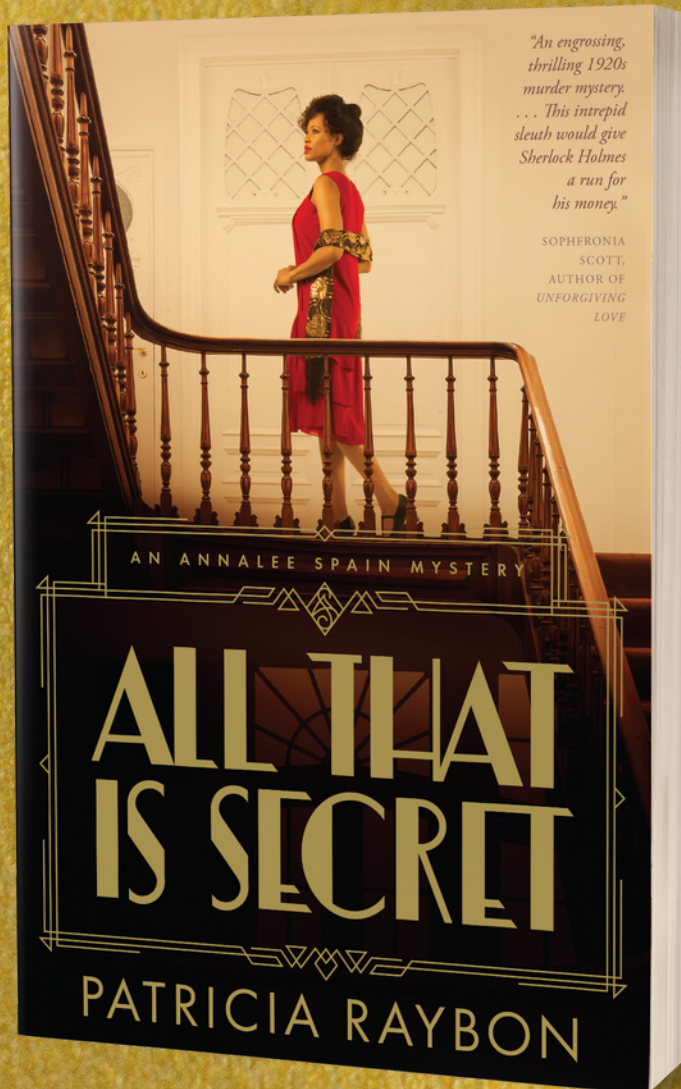




BOOK CLUB KIT





ABOUT PATRICIA RAYBON

Patricia Raybon is an award-winning author and essayist whose published books include *My First White Friend*, a Christopher Award-winning memoir about racial forgiveness, and *I Told the Mountain to Move*, a prayer memoir that was a *Christianity Today* Book of the Year finalist. Patricia's other books include *The One Year God's Great Blessings Devotional* and *Undivided: A Muslim Daughter, Her Christian Mother, Their Path to Peace*, coauthored with her younger daughter, Alana Raybon. Patricia's essays on faith, race, and grace have been published in the *New York Times Magazine*, *Newsweek*, *USA Today*, *Guideposts*, *Christianity Today*, and other national publications and blogs. A journalist by training, Patricia worked for the *Denver Post* and *Rocky Mountain News* before joining the journalism faculty at the University of Colorado Boulder, teaching for fifteen years before getting promoted to professor emerita. She now writes full-time on matters of faith. Patricia lives with her husband, Dan, a retired educator, in her beloved home state of Colorado, where they enjoy movies, popcorn, soapy costume dramas, and Masterpiece mysteries. *All That Is Secret* is her first novel. Visit her online at patriciaraybon.com.



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P.S. Sign up for Patricia's newsletter on her website to get updates delivered directly to your inbox!

Hello Everyone,

Thank you so much for selecting *All That Is Secret* for your book club. If you're like me, you love a good mystery. I've been reading them since I was a child. The thrill of the chase. The fun of the puzzle. That's what I longed to offer in my mystery, plowing the ground of a beloved format that I've admired and enjoyed for so long.

