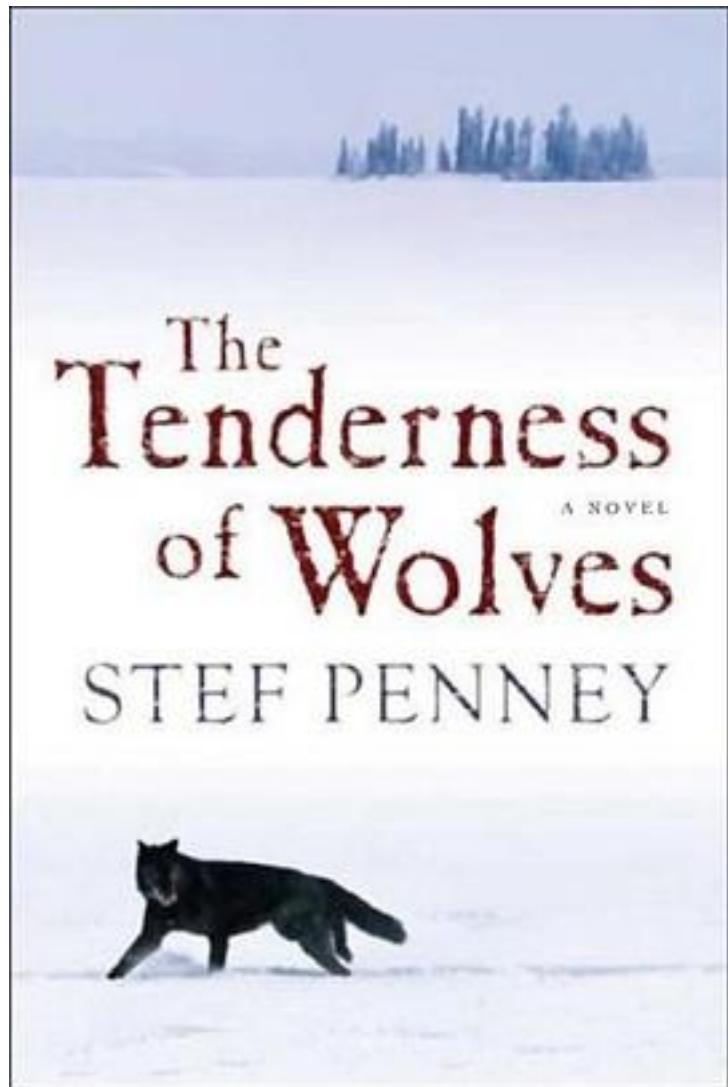


The Tenderness of Wolves



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"A brilliant and breathtaking debut that captivated readers and garnered critical acclaim in the United Kingdom, " *The Tenderness of Wolves* "was long-listed for the Orange Prize in fiction and won the Costa Award (formerly the Whitbread) Book of the Year." The year is 1867. Winter has just tightened its grip on Dove River, a tiny isolated settlement in the Northern Territory, when a man is brutally murdered. Laurent Jammett had been a voyageur for the Hudson Bay Company before an accident lamed him four years earlier. The same accident afforded him the little parcel of land in Dove River, land that the locals called unlucky due to the untimely death of the previous owner. A local woman, Mrs. Ross, stumbles upon the crime scene and sees the tracks leading from the dead man's cabin north toward the forest and the tundra beyond. It is Mrs. Ross's knock on the door of the largest house in Caulfield that launches the investigation. Within hours she will regret that knock with a mother's love -- for soon she makes another discovery: her seventeen-year-old son Francis has disappeared and is now considered a prime suspect. In the wake of such violence, people are drawn to the crime and to the township -- Andrew Knox, Dove River's elder statesman; Thomas Sturrock, a wily American itinerant trader; Donald Moody, the clumsy young Company representative; William Parker, a half-breed Native American and trapper who was briefly detained for Jammett's murder before becoming Mrs. Ross's guide. But the question remains: do these men want to solve the crime or exploit it? One by one, the searchers set out from Dove River following the tracks across a desolate landscape -- home to only wild animals, madmen, and fugitives -- variously seeking a murderer, a son, two sisters missing for seventeen years, and a forgotten Native American culture before the snows settle and cover the tracks of the past for good. In an astonishingly assured debut, Stef Penney deftly weaves adventure, suspense, revelation, and humor into an exhilarating thriller; a panoramic historical romance; a gripping murder mystery; and, ultimately, with the sheer scope and quality of her storytelling, an epic for the ages.

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