

TESS
GERRITSEN
THE
BONE GARDEN
HER NEW BESTSELLER



The Bone Garden

Tess Gerritsen

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

The Bone Garden

Tess Gerritsen

The Bone Garden Tess Gerritsen

Present day: Julia Hamill has made a horrifying discovery on the grounds of her new home in rural Massachusetts: a skull buried in the rocky soil—human, female, and, according to the trained eye of Boston medical examiner Maura Isles, scarred with the unmistakable marks of murder. But whoever this nameless woman was, and whatever befell her, is knowledge lost to another time. . . .

Boston, 1830: In order to pay for his education, Norris Marshall, a talented but penniless student at Boston Medical College, has joined the ranks of local “resurrectionists”—those who plunder graveyards and harvest the dead for sale on the black market. Yet even this ghoulish commerce pales beside the shocking murder of a nurse found mutilated on the university hospital grounds. And when a distinguished doctor meets the same grisly fate, Norris finds that trafficking in the illicit cadaver trade has made him a prime suspect.

To prove his innocence, Norris must track down the only witness to have glimpsed the killer: Rose Connolly, a beautiful seamstress from the Boston slums who fears she may be the next victim. Joined by a sardonic, keenly intelligent young man named Oliver Wendell Holmes, Norris and Rose comb the city—from its grim cemeteries and autopsy suites to its glittering mansions and centers of Brahmin power—on the trail of a maniacal fiend who lurks where least expected . . . and who waits for his next lethal opportunity.

The Bone Garden Details

Date : Published January 14th 2008 by Bantam (first published 2007)

ISBN : 9780593057773

Author : Tess Gerritsen

Format : Hardcover 370 pages

Genre : Mystery, Thriller, Fiction, Crime, Historical, Historical Fiction

 [Download The Bone Garden ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Bone Garden ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Bone Garden Tess Gerritsen

From Reader Review The Bone Garden for online ebook

Jonetta says

This is an interesting story of two time periods that will ultimately converge through the characters. Julia Hamill, newly divorced, has just purchased a new home and is working the garden when she discovers human remains. It's determined that they are over 100 years old. Julia, with the help of the brother of the previous owner, researches old letters that provide a compelling story of Rose Connelly, a young seamstress living in Boston in the 1830s.

Rose Connelly's story is the substance of the mystery. She struggles to keep and take care of her newborn niece after her sister dies soon after childbirth. Medical students Norris Marshall and Oliver Wendell Holmes become involved when Rose and Norris both witness the Grim Reaper at separate murderous occasions. Meanwhile, someone has an inordinate interest in finding Rose's niece, Meggie.

The transitions between present day and the year 1830 were done pretty seamlessly. Including Oliver Wendell Holmes in this tale provided an interesting medical backdrop, giving us insight into the crudeness of the field of medicine in that era. There are surprising twists that you won't see coming but are completely plausible. The present day story, however, lacks the depth and character substance found in the 1830s story but it doesn't detract from the strength of the book overall. The suggested connections at the end were not sufficient to salvage the one-dimensional aspect of the present day characters.

I enjoyed this story made more pleasurable by listening to the audiobook, even with the issues described earlier.

Cherie says

Fantastic! I loved every minute of the story of a woman who dug up more than she ever expected in the weed choked garden of her recently purchased old home.

The search to see if she could puzzle out the identity of the unknown woman whose bones she had discovered involved a story line spanning back almost two hundred years. The story in the past involved some Boston history, early medical practices in American medicine, poor Irish immigrants, young medical students, and a young woman who would not abandon those she loves.

I listened to this book, narrated beautifully by Susan Denaker.

Ariana Fae says

I just finished the BONE GARDEN by Tess Gerritsen. Words to describe what's in this story: suspense, mystery, misogyny, betrayal, racism, gruesome images, family ties, friendship, reincarnation and bitter sweet romance, which had my eyes glued to the pages of this book.

One of the things I loved was how Mrs. Gerritsen showed glimpses of 1800's medical training in the US. It was gruesome, shocking and so realistic. Another was how the Resurrectionist (grave robbers) operated and what they had to go through to obtain cadavers for the medical schools. This story taught you so much about

the early 1800's from the plight of the poor, racism against the Irish and how women were looked at and treated by men of that day.

Of course all the above is brilliantly intertwined by Mrs. Gerritsen's skillful writing, her world building and creating wonderful characters you want to root for or despise. It was a book I truly enjoyed reading and learning from. I would recommend this to any historical reader who loves mystery and suspense tied into a great package.