So where did I start? Agatha Christie, the queen of the genre, started writing her mysteries by knowing who did it and how. As I discovered with *All That Is Secret*, I started by wanting to figure who did it and why.

Once I "met" Annalee and understood what she wanted—to solve her father's murder, over everything else—that was my North Star.

When I set her on the page, her story, or plot, took off. My job was to keep up! To get out of her way, paying attention to *what needed to happen next*, plot-wise, to keep her story engaging and moving. Some novelists work from strict outlines. I followed the pants-on-fire approach, so I would discover what happened next just as my readers did. I found it an exciting way to write a mystery, and I hope you found it exciting and enjoyable, too.

I wasn't trying to reinvent the fiction wheel but honor what others already have studied and shared for centuries about story and plot—starting with Aristotle. The Greek philosopher said plot is everything, coming into its own when reversals and discoveries are allowed to impact where a story goes next.

I kept pinching myself, in fact, as I wrote *All That Is Secret*. After writing nonfiction for almost five decades—yep, that's true—I kept reminding myself, *You're writing a novel. And it's a mystery.*

It was such extraordinary fun that my only regret is not turning to fiction sooner. Still, as I told my husband, Dan, I pray that having more life experience and understanding—spiritually and otherwise—helps make my writing more true and real. I sure hope so.

Indeed, for readers (and book clubs), I so wanted *All That Is Secret* to be engaging and engrossing, intriguing and captivating. When *Parade* magazine picked it as a fall 2021 "Mysteries We Love" selection, I felt overjoyed. More people would discover the book, I prayed, putting more eyes and ears on Annalee's brave and gutsy crime-fighting adventures.

I feel humbled by the challenge of creating a story set during a hard time. I grew up in Colorado. So I'd known for years about the state's Ku Klux Klan era and its impact on everyone who lived here.

But would the brooding presence of a homegrown hate group work in a mystery novel? Could I make Annalee and her sidekicks and friends the best part of the story? A brave crime fighter you'd love to return to for more sleuthing and adventures? I pray you'll say yes. Book 2 is coming your way soon!

With peace and joy,

Patricia



The Making of a Detective

By Patricia Raybon



I love “clergy” mysteries—Father Brown by G.K. Chesterton, Sidney Chambers of Grantchester, and similar others. So my hope for my debut mystery was to introduce a beguiling faith character in Colorado—a female in a beautiful “sunshine” place, my home state, but during one of its darkest times, the 1920s.

But who would my sleuth be? What would set her apart? As I humbly set about creating a young detective, I trembled at knowing mystery fiction already was packed with quintessentially unique sleuths—from Sherlock Holmes, the master of analytical crime solving, to Hercule Poirot, Agatha Christie’s prototypical authority on human nature, to Christie’s Miss Marple, who, between her knitting and chatting up village suspects, can sniff out a murderer before teatime.

A Different Detective?

What, then, of my Annalee Spain? A poor, young Black woman with only two ugly dresses and barely a penny to her name? Who should she be to take on Colorado’s notorious Klan and its well-heeled advocates? But also tackle her own doubts and confusions?

From the moment I “met” Annalee in her cold-water room with its three-legged desk, I prayed she could tackle crime by bringing to it her human best. Her compassion for the downtrodden. Her honest vulnerability. Her intellectual curiosity. Her fears and uncertainties. Even her need to be loved.

I wanted, therefore, for Annalee to be multidimensional and fully human—but, in her humanity, to be relatable and find the capacity to take on crime and solve it.

What I discovered most, however, is that I wanted her to be real—precisely because she isn’t some quintessential science or history or theological wunderkind. Her family life alone has challenged her in heartbreaking ways. So she’s often confounded, wondering if God is even listening to her or her cares.

She brings similar questions to her relationships with others (including young pastor Jack Blake). Like Father Brown, she plumbs the depths of spiritual confusion, doubts, highs and lows—all amid her personal life. But as I discovered, searching her heart could lead her to insight in criminal motivation, too.

