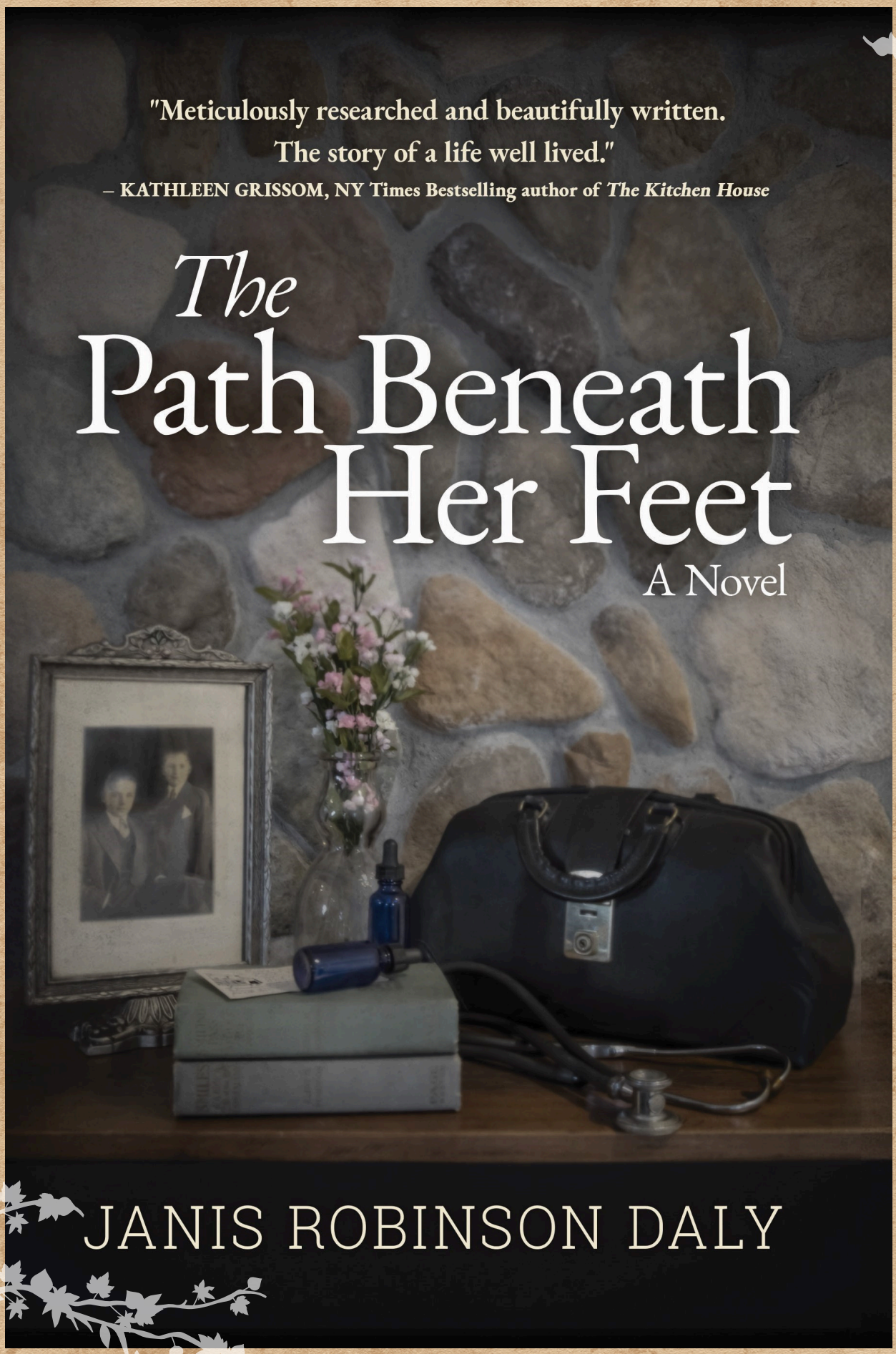
# Book Club Kit



# Thank You

## Dear Readers,

Thank you for choosing The Path Beneath Her Feet for your book club. I hope you have a great meeting. To help you prepare, this kit includes:

- **Questions.** Kick-start and guide your discussion. Feel free to come up with your own, too (and share with me so I can add to the list).
- **Recipes.** A few yummy treats mentioned in the book.
- **More Goodies – More Fun.** Ideas for special extra touches
- **Companion Books.** Books mentioned within The Path Beneath Her Feet; add a few to your reading list.
- **Meet the Characters.** Interested in the inspiration for some of the main characters? Even though each one is fictionalized, I leaned on archival research and family history to create compelling and engaging characters.

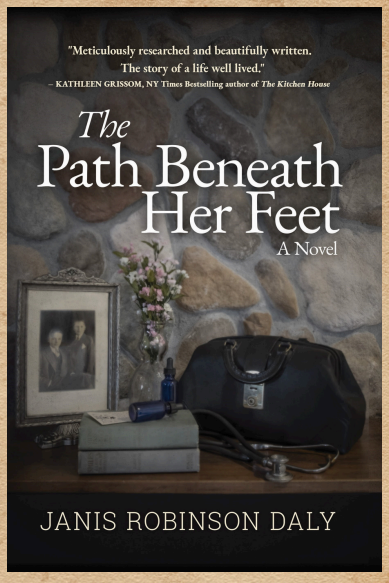
I love to hear from clubs about their meetings. Feel free to post to my Facebook page or email me photos or comments you'd like to share.

