



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

The Lost Apothecary by Sarah Penner

1. At the beginning of Caroline's story, she finds the apothecary vial while on a mudlarking tour. Had you heard of mudlarking prior to reading this book? Do you believe that fate or coincidence led to her discovery? Have you ever stumbled on something that you consider to be fate?
2. Both Nella and Caroline have been betrayed by men in their lives. In what ways did the two women respond similarly to these betrayals? In what ways did they respond differently? Do you feel that one woman was more emotionally resilient than the other?
3. Nella and Eliza form an unlikely friendship early in the story, despite Nella's resistance to having the young girl in her shop a second time. Why do you think Nella eventually softened her heart toward Eliza? What drew the two characters – one on the cusp of womanhood, the other toward the end of her life – toward one another? What kind of impact did Eliza have on Nella's character?
4. *The Lost Apothecary* explores the idea of female empowerment and rebelling against a man's world. In what ways did Nella, Eliza and Caroline empower themselves? Do you consider *The Lost Apothecary* a feminist book?
5. *The Lost Apothecary* is paced purposefully so that the truth about Nella's fate is slowly revealed over the course of the story. What techniques or literary devices did the author use to "drip-feed" this information and maintain the book's suspense?
6. Discuss the meaning of the title, *The Lost Apothecary*. In your opinion, which character is the real "lost apothecary"?
7. Which of the three characters – Nella, Eliza, or Caroline – did you find the most compelling or enjoyable to read? Why?

The above questions were taken from
<https://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/the-lost-apothecary/guide>
for your discussion of the book.

Author Biography

Sarah Penner is the debut author of *The Lost Apothecary*, to be translated in eleven languages worldwide. She works full-time in finance and is a member of the Historical Novel Society and the Women's Fiction Writers Association. She and her husband live in St. Petersburg, Florida, with their miniature dachshund, Zoe.

From HarperCollins website: <https://www.harpercollins.com/blogs/authors/sarah-penner>

Book Club in a Bag Terms of Use

Simplify your book club selection with Book Club in a Bag! Visit our website at www.clarington-library.on.ca/bookclubinabag to see a list of available titles, view the availability calendar and fill in a Book Club in a Bag Request Form.

Booking a Kit

- Booking may be made up to a year in advance.
- Please check the calendar accessible on our website for availability.
- Fill out the form with your information, and a staff member will be in touch to confirm your booking.
- Pick up your hold at the circulation desk. Your notification may come in a few days early, but it will remain available until your specified pick-up date.

Terms of Loan

- This kit includes 11 regular print copies and 1 large print copy
- 6-week loan period
- No renewals
- Kit may be picked up at or returned to any branch.
- Kit must be returned at the desk during operating hours, not through an exterior drop box.
- All items are checked out to one member's card.
- The member who borrowed the kit is responsible for:
 - The distribution and return of all items to their group members.
 - Any damages to the books/bag, or lost items.
 - The cost of a damaged or lost book varies depending on the item.