Paige Bookdragon says

You know the problem of writing reviews for books like this? It makes you stupid. Like **"What am I going to write? How am I going to explain to them that this book makes me feel fucking lonely and satisfied at the same time?"**

Side note: I never thought that loneliness and satisfaction combined is like floating in the middle of the Dead Sea contemplating life and shit. Does it make sense? No? Then good. It doesn't make sense to me either.

When I finished The Bone Garden my face is exactly like this:

No fucking joke.

I'm going to tell you why this book deserves my 5 star.

1. The fact that Tess Gerritsen knows how to make you crazy. You're like reading this chapter of a certain era and it's getting scary and full of suspense and she'll be like:

"Wait, lemme end this chapter and transfer you back to the other time. Trololol!"

Isn't it adorable?

2. Rose Connolly

This is going to be a character appreciation:

Rose, as you can say, is the heroine of this book (not Julia). She belonged in Boston 1830 and I just want to tell those who can read this review:

She rocks.

She's not the normal badass heroine that I usually like. You have to remember, this is 1830, the time when horses were treated more fairly than women. She didn't start a revolution. She didn't end a war. She just endured and fought for her and her niece's life.

Remember that saying that **men may be stronger but it is women who endure**. Rose Connolly endured and with that she shows her strength.

bow

cue exit

Fred says

Tess Gerritsen Fans Group Link

When started I found it difficult - 10/2017 - abandoned
Had bad logic between past & present to follow

Ken Consaul says

This is my second foray into Tess Gerritsen's books. I enjoyed about eighty percent of this one. As anyone who has read *The Bone Garden*, they can guess which eighty percent I'm talking about.

I really don't see what the present day tie in had to do with the story. Essentially (not really a spoiler), a woman buys a house, finds a skull when gardening. The famous Maura Isles shows up, appears on two pages to tell the reader she has nothing to do with the story. The rest of the present day segments revolve around going through a dozen boxes of old newspapers. At the end, the main story is tied to the present day one with some kind of mystical reincarnation link.

Now that complaint is out of the way, the main part of the story, the medical history/mystery in 1830 was first rate. Learned something about the sad state of medicine in the era, graverobbers, the plight of the poor and had a pretty good whodunit thrown in. I'm always a little disappointed when the murderer turns out to be a character that's pretty much been on the sidelines. Not giving anything away but the motive for the killing is barely plausible and the killer manages to be perfectly normal except when they are out killing people.

It seemed to me the author created the present day scenes simply to put Isles in the story as a cameo.

Yz the Whyz says

Not an author or a genre I would have picked up on my own, if she was not a Featured Author in the RRRC group.

The Bone Garden weaves two stories in two different time - one in the past and the other in the present. In the past, it follows the lives of Rose Connelly, a poor Irish girl trying to protect her newly-orphaned niece and Norris Marshall, a struggling student doctor, and how fate had intertwined their paths, both joyous and poignant. We read about them through letters read by our modern heroine Julia Hamill while going through old papers, related to her house and the bones she found in her garden.

The novel was written with sharp precision, keeping me on edge all along. There are times the details are too graphic and gory for my weak stomach, but I have to continue on. By the time, I reached the last disc, I was too involved with Rose and Norris relationships that I was crying at how their story ended.

Part of the five stars that I gave to this book is due to the narrator of the audiobook, Susan Denaker (spelling?). Wonderful narrator and really brought the book to life for me.

I may not read another book by Tess Gerritsen - too little romance for my romantic heart, too much gore for my weak constitution - but I did not regret listening to this novel.

Debra says

Loved the historical aspects. Was busy throughout the book looking up stuff on the internet. Great stuff, but not for the weak of stomach. Some very gruesome scenes. The mystery was well done too; kept me turning the pages along with a sincere concern for the main characters.

Margitte says

Newly divorced, Julia Hamill, buys a house and discovers a skeleton in her front garden. Looking for answers to the ancient mystery dating back to 1830, she soon connects with the family of the previous owners. In a parallel tale, the mystery is solved, leaving the reader in utmost surprise and awe.

This is one of those perfect suspense thrillers with a nerve-tingling impact reminiscent of the best of the all-time crime writers. The standard of the writing is just way above average. I started this book about five years ago, and forgot about it.

