

## Double the Lies: An Annalee Spain Mystery

**Patricia Raybon**

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In Patricia Raybon's stirring mystery novel *Double the Lies*, a Black theologian-turned-private detective becomes embroiled in the murder of a white stunt pilot.

Annalee Spain left university teaching behind to become a private detective. It's a dangerous job for a Black woman in Denver in the 1920s, given that the KKK runs the local police department, waiting for any chance to frame Annalee. When an overheard argument between a white couple leads to murder, Annalee winds up the top suspect, with the lives of everyone close to her threatened. Her past connections (including to an agent of the nascent FBI) lead Annalee to posh Estes Park, with its smuggling rings, dirty development deals, family grudges, and history of bigotry. Annalee has a few days to solve the murder and rescue her kidnapped boyfriend, a local pastor, before she lands in jail.

*Double the Lies* is the second series title, but those unfamiliar with the first volume will have no trouble following its engrossing plot, which is driven by its first-rate heroine—a feminist who calls on her intimate knowledge of Sherlock Holmes stories and the Bible to power through and make decisions. She's surrounded by a diverse and surprising team of helpers and an array of suspects who ensure that the killer's identity stays secret until the end.

The novel's rich setting teems with speakeasies, run-down boarding houses, pawn shops, barnstorming airfields, and elite mountain lodges, bringing the Colorado of the 1920s to life. Social issues including racism and antisemitism loop through the story, and a touch of romance blends in to make room for future installments.

The fast-paced and powerful mystery novel *Double the Lies* follows its heroine through vivid settings and has an underlying theme of social injustice.

PAULA MARTINAC (January / February 2023)

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