Email: janis@janisrdaly.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/JanisRobinsonDaly
Author Website and Newsletter Sign-Up: www.janisrdaly.com/newsletter

## Happy Reading!

Janis Robinson Daly

P.S. Please ask all members of your group to consider posting a review to Goodreads, Amazon, BookBub, social media. Those reviews mean so much to authors, especially those of us still trying to build our name and book recognition. Even if you got the book directly from me, from a local indie bookstore or your library, you can post to Amazon.
THANK YOU!!! -- a grateful author.



# Reader Discussion Questions

- Eliza is a more mature protagonist, age 57, when the story opens in 1936 and age 68 by the epilogue in 1947. Can you think of other books which have a mature protagonist? What were the similarities / differences between Eliza and those other characters?

- Eliza finds her strength from the women in her life, Aunt Florence, Charlotte, Olga, Bess, Kay, Grace, and Helen. Do you have a favorite among the other characters? Were you surprised by their paths? Which one? Why?

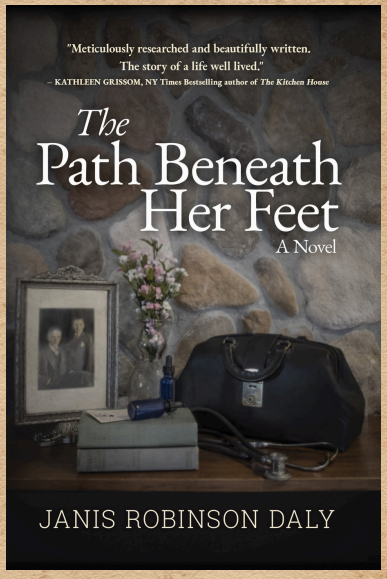
- How familiar were you with FDR's rehabilitation center for polio patients in Warm Springs? Did you learn anything about the center or the patients? Do you know anyone who contracted polio before the development of the vaccine? How were their lives affected?

- Racism was a theme in this book, from Kay Clark's treatment in Warm Springs to Toshiko's experience at graduation. Why is it still important to bring these instances from history to light today?

- Two popular books in recent years introduced readers to the packhorse librarians of Kentucky. Have you read either? (The Bookwoman of Troublesome Creek and The Giver of Stars). Like those books, The Path Beneath Her Feet introduces readers to the work of the American Women's Hospitals in Appalachia. Were you aware of those medical outposts before reading? How do these centers compare to the access to healthcare today in rural areas?

- Eliza grew up in Philadelphia and moved to Boston when she married, and remained there until the opportunity arose to travel to Warm Springs, GA and then Jellico, TN. Have you ever made a drastic move for your career or a relationship?

- Olga advises Eliza: "The few times I left you on your own, you fell in love with the wrong man. A third time isn't always a charm." Was Chet, a mountain man with little education, "wrong" for Eliza? Do opposites attract? Were you surprised by the letter from Patrick? Was it the correct ending to their love story?



# Reader Discussion Questions

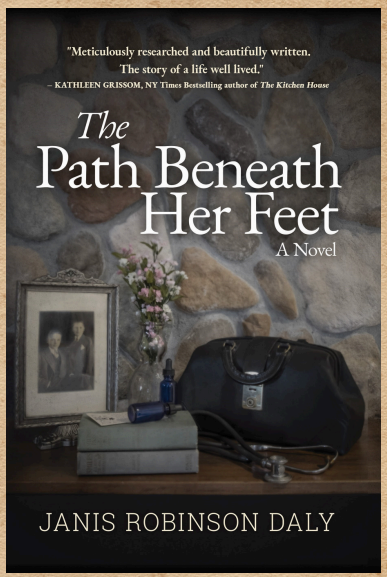
- All forms of dementia destroy not only the one with the disease but also affect their caregivers. Eliza must choose to leave behind the Maternity Shelter she built to care for Aunt Florence. How have caregiver roles changed in the past 90+ years? Do you think the health care industry has made enough progress with the cure and treatment of dementia or caregiving?

- Opinions on Eliza's actions to deliver Shirley Cole's baby during the chaos at the hospital on the night of the Cocoanut Grove nightclub fire. Was Eliza negligent? What would you have done? Were you surprised that Eliza reached out to her ex-husband's widow, Helen Shaw, to be her lawyer?

- Letters throughout the book depict the primary means of communication in the first half of the 1900s. When was the last time you wrote a letter? To whom? When was the last letter you received? From whom? (Not a card or a thank you note, a handwritten letter covering at least one page). What have we lost with the demise of letter-writing?

- The author dedicated The Path Beneath Her Feet to her parents, members of The Greatest Generation: "Who came of age during the Great Depression and served upon the seas and at the home front during World War II. Their history is ours. Let us not forget it. Let us learn from it." What can we learn from the people who lived during the tumultuous landscapes of 1930s and 1940s America?

I love hearing from book clubs.
Submit highlights from your group's discussion to me at
janis@janisrdaly.com to receive a free gift.



# Recipes

## Fried Green Tomatoes - a Southern delicacy

Allrecipes.com: Submitted by Diana Swenson-Siegel.

- 4 large green tomatoes
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup milk
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup cornmeal
- ½ cup bread crumbs
- 2 teaspoons coarse kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 quart bacon grease for frying

Slice tomatoes 1/2 inch thick. Discard the ends.

Whisk eggs and milk together in a medium-sized bowl. Scoop flour onto a plate. Mix cornmeal, bread crumbs, salt, and pepper on another plate. Dip tomatoes into flour to coat. Then dip tomatoes into milk and egg mixture; dredge in breadcrumbs to completely coat.

