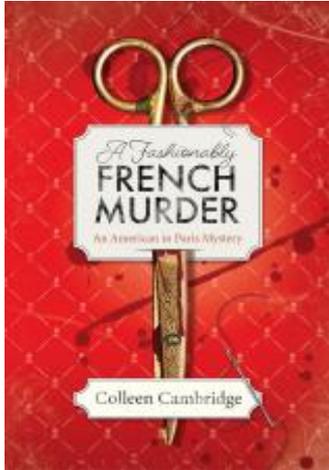


A Fashionably French Murder: An American in Paris Mystery

by Colleen Cambridge



About the Book

American expat Tabitha Knight has found a new life in postwar Paris, along with a delightful friend in aspiring chef Julia Child. Yet there are perils in peacetime too, as a killer infiltrates one of the city's most famous fashion houses.

If there's one art the French have mastered as well as fine cuisine, it's haute couture. Tabitha and Julia are already accustomed to sampling the delights of the former. Now fashion is returning to the forefront in Paris, as the somber hues of wartime are replaced by vibrant colors and ultra-feminine silhouettes, influenced by Christian Dior's "New Look."

Tabitha and Julia join a friend for a private showing at an exclusive fashion atelier, Maison Lannet. The event goes well, but when Tabitha returns later that evening to search for a lost glove, she finds the lights still on --- and the couturier dead, strangled by a length of lace. The shop manager suspects that a jealous rival --- perhaps Dior himself --- committed the crime. Tabitha dismisses that idea, but when another body is found, it's apparent that someone is targeting employees of Maison Lannet.

Meanwhile, Tabitha's Grand-père and Oncle Rafe are in the midst of their own design-related fracas, as they squabble over how to decorate their new restaurant. And there are strange break-ins at a nearby shoe store. But are the crimes related? It's up to Tabitha to don her investigative hat and find answers before someone commits another fatal fashion faux pas.

Discussion Guide

1. Have you ever watched Julia Child's "The French Chef"? Or any of her other television appearances? How did the

?real? Julia Child compare with the one portrayed in the book?

2. What do you think about the fact that Christian Dior was so powerful of a fashion designer that he had the ability to change hemlines from year to year --- and people in fashion went along with it?

3. What did you find most interesting about the world of *haute couture* as portrayed in this book? Was there anything that surprised you?

4. Shopping at a French market is portrayed far differently than going to the grocery store in the US --- in the 1950s, but also, even these days. Do you think you'd like the ?French way? of walking to your local market every day or every other day to select your food, seeing and getting to know the same people?

5. Have you ever had *cassoulet*? Have you ever made potato leek soup? What about crêpes? Did any of Julia's comments or suggestions about these dishes ring especially true or were especially helpful to you?

6. Do you think Merveille should have been more or less strict with Tabitha about her involvement in the murder investigation?

7. Each of the gowns described as part of the Dior fashion show were real gowns, released that year (1950, spring/summer collection). You can find pictures of them on the internet, searching by the name of the gown. Which one would *you* have wanted for your own?

8. As we learn in this book, women in particular were judged for collaborating with the Germans --- sometimes harshly, sometimes perhaps too harshly. What do you think about the position in women found themselves in Occupied Paris? How do you think you would have reacted/coped if you were in any of those situations?

9. Did you suspect XX as the killer (leaving the name out to avoid spoilers)? Why or why not?

10. Do you think Tabitha should pursue bringing Lupin back to live with Grand-père and Oncle Rafe and herself? Do you think she did the right thing, capturing the cat and bringing him to the veterinarian?

Author Bio

Colleen Cambridge is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of the *American in Paris Mysteries* and the *Phyllida Bright Mysteries*, the first of which, *MURDER AT MALLOWAN HALL*, was an Agatha Award finalist and an Indie Next pick. The first *American in Paris Mystery*, *MASTERING THE ART OF FRENCH MURDER*, was both an Indie Next pick and a LibraryReads selection. An accomplished historian whose meticulously researched novels appeal to fans of historical fiction and mysteries alike, she also writes under the pen names C.M. Gleason and Colleen Gleason. She lives in the Midwest and can be found online at ColleenCambridge.com.

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