

### ***A Girl with a Knife* by Alina Rubin**

This is the first book in a planned series (*Hearts and Sails*) by debut author Alina Rubin. The story follows Ella Parker, a young woman who has been dealt an incredibly tough lot in life in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Her mother just died, her father is drunk and abusive, and so she plots to run away. She meets a surgeon during her escape, and he allows her to assist him in his work temporarily. Ella is a quick study and wants to become a doctor herself, but in that time period women weren't allowed to do so. Instead of settling for becoming a midwife, she cuts off her hair, dons men's clothing, and changes her name in order to attend university. You really hope that it's smooth sailing for Ella at this point, but unfortunately that's not the case. She still has so much to overcome! This is one of those books that you just can't stop reading because you need to know that everything is going to be okay in the end.

I don't normally read much historical fiction, but this was just so compelling! The characters are very well-written and realistic. You really feel for Ella and understand her plight in getting as far away from her father as possible, you worry for her getting found out, and you hope against hope that she'll be able to finish her studies and become the doctor she seems destined to become.

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