Heat grease in a large deep skillet. Watch carefully it doesn't start to smoke or burn. Place tomatoes in hot grese in batches of 4 or 5, to prevent them from touching; fry until crisp and golden brown on one side, then flip and fry on other side.

Transfer fried tomatoes to a paper towel-lined plate to drain. Repeat with remaining tomatoes.

Serve on vintage Depression glass plates - plenty of them at thrift stores!

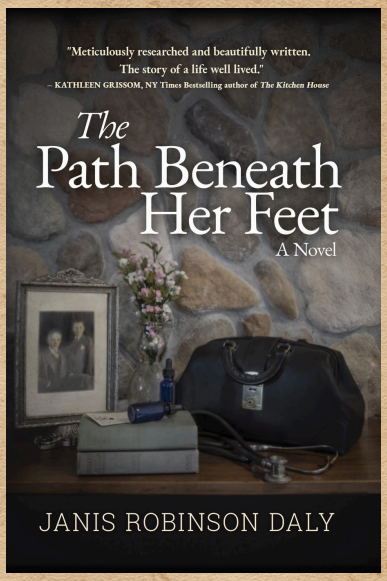
## Remoulade Sauce

Simplyrecipes.com: Submitted by Elise Bauer; recommended by Christie Crawford

- 1 1/4 cups mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup mustard (Creole mustard if possible)
- 1 tablespoon sweet paprika
- 1 to 2 teaspoons Cajun or Creole seasoning, divided (see recipe note)
- 2 teaspoons prepared horseradish
- 1 teaspoon pickle juice (dill or sweet, your preference)
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce (preferably Tabasco)
- 1 large clove garlic, minced and smashed

Mix all the ingredients together in a medium bowl.
Start with 1 teaspoon of the Cajun or Creole seasoning and add as much of the remaining teaspoon to taste.

The remoulade is better if left for a few hours to let the flavors meld. Keep refrigerated.



# Recipes

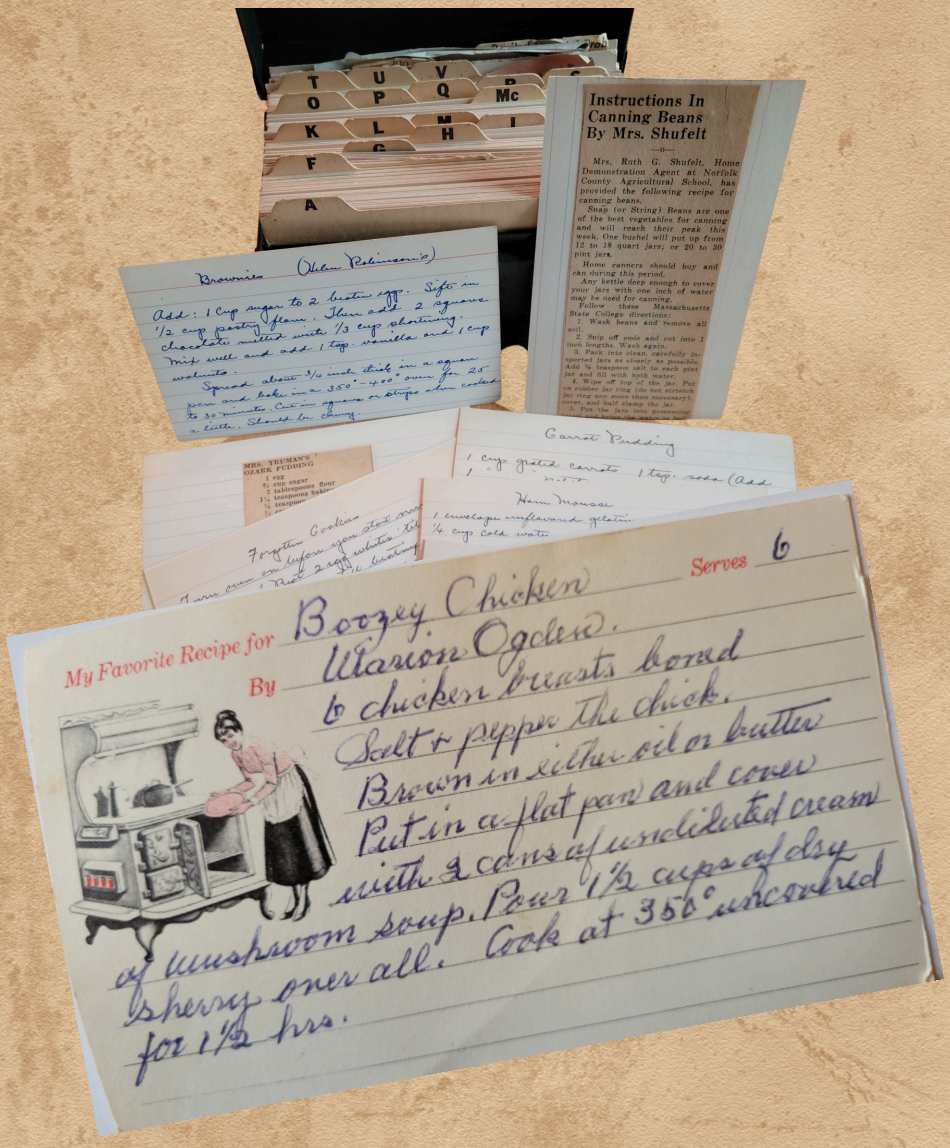
## Boozey Chicken - a working mother's easy dinner