This morning, during a power cut, I was looking through my book shelves for something entertaining to read (at least a book which did not need batteries, for crying out loud!) and rediscovered this book. For some or other reason I had to put it aside and I couldn't remember why. I immediately got lost between the pages again. I just couldn't believe that I did not finish it five years ago.

The power cut lasted the entire day. I ended up reading the final chapters in the light of candles. A perfect setting to enjoy a book playing itself out in the 1800s with candles in old windows and dark streets full of bad people. :-)) I sat on the edge of my seat in the kitchen, serving guests, running back to the book in the kitchen, then out at the tables again, so happy to see 'normal' people. lolol. The tale was just too mesmerizing, too gripping to leave me alone. But was I glad when the power switched on again!. Oh dear, I almost did not make it with this book in hand.

The plot is masterfully done and the ending was unexpected. The whole atmosphere of the book is so real! It reminded me once again of Dr. Kay Scarpetta's murder mystery series by Patricia Cornwell, and a little bit of *Cutting For Stone* by Abraham Verghese.

I was surprised afterwards to learn that the author is also a medical doctor, which explains my initial thoughts about the writing style and execution of the plot. (The Reaper executed the characters in the plot!!) :-))

An amazing read! A grizzly, but really unforgettable experience!

Rabbit {Paint me like one of your 19th century gothic heroines!} says

I'm just going to C + P my one status update for this book because it sums up my feelings/thoughts:

The weakest parts of the book are the modern day portions. The past portions are very well done. This book was a very mixed read for me.

Buggy says

Opening line: *“So this is how a marriage ends, thought Julia Hamill as she rammed the shovel into the soil.”*

This was a very good read although not quite what I was expecting. The Bone Garden is two stories woven into one; starting with Julie Hamill in present day who has just purchased a new (old) house in Boston following her divorce. While attempting to dig a garden she makes a horrifying discovery –a human skull. According to medical examiner Maura Isles (who only has a cameo in this book) the skull is very old, belongs to a woman and has the unmistakable marks of murder. This information sends Julia on a quest to find the story behind her death and sends the reader back to the 1830's and the hunt for the West End Reaper.

Back in 1830 we follow Rose Connelly, a poor Irish immigrant trying to care for her newly orphaned niece and Norris Marshal, a struggling medical student. Their paths intersect at a teaching hospital as Rose's sister lies dying from childbed fever and then again later when Rose witnesses a murder and Norris unwittingly becomes the chief suspect after he stumbles across the latest victim. Together they join forces to solve the murders and protect the baby which seems to be at the heart of the mystery.

I really enjoyed the beginning of this book, setting things up in both timelines and Gerritsen plays with the reader by ending each section on a bit of a cliff-hanger, forcing you to keep turning the pages. There are many well developed secondary characters in both time lines including a resurrectionist (grave robber) who digs up corpses from graveyards for sale on the black market (worth 25\$ and totally gruesome) Speaking of which, Gerritsen goes into graphic 1830's medical detail here, I mean I learned everything I didn't want to know about childbed fever and how to amputate an arm. And you will be shaking your head (and shuddering) as the simple concept of washing your hands didn't exist. Imagine the consequences of handling diseased corpses and then going from bed to bed checking pregnant woman!

In modern Boston Julia teams up with Henry, an ornery 89yr old with a cellar full of wine and boxes of documents and personal letters belonging to the previous owner of her house and dating back to the time of the murders. -Henry was one of my favourite characters in the book. We also see the spark of a romance beginning with her cute dog walking neighbor.

As the book progressed we spent more and more time in 1830 until those sections took over completely. I actually would have preferred a more balanced split between the two as modern day Julia was left a little vague and honestly I was ready for the olden day mystery to wrap up long before it did. The attention to the detail of that time is astonishing, especially the medical stuff and the brutality of living in a Boston slum.

Gerritsen's writing is always topnotch, with persistent suspense, a touch of romance, well developed characters, attention to detail and as usual she puts her medical training to chilling good use. Cheers.
396jb4

Sibyl says

I just finished reading *The Bone Garden* by Tess Gerritsen. As I thought about writing a review of the book I decided to mention where I had read an interview with her--the one that led me to select this book to read. As happens more and more often, I couldn't locate the darn magazine or remember which one the article was in. My thoughts drifted farther afield to consider in my review, how had I missed reading Gerritsen until now? One more step lodged itself in this zigzagging brain, what is my criteria for a reading list? How many more wonderful authors are there out there that I have yet to read? How do I find them?

