

Already written there was *family*, then *Juveniles*.

"Reine-Marie and I will swing by and pick you up."

"*Non, non.* I'm having drinks with someone first. I'll meet you there." Stephen looked ahead of him. Staring at *The Thinker*.

"What're you thinking?" Armand asked.

"That I'm not afraid to die. I am a little afraid of going to Hell."

"Why do you say that?" asked Armand, shaken by the words.

"Just the natural fear of a ninety-three-year-old reviewing his life."

"What do you see?"

"I see far too much ice cream."

"Impossible." Armand paused for a moment, before speaking. "I see a good man. A brave man. This's a better world because you're in it."

Stephen smiled. "That's kind of you to say, but you don't know everything."

"Are you trying to tell me something?"

"*Non*, not at all." He reached out and gripped Armand's wrist. His laser-blue eyes holding Armand's. "I've always told the truth."

"I know you have." Armand placed his warm hand over Stephen's cool one and squeezed gently. "When we first sat down, you said that Hell is empty and all the devils are here. What did you mean?"

“It’s one of my favorite quotes, you know that,” said Stephen.

And Armand did. Stephen loved to use the lines from *The Tempest* to unnerve business rivals, colleagues. Friends. Strangers on planes.

But this time was different. This time Stephen had added something. Something Armand had never heard from him before.

A specificity.

“You said the devils aren’t here, here.” Armand lifted his hands in imitation of Stephen’s gesture. “Why did you say that?”

“Who the hell knows? I’m an old man. Stop badgering me.”

“If they aren’t here, then where are they?”

The shadows had reached them now, and it was growing chilly in the shade.

“You should know.” Stephen turned to him. But not on him. It was a slow, considered movement. “You’ve met them often enough. You hunt devils for a living.” His blue eyes held Armand’s brown. “I’m very proud of you, son.”

Son.

Stephen had never called him that. Not once in fifty years.

Garçon, yes. Boy. It was said with great affection. But it wasn’t the same. As son.

Armand knew Stephen had been careful never to use that word. To not step on his late father’s memory and place in Armand’s life.

But now he had. Was it a slip? An indication of age and frailty? The defenses worn down, allowing his true feelings to escape? On that one, small, word.

“Don’t you worry about the devils, Armand. It’s a beautiful September afternoon, we’re in Paris, and your granddaughter is about to be born. Life is good.” Stephen patted Armand’s knee, then used it to push himself upright. “Come along, *garçon*. You can take me home.”

They paused, as they always did, at *The Burghers*. To look into those grim, determined faces.

“Just remember.” Stephen turned to look at his godson.

Armand held his eyes and nodded.

Then the two men walked slowly down rue de Varenne. Armand took Stephen’s arm as they crossed the streets. They ambled past an-

tique shops and stopped at a patisserie, where Armand bought a *pain aux raisins escargot* for Reine-Marie, her favorite. And a croissant for Stephen to have with his breakfast.

At the large red-lacquered double door into Stephen's building, the elderly man said, "Leave me here. I might just go across to the Hôtel Lutetia for an aperitif."

"And by 'aperitif' you mean ice cream?"

It was only when Armand was crossing the Pont d'Arcole, on his way to their apartment in the Marais, that he realized he hadn't pursued the question with Stephen. Or maybe Stephen had managed to divert his attention.

Away from the devils. That were somewhere here, here. In Paris.