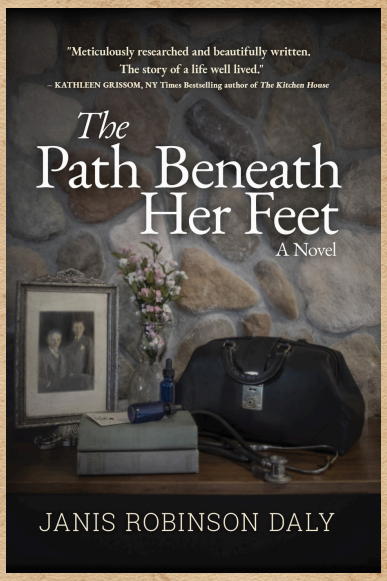
- (6) chicken boneless breasts
- 1-1/2 cups dry sherry
- (2) cans undiluted cream of mushroom soup

Salt & pepper chicken. Brown in oil or butter. Put in baking dish and cover with the soup. Pour dry sherry over all.

Cook at 350 degrees Fahrenheit, uncovered, for 1-1/2 hours. Serve with a side of stuffing and buttered green beans.

Credit to Jean C. Davidson Bonney via Marion Ogden. Recipe found in my maternal grandmother's recipe box, believed to have been used in the 1930s.



# Recipes

## Ruth Newcombe's Cornbread Stuffing

Recipe adapted from one found on Allrecipes.com

- 1 cup diced celery
- 1 cup diced apple
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1/2 tablespoon thyme
- 1/2 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
- 1 large corn muffin, crumbled
- (1) 12 oz. bag Country Style cubed stuffing
- 2 ¾ cups chicken broth
- 1/2 cup hickory nut meat, chopped into small pieces (or substitute with walnuts*)

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit.

Combine celery, apples and onions in a large, deep skillet well-coated with vegetable oil. Cook over medium-high heat., stirring often until vegetables are translucent, 7 to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and drain.

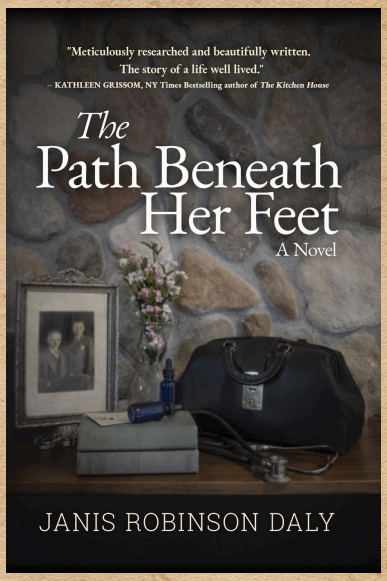
Transfer mixture to a large bowl. Add crumbled corn muffin, bread cubes, chicken broth, hickory meat and herbs. Mix until well combined, transfer to a well-greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Cover with foil.

Bake in the preheated oven until stuffing is well set and cooked through, about 45 minutes.

Differences between hickory nuts and walnuts:

1. Nutrition: Walnuts are richer in protein, dietary fiber, and have a more favorable fat composition. Hickory nuts are slightly higher in net carbs.
2. Walnuts are a better source of vitamins B1 and B5, copper, calcium, and iron. Hickory nuts are richer in vitamins B6 and B9 (folate), manganese, selenium, and zinc.
3. Hickory nuts have a stronger flavor than walnuts.

Serve as a side dish with the Boozey Chicken, bringing Eliza's favorite dinner together with a new favorite she finds in the Cumberland Mountains of TN.



# Recipes

## Molly's Gingersnaps

Recipe adapted from one found on Allrecipes.com

- 2 C sifted all-purpose flour
- 1 Tbsp ground ginger
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp salt
- ¾ C shortening
- 1 C white sugar
- 1 egg
- ¼ C dark molasses
- ⅓ C cinnamon sugar

Molly's Secret Ingredient: (Fireball® Cinnamon) Irish Whisky – decrease the molasses by 1-2 Tbsp to taste and replace with the whisky.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

Sift together the flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt. Stir the mixture to blend evenly and sift a second time into another bowl. Place the shortening into a mixing bowl, beat until creamy. Gradually beat in the white sugar. Beat in the egg, dark molasses and whisky. Sift 1/3 of flour mixture into the shortening mixture; stir to thoroughly blend. Sift in the remaining flour mixture; mix together until a soft dough forms.

Pinch off small amounts of dough and roll into 1" diameter. Roll each ball in cinnamon sugar; place 2" apart on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven until the tops are rounded and slightly cracked, about 10 minutes.

Cool cookies on a wire rack. Serve from a vintage cookie tin like the ones my grandmother used.

# Recipes

## Fresh Southern Peach Cobbler

- 8 fresh peaches - peeled, pitted and sliced into thin wedges
- ¼ cup white sugar
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup white sugar
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, chilled and cut into small pieces
- ¼ cup boiling water

Secret Ingredient: substitute lemon juice with peach schnapps for a kick

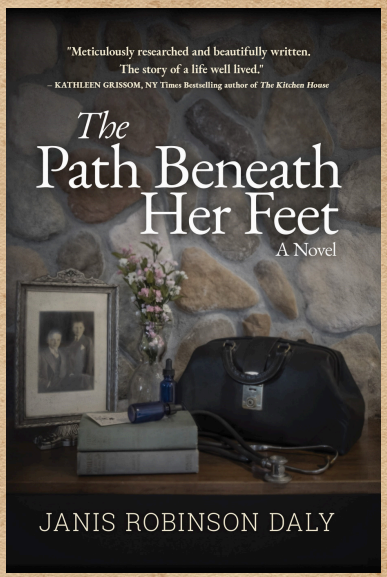
Preheat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.

