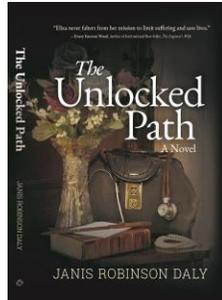


## A “New Woman” of the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Battles Sexism & Self-Doubt for a Career in Medicine in Bold Debut Historical Novel



### ***The Unlocked Path***

(a novel)

by Janis Robinson Daly

*Daly develops Eliza’s family ties and show her passion for social change through her career choices and her opinions .... A work that effectively showcases the power of love, friendship, and faith – both in one’s calling and in oneself – to create change in the world – **Kirkus Reviews***

In Janis Robinson Daly’s debut novel, *The Unlocked Path*, readers meet a “New Woman” of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: educated, career-minded, independent Eliza Edwards. In 1897 Philadelphia, after witnessing her aunt's suicide, Eliza rejects her mother’s wishes for a society debut, and at a time when only five percent of doctors are female, she enters the Woman’s Medical College of Pennsylvania. With the support of a circle of women and driven by a determination to conquer curriculum demands, battle sexism, and overcome doubts, Eliza charts her new life course. Combining science and sympathy, she triumphs to heal others and herself. (Black Rose Writing, August 26, 2022, paperback, ISBN: 978-1685130145)

Organic Chemistry may slay her, if the strain of endless study, odoriferous labs, and gruesome surgeries don’t claim her first. As a young intern, she summons a forthright confidence asserting her abilities to those mistrustful of a woman doctor. Through her work with poverty-stricken patients, she defines her version of suffrage work to champion women’s rights for and beyond the right to vote. Love is found, love is lost. During a visit to the fairy-tale-like city of Newport, a new relationship may fulfill her desires. When global events devolve into chaos with the 1918 influenza pandemic and a world war, Eliza renews her vow to help and heal.

### **About Janis Robinson Daly:**

Intrigued by the discovery that an ancestor was a founder of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, Janis Robinson Daly found her next career path: unearthing the stories of women whose lives have remained in the shadows. A graduate of Wheaton College, MA, with a B.A. in Psychology, Daly explores female-centric issues and the power of supportive relationships developed among women. Daly, her husband, and their rescue pup have embraced a nomad life, thanks to an empty nest and access to WiFi. From New Hampshire to Cape Cod to Florida, she squeezes in stops along the way to find other women's stories which need to be told, balancing authenticity and fictional flair to give readers a deeper, more emotional connection than what biographies offer. Daly's followers on Facebook, Instagram, and her blog look to her for recommendations as she shares her love of women's historical fiction with others. She's involved with several book clubs as both a member and moderator, lending her expertise in selecting books which prompt insightful and engaging discussions. Janis is a member of the Women's Fiction Writers Association, Historical Novel Society, and the Cape Cod Writers Center.

### **Connect with Janis at**

<https://janisrdaly.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/JanisRobinsonDalyAuthor/>

[https://www.instagram.com/janisrdaly\\_writer/](https://www.instagram.com/janisrdaly_writer/)

### **Advance Praise:**

"Eliza, a young woman in turn of the century Philadelphia, faces a life-changing choice. Her mother's path: a debutante ball followed by marriage, children, and acceptance into Main Line society, a career in law or charity like her spinster aunts, or the most difficult path, attend the Women's Medical School her grandfather had helped establish. Choosing medicine, Eliza embarks on a stunning career mostly focused on women's health, at a time when only five percent of doctors were women. From tending to victims of botched abortions to soldiers dying from the Spanish flu, Eliza sees the best and worst of humanity, but never falters from her mission to limit suffering and save lives. It's a story of the ties of family, and friends and colleagues who become family. It's about love and loss, and the eternal struggle to live one's best life. Fans of literary medical historical fiction such as Abraham Verghese's *Cutting For Stone* or *The Girl In His Shadow* by Audrey Blake will enjoy the rich period detail and emotional impact of *The Unlocked Path*." —**Tracey Enerson Wood, Author of International Best Seller *The Engineer's Wife***

"A young woman defies societal norms in her personal life and career in Daly's debut historical novel set in 1897 Philadelphia. Eighteen-year-old Eliza Edwards comes from a family of passionate dreamers. She sees her aunts Estelle, Florence, and Josephine—in their respective careers as a stenographer, art teacher, and secretary and board trustee—as role models and struggles to accept a seemingly fated future as a housewife and mother as her debut in society approaches. After a field trip with Josephine to the library at the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, Eliza meets medical student Anandi Gopal Joshi and finds the missing piece in her heart: 'The students at Woman's Med. have forged their own paths. I wish to do the same.' After completing med school, Eliza accepts a position at the West Philadelphia Hospital alongside Dr. Patrick Callaghan, her former professor. As love blooms between them, Eliza balances her responsibilities to her career and to her family. After a devastating event, she takes a trip to Boston to visit her brothers and their loved ones and finds that a new life awaits her there. She must make difficult choices as she fights for her family, her vocation, and her lifelong dreams. Daly presents a well-researched story that weaves the fictional details of Eliza's life with major, real-life historical events. Her careful crafting of each character, and her detailed, old-fashioned setting of each scene, encourages readers to root themselves in the moment, and as a result, they'll feel emotionally invested in the protagonist's every sadness and joy. Daly also develops Eliza's family ties and shows her passion for social change through her career choices and her opinions, which have a strong feminist element. It results in a work that effectively showcases the power of love, friendship, and faith—both in one's calling and in oneself—to create change in the world. An often-riveting fictional testament of a doctor's life at the turn of the 20th century." —**Kirkus Reviews**

