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Historical

The Apothecary's Daughter
Julie Klassen
Bethany House
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Young Lilly Haswell stands on Honeystreet Bridge in a small town in the Wiltshire district of Regency-era England, searching the barges and narrow boats for a familiar face. Her mother's run off, leaving her father, the apothecary Charles Haswell, her brain-damaged brother Charlie, and Lilly with no word about why. However, Lilly "felt a shameful thrill" at her mother's disappearance. She imagined her mother traveling the world, something Lilly longs to do, stuck as she is "in an inconsequential village" she "was certain that would never be enough."

Klassen, author of *Lady of Milkweed Manor*, a Christy Award finalist, enriches Lilly's story with wonderful specific details, such as Regency settings and rules of society and concoctions of the times, like "tempered figs"—figs pressed and heated as much as a patient could endure—to ease breast pain, and "ointment of lemon, rose water, and silver supplement" to treat blemishes. Further, at the beginning of each chapter are gems of healing remedies from *Culpepper's Complete Herbal* or other sources, as well as a view into the period through advertisements in the *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* from 1833.

Though Lilly's longing for a different life is realized through her mother's brother, a member of London society, she can't es-cape her upbringing in her father's shop. Lilly is a "rememberer"; her gift of eidetic memory is an essential component in dispensing medicine. At a society party when the father of a friend is choking to death, Lilly steps up to the plate, obtains a "probang" from the house medicine chest and uses the flexible tube to dislodge a peppermint that is stuck in the man's throat. Saving this man's life spoils her Lon-don Season; there is no way that any gentleman of quality would offer marriage to a woman whose father was "in trade."

Nevertheless, several beaux seek Lilly's favor, from the disreputable Lord Marlow of her hometown to Dr. Graves, a newly-minted physician. However, her life straddles the tense juncture between three professions: university-trained doctors, surgeons who learn their trade on the battlefield, and the apothecaries. It is upon this landscape that Lilly finds her true place in the

world.

Carol Lynn Stewart