Combine peaches, 1/4 cup white sugar, 1/4 cup brown sugar, 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon, nutmeg, lemon juice, and cornstarch in a large bowl; toss to coat evenly, and pour into a 2-quart baking dish. Bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, combine flour, 1/4 cup white sugar, 1/4 cup brown sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Blend in butter with your fingertips or a pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse meal. Stir in drops of water as needed to combine.

Remove peaches from oven, and drop spoonfuls of topping over them. Mix 3 tablespoons white sugar and 1 teaspoon cinnamon together in a small bowl; sprinkle over entire cobbler. Bake in the preheated oven until topping is golden, about 30 minutes.

Top with a scoop of vanilla ice cream and pecan halves.



# Audio Entertainment

## Glenn Miller - the hit maker of the Big Band ERA - Taylor Swift has nothing on him!

In case you want to add a musical selection to your meeting, Glenn Miller and His Orchestra were all the rage in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Snap your fingers and swing away to IN THE MOOD, the biggest hit of 1940 and of Miller's career.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aME0qvhZ37o&t=3s

Or, melt into your partner's arm and waltz your way through MOONLIGHT SERENADE. Keep your steps close and tight, just like Eliza and Chet as they glided around the small reception area of the Jellico Maternity Shelter.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Ws6DdrDtyo

# Door Prizes and Take Home Goodies

Decorate with a few extra touches for your meeting, using meaningful items from the book which can be bundled together to double as a door prize or a take-home goodie for each member. Items are available on Amazon at reasonable prices.

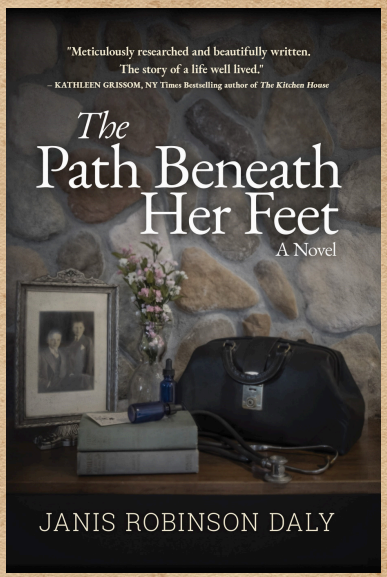
**Olga's Cameo** (a gift from Eliza's mother which is passed on to Grace Wilson).
Weiman Jewelry Crystal Rhinestone Flower Vintage Victorian Cameo Brooch Pin Set of 24 for $15.99, Amazon Prime
https://amzn.to/3KHdHR3

**Pond's Moisturizing Face Cream** (used by Aunt Florence and which Eliza's adopts as her nightly ritual to battle those nasty wrinkles).
Check at your local CVS, Walgreen's, or Walmart for the travel size, 1.75 oz jar.
Or on Amazon as a pack of 3 for $14.00, Amazon Prime
https://amzn.to/4c8eqqe

**Lavender Sachets** (Eliza learns of the calming, healing powers of lavender during her time in Appalachia).
Set of 24 for $14.99, Amazon Prime
https://amzn.to/3Rk0nGm

**Wooden Keepsake Box** (Eliza receives a hand-crafted wooden box from Chet as a birthday gift).
Set of 6 (unfinished) for $23.99, Amazon Prime
https://amzn.to/45eo1cZ

**Russell Stover Pecan Delights** (GA - "land of peaches, pecans and petty peons").
Bag of 28 individually wrapped pieces for $21.82, Amazon Prime
https://amzn.to/3XhgwQG




Prices quoted as of June 2024.

# Companion Books

Eliza loves to read, when she has the time - just like the author of The Path Beneath Her Feet. Some of her (my) favorites:

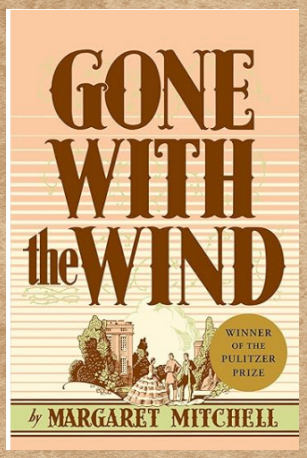
**Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell**
https://amzn.to/3KHdHR3

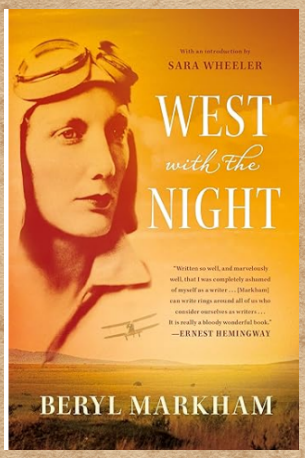
**West with the Night by Beryl Markham**
https://amzn.to/45gwGLS

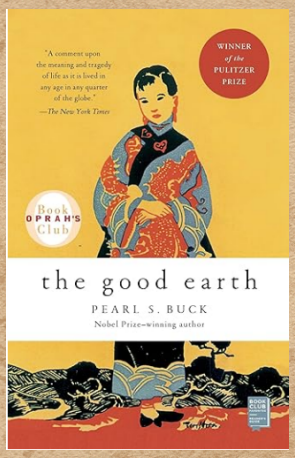
**The Good Earth by Pearl Buck**
https://amzn.to/3VxAi97