All of these considerations are to say: how have I missed reading anything by Tess Gerritsen until now? Tearing up (that is, tears) as a book is ending is definitely a sign that my emotions have been engaged. As *The Bone Garden* was ending, those tears welled up as I sensed such a satisfaction as to how she knitted together the skeins: characters, plot, history, and the true-to-life facts of a real life historical person. This is a tour-de-force.

First, the novel. Weaving the past with the present, using a century's batch of letters to further her story, drawing the reader into the lives of her characters from the present and the past--truly, these are the hallmarks of a seasoned writer. Pleased am I to write that this book is going to become a favorite of mine. The title of the book? It directly relates to the story. There were bones she discovered as she was digging in her garden. The title is not like one of those book titles that really is clever but fails to bring to mind what the book is about. Do I really need to supply examples here?

Gerritsen is a physician. This book contains grizzly operating room scenes where handfulls of internal organs are pulled out of dead bodies and deposited quickly into buckets so as to not plop onto floors. How medicine was practiced, and learned, in the 19th century is a central feature of the book. Not a very pretty history the medical learning curve, yet the truth leads ultimately to solving serious health issues that were horrible then but their remedies are today accepted as common practice. Gerritsen deftly leads her reader along, crediting one of her characters with reforms that are undeniably normal procedure in today's medical setting. I wash my hands after every visit to the restroom, I wash them after every session of digging in the dirt, again after chopping up a chicken; these are accepted standards of cleanliness. Such standards were not always known or accepted, were even scoffed at before common acceptance. This novel dwells on situations of cleanliness in the operating setting, but they are not oppressively drawn out in such a way as to make the reader say "enough, already".

Second for consideration, how do I decide what I want to read? I have changed my standards over the years to accept the influence of the internet. Formerly, when I read a book I liked I would search the author's other works and read them. This technique worked handily when I had access to the Main Library stacks at the University of Texas at Austin. I plowed through all the works of all the authors, sequentially, because they were all in the library.

So it seems I've always used a system of finding worthy books to read. Another system I used was recommendations I heard while listening to public radio. Then again when I was heavily into mysteries and discovered that various organizations made annual awards for their best of the year books, their selections became my criteria. With the rise of the internet I learned to sort through lists on Amazon which relied upon readers' criteria. Lately, as I have been writing my own story I have read writer's magazines and interviews with authors. Though I still can not locate the interview, that is how I stumbled upon Tess Gerritsen's works. Third point: how am I going to continue to find new authors of merit? The field is now strewn with so many best sellers whose books I've read and felt wasted my time that I've discarded the category of 'best seller' as a criterion. Interviews of authors on public radio frequently lead me to read works I'd normally miss, or not choose to read. Reviews of books I've heard on public radio often lead me to search for those books. Recommendations by friends often lead me to look at authors I've not read. Reading magazine articles by certain writers sometimes leads me to their other longer works. A couple of times, an interview of public television has led me to an author of interest.

Do I go to the library and browse for a title that looks interesting. Nope. Do I check out the New York best seller list? Yes. Do I follow up by selecting a book on the list? Not unless I recognize the author. Do I follow Oprah's selections? Not after I read a couple of them and they were not that interesting.

I recently began writing myself after joining an organization that encourages women to write their memoirs. The network was founded by an author so I decided to read several of her books. They are what I consider light-weight mysteries, interesting because of their localized setting, and each one has a bit of a deeper message once past the chatty and high volume of characters. If I was into cooking there are many recipes scattered through the various books and that is fun. But am I gripped by the books, not really.

So I will now proceed through some of Tess Gerritsen's writings, keeping an eye out for some of my favorite author's latest publications. I'll hope to be surprised by discovering an author of uncompromising worth as I daily pick up something good to read.

Seda says

Tess'e ne kadar y?ld?z verseniz de haketti?inin yan?nda az kal?r. Bu zamana kadar okudu?um Tess romanlar?n?n hiçbirine benzemiyordu.

Bir Tess hikayesinin sonunda a?lad?m, hala ?oktay?m. 1830 da ge?en hikayeyi nas?l bir beyin tasarlar, kalema al?r anlam veremedim. T?m detaylar ?ok g?zel anlat?lm??, hi?bir ayr?nt? bo? yere verilmemi?. O kadar g?zel bir kurgu var ki kitap bitince a?z? a?k kal?yor insan?n. Nefes almadan okunuyor, katil kim ya da olaylar nereye gidecek diye merak etmeye vaktiniz kalm?yor. Sonunda da ??????ok ?ok...