"In *The Unlocked Path*, Janis Robinson Daly movingly depicts the monumental struggles early women physicians faced, and the much-needed niche they filled. Meticulously researching a fascinating era in our history and creating an engaging narrator to guide us through it, Janis Robinson Daly has delivered a winner." —**Sally Cabot Gunning, Author of *The Widow's War* and *Painting the Light***

"*The Unlocked Path* follows the extraordinary life of a courageous woman, Eliza Pearson Edwards. Based on Janis Daly's exhaustive research into the country's first women doctors, historical events of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and her own ancestral lineage, the reader is treated to Eliza's eventful life story. From a wide-eyed girl declining her social debut, through her grueling training as a rare female medical student, to life as a vital doctor to women in need, Eliza's personal and professional journey is both unique and yet consistent with the tenor of the times. Daly's care in telling a story bursting with historical detail is evident in every page." –**Juliette Fay, USA Today bestselling author of *The Tumbling Turner Sisters* and the recent highly acclaimed, *Catch Us When We Fall***

"A story of resilience, empowerment, and coming of age. I felt an indescribable connection to this young woman physician, not just in name, but because her journey and discovery of "the why" echoes a story that we all carry in our hearts. Great historical fiction is timeless." –**Eliza Lo Chin, MD, MPH, Executive Director, American Medical Women's Association and editor, *This Side of Doctoring: Reflections from Women in Medicine***

"Eliza Edwards chooses an unconventional path. Choosing to ignore high society and commit herself to medical school, she must possess an unwavering belief in herself. She decides that to succeed, she must change the system. Eliza will win you over with her quiet strength and kind heart." –**Kerry Chaput, Amazon bestselling author of *Daughter of the King***

### **Excerpt for *The Unlocked Path*:**

Besides breaking to use the ladies' room twice and to nibble on two Lorna Doones a nurse shared with her, Eliza's day blurred into a catatonic haze. She could scarcely remember a single name of the men she attended, nor the eight whose names she penned onto death certificates and toe tags. Since leaving West Philadelphia, she could recall at least twenty-five women and most of their babies, too. If she remembered the soldiers' names, would they live? Did blocking their names erase their existence?

Eliza checked her watch while she sat outside Dr. Vaughan's office. 6:50 p.m. The summer sky remained bright outside with the Daylight-Saving Law passed in March. Yet, the narrow windows denied the sunlight. Darkness prevailed.

Starting in her heart, fatigue claimed her body. A throb in her temples spread to a twitch in her fingers. Eliza knew exhaustion on a first-name basis. Over her career, it visited her often, made itself at home and settled into her bones. But this debilitation consumed her unlike any other time. Her life classified fatigue into physical or emotional. Exam study, double shifts at the hospital, and looking after two energetic sons required physical exertion. The heartbreak of losing Patrick, cradling a dying patient's hand, dealing with Harrison's volatility, or concern over her children's health drove emotional exhaustion. Here, she fought a simultaneous battle. Hour after hour she tended to patients. She lifted their limbs, walked the rows in an endless loop like Will's train set, and carried trays of water and salves. Her arms and legs numbed. Men died; not one, not two, but eight over the course of nine hours. The enormity of it drained every fiber of her verve. A helpless anguish seized control.

## Biography for Novelist Janis Robinson Daly



After a career in sales and marketing and raising two boys active in sports through the college level, Janis asked herself, Now what? During a genealogy search on her great-great-grandfather, William S. Peirce, Esquire, she found her answer in an entry from FamousAmericans.net: *He took an active part in founding the Woman's Medical College in Philadelphia.*

Inspired by that line, more research ensued, and a story and characters formed. The early graduates of the Woman's Medical College have remained in the shadows. Their stories needed to be told. With a love of history, Janis balanced a need for authenticity and details with a flair to create emotional connections to fictional characters.

While her family has roots in Philadelphia, Janis is a Boston girl through and through, from her accent to the cans of baked beans in her pantry, to the New England Patriots flag that hangs over her driveway every fall. She grew up outside of Boston and remained in Massachusetts, graduating with a B.A. in Psychology from Wheaton College, at the time, an all-women's college. At Wheaton, Janis developed a fond appreciation of the supportive relationships established between students, faculty, and alumnae and a heightened awareness of female-centric issues. Both directed her writing of *The Unlocked Path*.

With a plot and themes sketched, Janis enrolled in a creative writing course sponsored by Wesleyan University to hone her skills. Combining years of extensive research and feedback from writers' conferences and a series of beta and sensitivity readers, including the Executive Director of the American Medical Women's Association for accuracy, she polished the manuscript and readied it for publication with independent press, Black Rose Writing.

Splitting her time between Cape Cod, New Hampshire, Florida and hotels along Route 95, a tablet became her Kindle library and desk, packed into a travel bag for reading and writing wherever she might land. Janis' husband, along with their rescue pup, has willingly, and luckily, also embraced this nomadic lifestyle. More adventures beckon her to document other women in history whose stories need to be discovered. She is currently working on a sequel to *The Unlocked Path*, following two main characters into and through the Depression and World War II years, as they advance their training as women doctors, applying science and sympathy to treat and heal their patients. From the polio epidemic and research into the vaccine, to the Coconut Grove nightclub fire and more, readers will again be treated to a story centered on events of the past and rich in historical detail.