Adding Guts and Gumption

To work as a fictional detective, however, Annalee needed one other pivotal trait. To be proactive. Fictional protagonists can’t be shrinking violets. They need guts and gumption—enough moxie to get up and get cracking, follow clues, walk into scary situations, chase after bad guys (and gals), and nab them.

So with every book in the series, Annalee will get sharper at sleuthing. More than all, however, I pray she gets better at being and showing the kind of character that her readers will love, respect, learn from, and cheer on. Thank you for giving her that chance. Happy reading!



All That Is Secret Name Game



How good is your memory? Give your group five minutes to answer the questions below. Have a small prize ready—or just give bragging rights if you're meeting virtually—to the person who gets the most correct answers!

1. What's the name of the fictional detective whose stories Annalee loves to read?
2. What's the name of the New Testament Gospel where the title of *All That Is Secret* is taken from?
3. What's the name of the ranch where Joe Spain worked as a cowboy?
4. What's the name of the train that Annalee takes from Chicago to Denver?
5. What's the name of Pastor Jack Blake's 369th Infantry Division in World War I?
6. What's the name of the song Annalee and Eddie use as a secret signal?
7. What's the name of the historic Black neighborhood in Denver where Jack's church is located?
8. What's the name of the fashion magazine whose pages Bernita Jamison displayed in her tiny bedroom?
9. What's the name of the daughter of rancher Lent Montgomery's cook, Rosita Montez?
10. What's the first name of Mrs. Stallworth's husband?

Answers on next page

Name Game Answers



1. Sherlock Holmes
2. Gospel of Luke (Luke 8:17, NLT)
3. Lazy K
4. Chicago Limited
5. Harlem Hellfighters
6. "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows"
7. Five Points
8. *Vogue*
9. Dominga
10. Worcester

Q&A with Patricia Raybon

Questions and answers courtesy of Patricia Raybon

Q. This is your first novel. What led you to try fiction?

A. The pandemic. It sounds prosaic, but I'd started working on a mystery some 10 years ago, and then put it on a shelf. During the pandemic lockdown of summer 2020, however, I was desperate for something to take me away from the horrible daily news. So, I went back to my mystery. What had changed was me. Older now, I simply worried less about what people might think or say about Patricia Raybon writing a romantic historical mystery—or worry about what my characters needed to say and do. No reaction could be worse than a pandemic. So, I let her rip and gave it my all.

Q. Where did the idea come from to write about 1920s Denver and the Ku Klux Klan corruption?

A. First, I love “clergy” mysteries—Father Brown by G.K. Chesterton, Grantchester's vicar Sidney Chambers, and the like. My hope was to introduce a faith character in Colorado during one of its darkest times, the 1920s. Since fiction needs a threat element, I used the Klan as a hovering danger for a young Black theologian's attempts to solve her father's murder. I hope it makes for good tension.

Q. What sort of research did you do?

A. I started out reading histories about Colorado's Klan. Then, I scoured old newspapers at the Colorado Historical Newspapers site (a treasure) and listened to oral histories at the Denver Public Library's amazing Digital Collections—also poring over their old phone books, street maps, vintage photos, church bulletins. I love history, so digging through this material never got old.

Continued on next page

Q. Was the neighborhood burning based on an actual event?

A. Yes, the historic Shorter A.M.E. Church in Denver—founded in 1864 and named for an A.M.E. bishop (James A. Shorter)—was destroyed by fire on April 9, 1925, with many suspecting the Klan. One year later, on Easter Sunday, April 4, 1926, the congregation moved into a newly built building on the site of the previously burned structure in Denver’s Five Points neighborhood, staying at that location until 1981 before moving to Martin Luther King and Colorado boulevards. My husband Dan and I have been members of Shorter for nearly 40 years. Knowing about the fire, I used the incident in my novel, *All That Is Secret*.