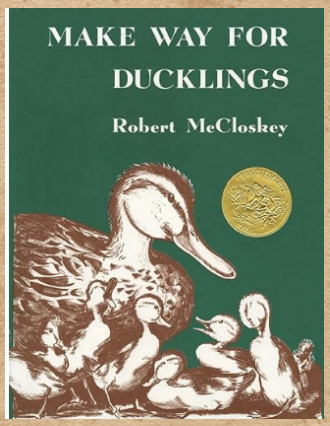
**Thornton Burgess books for children**
https://amzn.to/45hLKcc

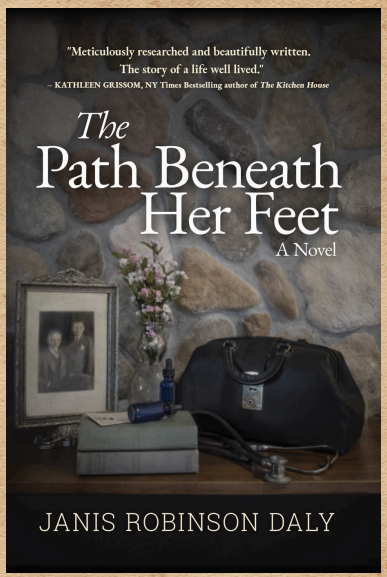
**Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McCloskey**
https://amzn.to/3yUEoiM



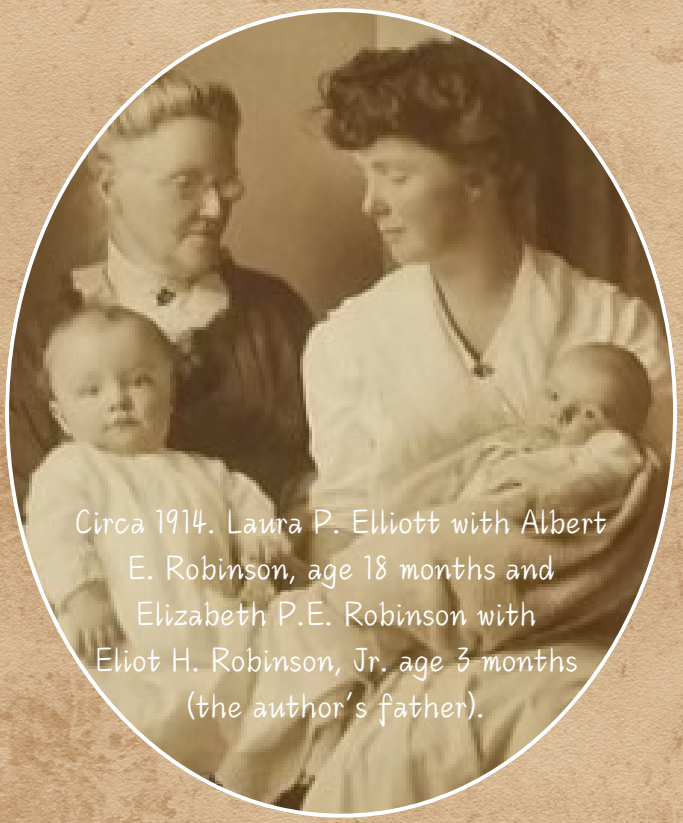





# Character Inspiration
# Eliza Edwards, M.D.

Janis Elizabeth Robinson Daly never knew her paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Peirce Elliott Robinson. Elizabeth was raised in Philadelphia by her mother, Laura Peirce Elliott after Elizabeth's father, Aldophus Elliott, died suddenly at age 30. With her two older brothers, Albert and Fredrick, the family lived for a brief time with Laura's parents, Judge William S. and Elizabeth Peirce. At some point around 1910, the Elliotts moved to the Boston area. Elizabeth married Eliot Robinson, a Harvard-educated lawyer and secretary to Congressman Gifford of Cape Cod in Washington. They had two sons. Janis' father, the younger son, joined the U.S. Navy in 1942, serving on a Landing Craft Infantry (L.C.I.) ship in the South Pacific for 22 months. After a separation of nearly 20 years, Elizabeth and Eliot divorced. Eliot soon after married Helen Bradlee, a Boston lawyer who founded a bar review program for aspiring attorneys. Eliot died from cirrhosis of the liver less than five years after marrying Helen.



Circa 1914. Laura P. Elliott with Albert E. Robinson, age 18 months and Elizabeth P.E. Robinson with Eliot H. Robinson, Jr. age 3 months (the author's father).

Eliza is a composite character based on research into the Woman's Medical College of PA and the American Women's Hospitals. Dr. Lillian South and Dr. Hilla Sheriff, both of the AWH's rural health centers shaped Eliza's time in Jellico, one of the AWH's outposts, along with centers in Greenville and Spartanburg, SC, North Carolina, Florida and Virginia.

# Character Inspiration
# Olga Povitsky, M.D.

Olga Raissa Povitzky came to Philadelphia from Marijampole, Lithuania (Russia) as a 16-year-old girl, speaking only Russian.

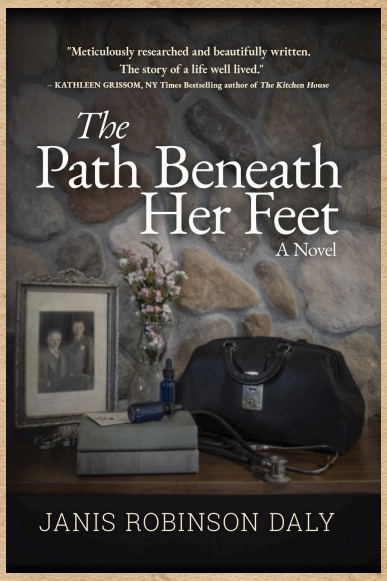
Two years later, she entered Woman's Medical College and graduated in 1901. She managed to overcome the language barrier, but later recalled an incident in which she was asked what she thought of a lecture on Darwin and replied—without meaning to make a pun—"I did not understand it very well but there seemed to be a lot of monkey business in it." From this antecdote, the author knew Olga's must have had a quick wit.

