The Lost Apothecary

Sarah Penner

Caroline Parcewell is visiting London on what should have been a 10th anniversary celebration with her husband, but she is on her own after discovering that her husband is having an affair. Instead of cancelling the trip she decides to go on her own. On her first day there Caroline is invited to go Mudlarking along the River Thames. Mudlarking involves walking along the river and seeing what kinds of treasures you might find in the mud. Caroline finds a blue vial with an etching on the side of it that looks like a bear. The man leading the Mudlarking group said that it looked like an apothecary’s vial. Caroline, a history major, goes into research mode and starts investigating what the vial was for.

In 1791 London, Nella who runs a secret apothecary shop, sells well disguised poisons to women who want to be rid of oppressive and dangerous men in their lives. Nella has glass vials with the etching of bears on them and also vials with the name of the shop engraved on the sides. When one of her poisons is mistakenly put in one of the vials with the name of the shop on it, and given to a client, Nella’s world starts to fall apart. If Nella and her shop of poisons are discovered it will be the hangman for her.

The book jumps back and forth from present day to 1791 and it is interesting to see how Caroline’s investigation brings her into the world of Nella. For those interested in mysteries and historical fiction this may be the book for you.