Q. How unusual was a female seminary professor in the 1920’s? A Black theology professor of either sex?

A. Not totally unusual for two reasons. Many college-educated women in the U.S. matriculated at all-female seminaries, forerunners of female colleges such as Smith or Wellesley. Their goal was to prepare young, unmarried women to be teachers. Meantime, there was a move by many denominations to launch colleges for “Negroes,” now known as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Some white schools, such as Oberlin, had accepted Black students even earlier—at Oberlin since 1835. While most white colleges in the U.S. didn’t admit Black students until much later, Annalee would’ve found a place to study. Her study of theology would be rare, but not impossible.

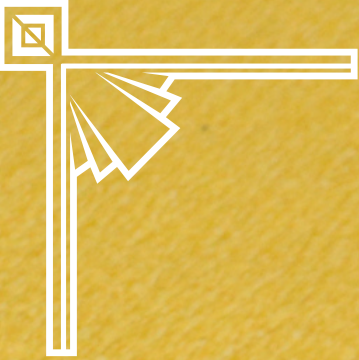
Q. What did you learn by writing a mystery?

A. To treasure life even more. In a mystery, since someone’s life usually gets taken, that invites a brave look at all things in life that die—especially spiritually—for each of us. What, indeed, can we learn about life by looking hard at dying? To a theological detective, that’s a key question. As for historical fiction, hindsight reminds us that winners write history. But what’s the rest of the story? Historical fiction allows a second look. Writing my novel helped me get in touch with both sides of a historical time and place.

As for the actual plot, the moment-by-moment action, I honored those experts who say to focus on what the character wants most. Once I met Annalee and understood what she wanted—to solve her father’s murder, over everything else—that was my North Star.

I wasn’t trying to reinvent the fiction wheel but roll with what others already have studied and shared about plot—starting, in fact, with Aristotle. I’m a beginner at this, however, so I know there’s much more to learn.





Tips for a Great Book Club

Set the stage for your book club discussion of *All That Is Secret* by preparing some tasty treats Annalee might have enjoyed, and immerse yourself into the 1920s by dressing up in historical clothing and listening to music that captures the feel of moments from the story.



Turn the page to continue





Recipe courtesy of Patricia Raybon

Church Social Frappé

My mother called this recipe her ice cream punch. I added the “Church Social” part to the name. That’s because I have fond memories of my mother, along with her bevy of women friends at my childhood church in northeast Denver, making the frosty concoction for church socials and events. It’s quick, frothy, delicious—and makes any gathering feel fun and special. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 1 48-ounce size sherbet (or 2 quarts) of any fruit flavor (orange is my favorite)
- 12-liter bottle lemon-lime carbonated soft drink (chilled)
- few slices of lemon, lime, and/or orange slices for garnish (optional)

Directions:

Gently add chilled carbonated beverage to the punch bowl by pouring it along the sides. Wait for fizz to settle a bit before continuing to pour. Place large scoops of the sherbet atop the carbonated drink, letting it “float” until it softens a bit in the punch liquid. Garnish with lemon, lime, and/or orange slices. Serves about 10 to 12 people.

P.S. Remember to exercise caution when trying out a new recipe as you’re making it for the first time and some ingredients may contain allergens.

Snacks & More

Tips for your book club
courtesy of Patricia Raybon

Passenger Train Nibbles

Annalee's sleuthing kicks into gear on a passenger train from Chicago to Denver. During the time of her story, passenger trains featured lounge or club cars offering snacks and beverage service to cross-country travelers. For your book club, you can set out pretty dishes of these snacks to accompany your sherbet punch.

- mixed nuts
 - cashews
 - Jordan almonds
 - candied mints
-

Sugar Cookies

Buy "slice and bake" style refrigerator cookies and bake, following directions. (Why not make them yourself? You can if you'd like. But if you're a detective, you're busy chasing bad guys and solving crime.)

More tips on the next page!



Fashion Fun

After working undercover as a maid, amateur detective Annalee Spain gets a fashion upgrade when her new friend Bernita Jamison lends her a red dress to wear to Sunday services at Mount Moriah AME Church.

In tribute to Annalee's courageous fashion makeover, invite book club members to wear a red dress (or red sweater with favorite slacks, skirt, or jeans). For fun, accessorize by throwing on a long pair of 1920s-style pearls or beads.