Povitzky was politically active, donating to the socialist magazine, The New Review, and advocating for women's suffrage. After her service with the American Women's Hospital in WWI France, Povitzky returned to her position with the New York City Department of Health, where she oversaw the manufacture of a diphtheria antitoxin.

She also studied H. influenzae, experimenting with a serum that could cure meningitis. In the 1930s, Povitzky designed a rectangular two-liter Pyrex culture bottle that was later adopted as the standard vessel for the Salk polio vaccine. She remained active in the laboratory until just two years before her death in 1948. Foxx Laboratories of NH now manufactures an Olga Povitzky cell culture bottle.

# Character Inspiration
# Charlotte Fairbanks, M.D.

Charlotte Fairbanks, M.D. earned a B.A. from Smith College in 1894, a Ph.D. in chemistry from Yale in 1896, and her medical degree from the Woman's Medical College in 1902. At the beginning of WWI, Fairbanks joined the American Women's Hospital unit in France and was stationed in Luzancy, where she spent a year as the chief surgeon at the hospital. For her efforts, she was awarded a medal of French gratitude and was awarded French citizenship. After WWI, Fairbanks returned to her home in St. Johnsbury, Vermont and continued to work until her death in 1932.



# Character Inspiration
# Grace Wilson

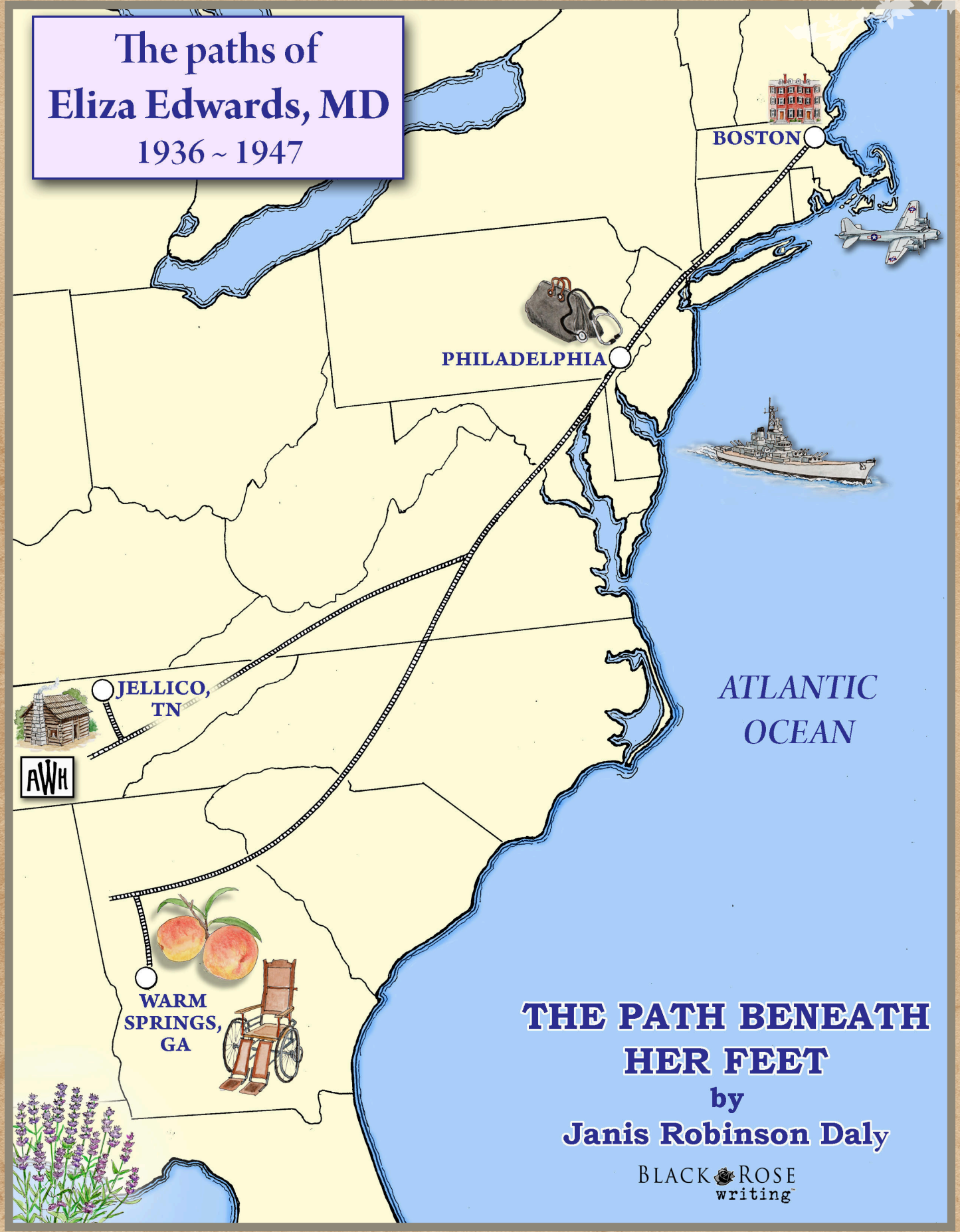
The character of Grace Wilson developed from another fictional character, Rose "Smiles" Webb.