?imdiki zamanda ge?en hikayenin ba?land??? yer de tam benim gibi a?k romanlar?n? seven okurlar i?in yaz?lm???. G?z? ya?l? bir ?ekilde sonunu okurken y?z?mde tebess?m olu?turdu en az?ndan.

Tarz?n?n nadir ?rneklerinden biri bence bu kitap. Son sayfalara kadar tam bir gizem i?eriyor. ?st?ste a?k?lanan olaylarla, kitab? merak i?inde okuyanlar? tatmin ediyor.

KD says

At first, I was quite perplexed over the present day/historical split as the present day story seemed thin with the majority of the tale taking place in the 1830's. In the end, the story came full circle, providing that connection for the characters in both eras. I thought the details regarding medicine of the 1800's was fantastically gruesome and superbly done (and as many other reviews have stated, made me VERY happy to be a woman today!) with descriptions so rich your could almost *smell* the air the characters breathed (not always a pleasant thing!) The end of the story introduced a concept not bridged anywhere else in the story, either in present day or the past. This was sort of a 'new age' idea and while I enjoyed it and thought it well written, I am not sure it fit the story completely. It seemed a bit out of place. That being said, it was a subtle reference that added more to the story if the reader doesn't miss it.

All in all, a great and easy read. This book has made me a fan, and I look forward to reading more from Tess Gerritsen.

Jennifer says

Sometimes you take a chance on a book and it pays off, sometimes you regret it. This was a case of regret. Though the book started with a promising mystery the protagonist in the current-day plot line was a namby-pamby and hard to identify with. The storyline in the past was more interesting but the contrast between the two left the book off-balance.

It was OK until nine-tenths of the way through it took a turn toward romantic drivel in the past plot line which soon ended tragically. I don't have a problem with the tragic end but it was tempered by the intimation that the romance continued reincarnated in the modern day plot which was just lame. There was a plot twist that had me moderately interested for a short time but when the evildoer was finally revealed the mystery seemed to lose interest in itself. There was no final answer given as to whether that person committed the Ripper-style murders or was only behind them. Characters actually considered not telling the public which strained credulity. To have limped through the entire book and have this be the payoff felt like a punishment for making a poor choice!

Sara says

Yay new shelf! So this is what I'm gonna call a "kitchen sink" book. Meaning Ms. Tess Gerritsen decided to throw everything and the kitchen sink into this pretty average but well written mystery. We've got;

1.)A modern day heroine going through a difficult divorce that is ENTIRELY the fault of her awful husband who's bought a fixer upper that of COURSE has a body in the backyard. Oh no!!!! How did that happen!? There's something weird going on around here!

2.)And of course said body is a few hundred years old which propels us right back into a whole lot of 1830's flashbacks where we get to learn all about how horrible practicing medicine was! We learn all sorts of interesting historical tidbits about body snatching and childbed fever and how crazy everyone thought it was to wash their hands!

3.)In the present our heroine meets a lovable curmudgeon who happens to have all of the history about her fixer upper stored in boxes in his house! Even though no one else likes him she gets him! They're friends! They read lots of old letters and he acts like a curmudgeon! Awwww! Ooohhhh and he has a cute nephewwwww...watch out there heroine!!!!

4.)Back in the past no one likes Irish immigrants! They steal things! Everyone calls them "Bridget!" We meet a "Bridget" with red hair who doesn't cater to the establishment! She's plucky! She has red hair! She won't let these mean doctors tell her what to do!

5.)We also meet a farm hand who wants to be a doctor! He's reaaaalllyyy handsome and he's smarter than EVERYONE!!! He thinks bleeding people is stupid!!! Watch it there uppity farm hand!!!

6.)Uh oh someone is skulking around in a long black cloak killing women in a vaguely ritualistic manner!!! Uh oh farm hand and Bridget keep arriving on the scene at inconvenient times!!! the "night watch" thinks they did it!!!! Mean "night watch!"

7.)Ohhhh the police are so stupid!!! There's one who's so stupid he keeps arresting the wrong people!!! Stupid police!

8.) Hey is that Oliver Wendall Holmes? What's he doing here? Who cares!