Music

What follows is a playlist for the book. Either compile the songs together and have them playing softly in the background during your book group, or play the songs individually to accompany the following points of discussion:

1.) Barber's "Adagio for Strings"

A sad discovery is described in the Prologue. To acknowledge that opening incident, listen to this selection and discuss all the ways the book's opening made you feel—about what happened, about Joe Spain and the infant's identity, about Annalee's predicament when the book started, and your expectations for the rest of the novel.

2.) Duke Ellington's "Take the A Train"

Annalee's sleuthing starts on the Chicago Limited to Denver. Discuss your initial feelings about Annalee and your hopes as you recall them, as you read the novel's opening chapters, for her crime-fighting success.

3.) "O Fortuna" (Carmina Burana) Carl Orff

The threat in *All That Is Secret*, the Colorado Klan, is always in the background—along with the casual racism and bigotry that it represented and the way that it impacted Annalee's life and the lives of those the Klan targeted. Discuss your thoughts about hate groups. What allows them to take root and grow—even among churches and their members? How could a believer in Christ confuse supremacy as godly? Why don't people's "better angels" prevail?

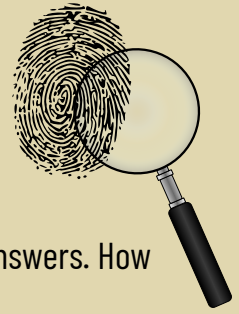
4.) Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man"

Colorado is the setting for Annalee's first mystery, including a large ranch south of the city of Denver. But as Sherlock Holmes observed, "It is my belief, Watson, founded upon experience, that the lowest and vilest alleys in London do not present a more dreadful record of sin than does the smiling and beautiful countryside." Reflect on that contrast.

5.) "You Made Me Love You" sung by Judy Garland

Annalee falls hard for the young pastor Jack Blake. Reflect on your feelings about their relationship. What are your predictions for the romance between Annalee and Jack? What do you hope for them? For her? (As an aside, the song, composed by James V. Monaco with lyrics by Joseph McCarthy, was introduced in 1913 by Al Jolson in a Broadway revue called *The Honeymoon Express*. Jolson's recording was an international hit, often sung in blackface in minstrel shows, which Jolson popularized. In 1937, lyricist Roger Edens wrote additional lyrics for Judy Garland whose rendition was released as the b-side of Garland's recording of "Over the Rainbow" from *The Wizard of Oz*.)

Discussion Questions



Read these questions together in your book group and then share and discuss your answers. How has your understanding of the story grown? What new insights have you discovered?

1. Annalee starts her story uncertain about both herself and her relationship to God. How might those two things be connected for a young Black woman of her time? How are those two things connected, in any way, for you?
2. Both Annalee and Eddie have to deal with the legacy of imperfect fathers. How are their experiences similar? How do they differ?
3. Mrs. Stallworth advises, “When it comes to unraveling life’s big mysteries, you don’t aim at the big parts of the problem. You work on the small. . . . You don’t grab a hammer and beat down the door. You work on the hinges.” Do you think she’s right? How does Annalee “work on the hinges” as she solves the mystery of her father’s murder?
4. Annalee develops a tense but close friendship with the Castles’ maid, Bernita Jamison. What was your initial reaction to Bernita’s character? How did your feelings about Bernita change or deepen during the course of the story?
5. In the midst of searching for her father’s murderer, Annalee finds herself falling for the young pastor Jack Blake. Is it unwise for her to attempt both things at the same time—pursuing a murderer and a man? In what ways does Jack affirm her? In what ways does he confuse her? In future stories, what do you expect or hope for their relationship?
6. What does Annalee’s knowledge of Sherlock Holmes teach her about what it takes to conduct a crime investigation? Where do her instincts help her along the way? Do they ever steer her down the wrong path?

Continued on next page

7. What theories did you develop throughout the story about Joe Spain's murder? Who seemed most fearful of secrets being exposed? What twists did you see coming? Which surprised you?

