

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - United States, 2021-April 29 — /ToStories/ - American fiction author Patricia M. Muhammad discusses her second mystery/detective romance novel, *The Speakeasy Murders*.

There are three things which stand out during the American 1920s: Prohibition, dance and fashion. Within each one, the casual observer will note an aspect of rebellion attributed to each one. Two major camps existed, those who supported the Volstead Act who deemed alcohol consumption as an affront to mores or religious values, and those who opposed the legislation as a violation of freedom and leisure. Those who would not adhere to Prohibition resorted to bootlegging and creating underground establishments in which alcohol and spirits could be freely consumed. Dance, in particular among woman, was a new display of freedom and living carefree. These women did not limit their dance solely to the indoors, but many would dance in the streets or parks as a culture breakthrough and counter culture to the previous decade. However, it seems that the most consistent ode to the 1920s was to its iconic fashion. Hair, shoes and dresses all compiled the persistent trope of the would-be flapper.

Women had their hair cut short, styled in less feminine ways. Yet their dress countered the mainstream shock to their deviation of American cultural norm. These women would wear plain to extravagant dresses with heavy amounts of jewelry and makeup. They would adorn their shoulders with boas and their necks with multiple strings of pearls. Their smiles exuded confidence and their eyes spoke of freedom. What permeated their cultural shift was a new form of femininity for many. Even with shorter hair styles, these women secured waves and curls as part of their superficial transformation. Fashion and dance defined the flapper. Music, dance and alcohol defined the speakeasy. For one detective to enter unnoticed, she would have to undergo her own transformation. This is the story of one undercover detective during the 1920s in the city of Chicago. Her name was Helen Williams.

She is an astute, but bashful upper class coloured detective. Though some of her co-workers take some time to become accustomed to her quirks, she is admired for her detail, accepted and often called upon her colleagues for her insight. Helen is called in one night to help investigate some peculiar murders presumably used as the criminal mastermind's dumping ground. After a couple of days of discussing similar cases with her colleagues, Helen realizes that these murders lead to an underground nightclub.

Lieutenant Johnson partners Williams with Patterson to go undercover and further investigate the murders stemming from the speakeasy. Stephen introduces Helen to his sister Ruby to help her undergo her transformation. It is here where she now has the appearance readily accepted of popular culture. Her new hairstyle and dress takes some time getting used to. Helen believes the dresses are too extravagant and only feels comfortable wearing a cardigan with them. Her station house brother teases her, but Williams is adamant is about the sweater. Despite this irregular accessory, overall Williams now appears as a flapper. Neither she nor Stephen has ever been to a speakeasy. Helen hopes that no one will notice how out of place she is. An Englishman notices her beauty and her being distracted—and none of it has to do with dance or music. Thaddeus is able to garner her attention with a genuine interest in becoming better acquainted with her. She is polite but concentrates on the investigation. The detective does not wish to spend more time at the seedy club than necessary and the sooner the case

is resolved, the quicker she could return to her normal clothes and life—above ground. However, Helen surprisingly realizes that Thaddeus is very much the gentleman though a bit assertive. The Brit has already decided Helen is the only woman he could have henceforth. Helen maintains her courteous nature, but is still unsure of Thaddeus' intentions.

One night at the speakeasy, Helen is assaulted and nearly raped by a Negro male in one of the bigger rooms to the left of the main floor. His African male accomplice waits at the threshold of the room's door to make sure the job is done. She was able to maneuver and defend herself until Stephen nearly pummels him. The British patron, Thaddeus carries her away and brings her to his flat. She is shy and cautious. Helen is no longer in manner of being a gun-toting detective. The events that night happened so quickly, she was part of a social whirlwind in which her gentleman patron had to whisk her away from it all. She settles in with Thaddeus as circumstance dictates. Her vulnerability, let alone her cardigan easily allows for Thaddeus to gain a greater understanding to who this sweet young woman is. Helen notices that the Englishman is very protective of her. Over time they increase in natural affection towards one another. The Englishman proposes to Helen and she accepts. Yet the investigation has to continue. One night at the speakeasy, Helen discovers a secret stairwell. It would be the gateway which leads her to solve the murders. To whom it leads is still anyone's guess. No one knows who will leave alive.

The Speakeasy Murders* is now available for purchase as an ebook at these online retailers:

Amazon ASIN: B08Y751JKQ
Barnes & Noble: 2940162220978
Kobo ISBN: 1230004607311
Google Play: GGKEY:KFFB1XXWEAH E
Smashwords: 9781005999629
Thalia.de EAN: 9783752137118
Apple Books: N/A
DriveThru Fiction: N/A
Lulu: N/A

About the Author: Patricia M. Muhammad is a multi-genre fiction author currently based in the United States. She often includes multi-racial characters and interracial relationships in her books. She has written 20 novels. Patricia is currently based in the United States.

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* CONTENT WARNING: This book is a work of fiction. However, the author intended to create characters and settings historically accurate to the era it takes place in, the racially tumultuous 1920s. Certain terms used as racial descriptions now considered archaic, outdated or even offensive are used to reflect the past usage by both black and white Americans of that era. Particular themes regarding race, references to certain crimes such as murder and sexual assault are included as part of the fictional plot. The

author provides this content description for any potential reader who may consider any of these subject matters or references too sensitive to consider.