9.) Back in the present curmudgeon and heroine keep on reading letters and the nephew is a doctor!!! Ohhh snap him up heroine!!!

10.)Awwww Bridget and the farm hand are in love! What? They've only had one conversation? Who cares!!!!

11.)Hey how about a random subplot about body snatching so we can make a weird joke about Burke and Hare!!!!

12.)Does anybody still care about that skeleton in heroine's backyard? Oh you'll conveniently wrap that up on the literal last page of the book!? Okay then!

Laurel says

A page-turner historical fiction/whodunit with some fascinating (and gruesome) glimpses of early 1800s medical school training in the US. Written by a physician - a quick read that will make you grateful you live now instead of then! One of the characters is Oliver Wendell Holmes, not the Supreme Court judge, but his father, who, in 1843, introduced a new practice to American medicine in an attempt to control "childbed fever"...suggesting that physicians wash their hands between patients.

Janice says

This book sat on my bookshelf collecting dust and may have still been there if it hadn't been for the Geocaching challenge. I'm so glad that I didn't leave it to sit any longer.

One of Tess Gerritsen's medical mystery collection, the story is split between the present day and 1830. When Julia digs up a skeleton in her newly acquired garden, she unearths a 200 year old mystery.

I really enjoyed the story about a young medical student in 1830's Boston. Secondary to the mystery was the medical history - women dying of childbed fever, the competitive business of supplying cadavers to the teaching hospitals, and the attitudes of the medical community.

I debated about giving this 5 stars, I was so engaged in the story. I'll certainly be reading more of Tess Gerritsen.

Daniel Balici says

The Bone Garden is yet another example of Tess Gerritsen at her finest. It is the second standalone novel written by this author that I picked out after my experience of *Playing with Fire* from two years ago. While I am a big fan of the *Rizzoli and Isles* series, as I have emphasized in previous reviews as well as through either 4 or 5-star ratings, I am happy to tell you that the standalone books are equally good and acquaint the

reader with a fairly different facet of Gerritsen's remarkable story-telling skills.

The Bone Garden is an excellent and gripping read, a well-penned mystery taking in the medical aspects that have come to be considered the author's hallmark, given her physician background, as well as in a partial historical look at Boston in 1830s. Temporally, the novel shifts back and forth between past and present, with the latter time period being less extensively covered, having the role to direct the focus towards past events. The historical component pays homage to Oliver Wendell Holmes, a physician renowned for his straightforward and revolutionary, hygiene-related proposition that medical practitioners should wash their hands properly before and after attending patients so that unnecessary disease transmission and subsequent deceases could be avoided. Gerritsen crafted a character mirroring Holmes at the start of the medical school and furthermore, she explored certain realities of 1830s, among them the scarcity of corpses for anatomical dissection at the American medical students' disposal, the unlawful practices of snatching and selling cadavers for the sake of medicine and the general stigma associated with Irish immigrants. All these are conveyed in the fictional context of a series of gruesome murders as well as the menacing, mysterious interest in a newborn, motherless baby girl.

Tess Gerritsen wrote an eventful and twisted tale, featuring well-developed, likeable characters whose experiences throughout the book were riveting. She has also linked intelligently the characters to one another, which in turn resulted in a satisfying, well done denouement. My only criticism relates to the way the romance aspect from the past was carried out. Even though I anticipated the development of a romantic relationship between Norris and Rose at an early stage of the book, I thought the build-up of romance culminating in a mutual declaration of love was too sudden and slightly unrealistic, especially as regards Norris. For this reason, I will stick to a 4/4.5 rating. Finally, I highly recommend you to read *The Bone Garden* and everything else Gerritsen has written. She can do no wrong and has always been a safe bet for me.

Clare K. R. says

Would have given this 3.5 stars if I could. I would definitely have given it at least four stars if the novel had only been the historical parts of the book, without the modern-day parts.

The two sections just didn't mesh well. I suspect the author just wanted to include a modern-day section as a hook for readers who are used to her contemporary mysteries. The modern-day section only has two connections to the historical mystery: the main character finds one of the bodies in her garden, and some of the other characters are related to some of the major characters in the historical part. There are hints of a mystery in the modern-day part, but it never goes anywhere. In fact, after the first few chapters the modern-day part mostly consists of the characters going through letters and, apparently, learning exactly what we're reading in the historical chapters.

I was, somewhat surprisingly, disappointed by the revelation of the identity of the killer, (view spoiler)