8. As he and Annalee talk about the Klan, Jack says, "They're afraid of being afraid. Losing control of a world they never controlled in the first place." Do you agree with his assessment? How do you see the same fears playing out in the world today?

9. Annalee begins to wonder if what she has really longed for is to be loved and treasured. What does she learn about self-worth, about giving proper value to herself, through the events of the story? What does she learn about her worth to others? To God?

10. Annalee thinks about the difficulty of explaining the "color line" to her students: "Mercy, Jesus, the lynching, burning, jailing, raping, degrading sickness of it—by people wearing his cross." What do you think she means by her answer: "I feel sad for God"? When asked to explain racial prejudice to a young person, what do you say?

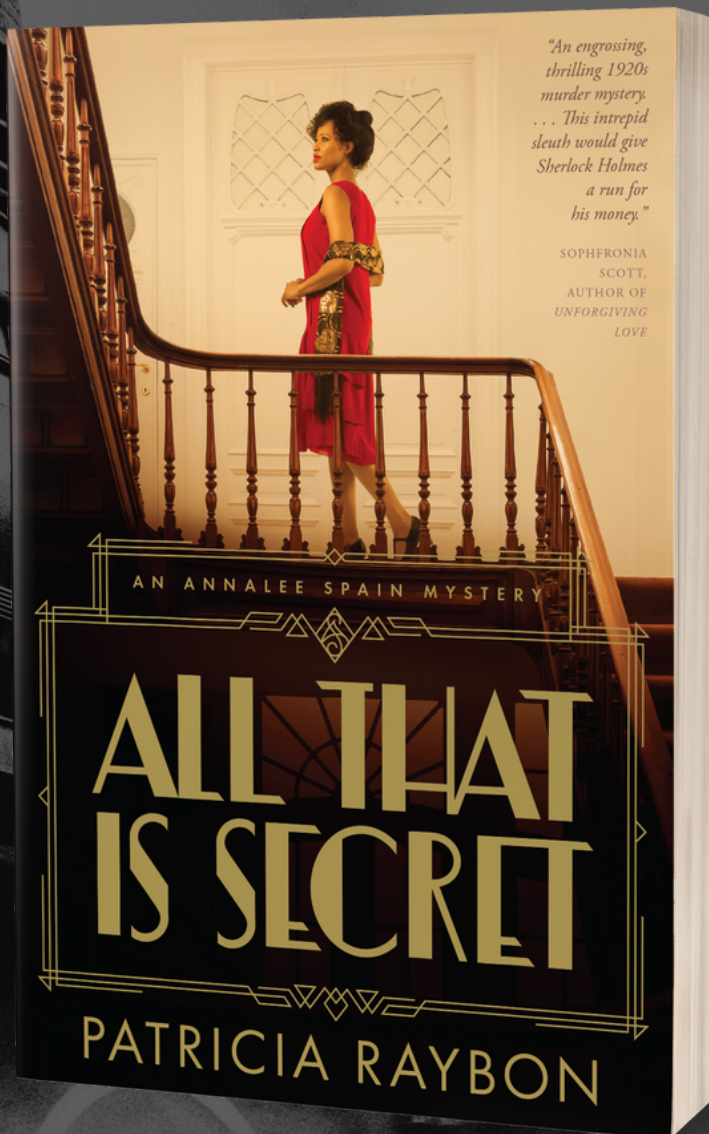
11. Eddie believes his father is the Denver Klan leader and hates him for it, yet in a moment of strong feelings, he almost hurls the same ugliness at Annalee. Why do you think that is? Have you ever been shocked by what came out of your mind, heart, or mouth in a moment of anger? How did you deal with what you learned about yourself?

12. Annalee solves her father's murder but uncovers new secrets in the process and finds herself suddenly visible in a way she wasn't before. What do you think is next for her? In what ways does she inspire you?

My discussion questions:

Use this space to jot down some questions you want to ask in your book club meeting.

Thanks for choosing



for your book club!



Keep an eye out for
the next *Annalee
Spain* mystery novel
by Patricia Raybon

Coming in 2022 from Tyndale House Publishers

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