Rose is the main character in SMILES, A Rose of the Cumberlands by Eliot H. Robinson, Sr., the author's grandfather and most likely the source of the creative writing gene. In SMILES, a young male doctor travels to the Cumberland Mountains, meets Rose, and inspires her to study nursing.

Grace Wilson is a character written by an author of the 21st century. Hence, a WOMAN doctor travels to Appalachia and inspires a young woman she meets to become a doctor.

Grace's composite character also formed from interviewing woman medical students of today and researching those who joined the outposts of the American Women's Hospital units in the rural South during the 1930s and 40s.

# Eliza's Paths

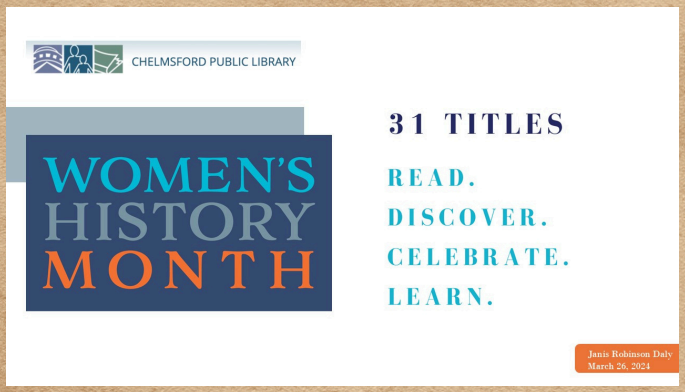


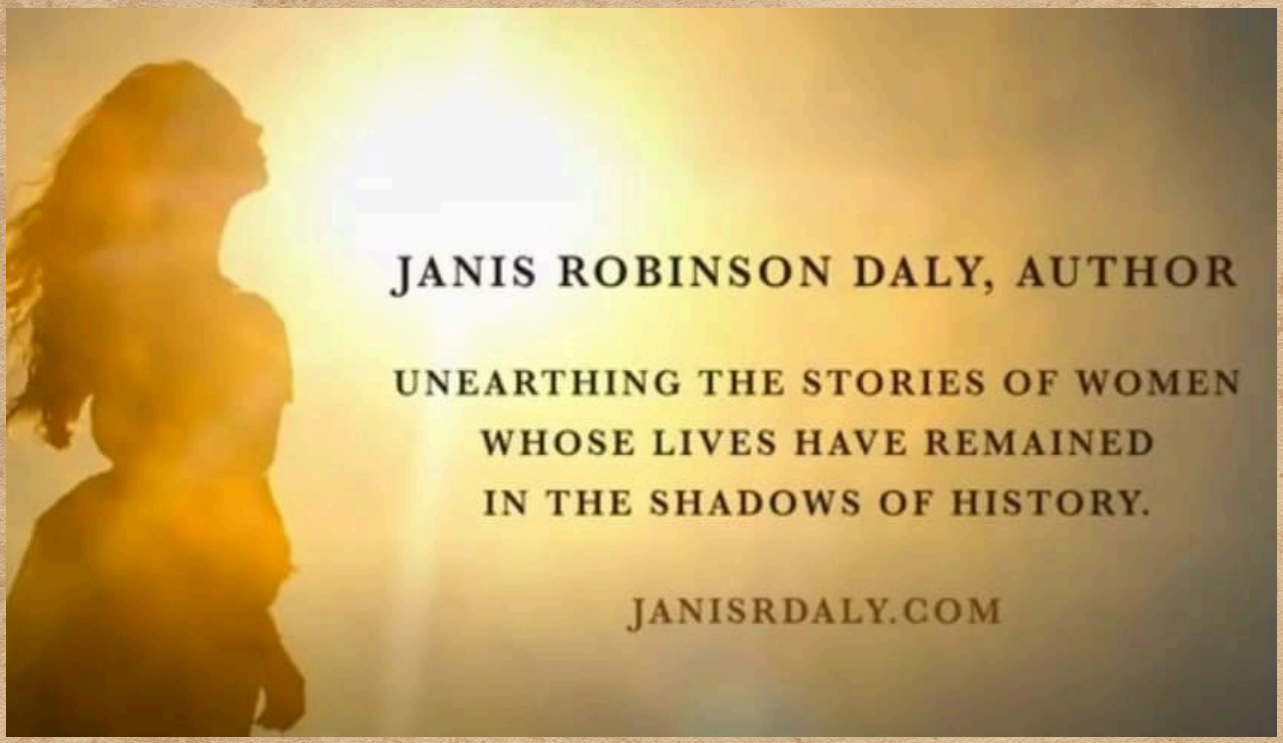

Many thanks to Dana Gaines of Island Graphics for capturing the vision of Eliza's paths.
https://www.danagaines.com/

# #31titleswomeninhistory

If you enjoyed learning about the students and graduates of the Woman's Medical College of PA and the work of the American Women's Hospitals - women whose stories have remained in the shadows - you may want to check out my annual #31titleswomeninhistory list which I publish in March for Woman's History Month.

The list features historical fiction selections of real women in history to celebrate their accomplishments. Each year, I use a defined criteria to select the books, including diversity in the subject and the author, as well as Goodreads ratings and type of publisher.




Watch for announcements of the list in March through my newsletter and social media. I also have a library presentation available which lends itself to a fun and engaging event as we play a Bingo-styled game running through the 31 titles using a calendar format as a Bingo card. I even bring prizes. Maybe your library would be interested in the event.