

CODE NAME
Badass



R. 3375

INDICATIF

HALL Virginia

MARIE © DIANE © HALL Mary

FB/FR/38

15th January, 1941.

To: F.

Miss Virginia HALL

who works at the U.S. Emb
talked in my house last night of
ing to go for about a week to Fr
via Lisbon/Barcelona
place she said her ol
her a visa for France

Give

COFFEE BAR

THE NAME DASS

**THE TRUE STORY OF
VIRGINIA HALL**

by **LEATHER DEMETRIOS**


atheneum

NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO
SYDNEY NEW DELHI



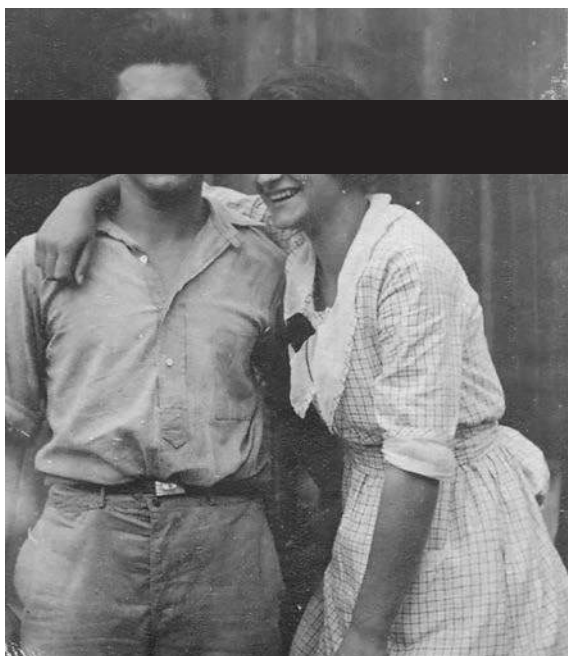
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Photo credits to come.

FOR MY (BADASS) FEHST FAMILY:

LINDA, WALT, NICK, AND—

OF COURSE—ZACH



“Virginia Hall is a clerk of . . . unbounded ambition, a lack of appreciation of her own limitations, and a most praiseworthy determination. . . . She is not good material for a career service because she lacks judgment, background, good sense, and discriminatory powers. She also talks too much.”

J. KLAHR HUDDLE, US DEPARTMENT OF STATE AMBASSADOR

“Shut up. That’s just about the most stupid idea I ever heard.”

VIRGINIA HALL, THE MOST WANTED ALLIED SPY IN FRANCE

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NORWAY

SWEDEN

DENMARK

IRELAND

UNITED KINGDOM

London

NETHERLANDS

BELGIUM

Berlin

GERMANY



BOHEMIA & MORAVIA

Paris

Northern Zone

FRANCE

SWITZERLAND

Southern Zone

ITALY

CR

Madrid

SPAIN

PORTUGAL

Rome

TANGIER

MOROCCO

ALGERIA

TUNISIA

MALTA



HEIGHT OF AXIS DOMINATION

- NAZI GERMANY
- AXIS-OCCUPIED TERRITORY
- ALLIED OR NEUTRAL TERRITORY

SOVIET UNION

FINLAND

OSTLAND

Moscow
⊛

MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

Warsaw
⊛

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

UKRAINE

SLOVAKIA

HUNGARY

ROMANIA

CROATIA

SERBIA

BULGARIA

MONTE NEGRO

ALBANIA

GREECE

TURKEY

SYRIA

CYPRUS

IRAQ

SAUDI ARABIA

TRANSJORDAN



UNITED KINGDOM

London

NETHERLANDS

GERMANY



BELGIUM

Northern Zone

Paris

Seine R.

Metz

FRANCE

Loire R.

Cosne-sur-Loire

Saone R.

Rhone R.

SWITZERLAND

Atlantic Ocean

Demarcation Line

Vichy

Limoges

Lyon

ITALY

Southern Zone

Mauzac

Alger R.

Le Puy

Le Chambon-sur-Lignon

Dordogne R.

Rhone R.

Marseille

Tarn R.

Garonne R.

Perpignan

The Pyrenees

San Juan de las Abedesas

SPAIN

Madrid

Mediterranean Sea



CORSICA

SARDINIA

NAZI-OCCUPIED FRANCE

- NAZI GERMANY
- AXIS-OCCUPIED TERRITORY
- ALLIED OR NEUTRAL TERRITORY

YOUR MISSION, SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT

It started with a lost umbrella.

Picture me in Washington, DC, in a gloomy mood because it was raining buckets and I'd left my fabulous new umbrella in the car my friend and I had taken to the International Spy Museum. This forgetfulness didn't bode well for my future as an international Woman of Mystery.

Going to the spy museum had been my idea: Ever since I could walk, I've wanted to be a clandestine operative, and I had a sneaking suspicion a museum dedicated to espionage would rival Disneyland itself. Because I'm a maladjusted weirdo, my Happiest Place on Earth is a building where you can learn all about how to kill people in sneaky ways, steal government secrets, and, of course, rock fantastic disguises. My bad vibes disappeared the minute I walked through the doors and received MY VERY OWN COVER IDENTITY.

About halfway through the exhibit, I got to the World War II section, which is my other happy place (re: maladjusted

weirdo). They had exploding coal on display—perfect for sabotaging Nazi supply trains—and a pistol flashlight, a precursor to the KGB’s “kiss of death.” This is a pistol made to look like a tube of lipstick, which is now at the top of my list of things to ask for when the CIA recruits me. Or for Christmas. Whichever comes first. I thought I knew everything about WWII, but I had no idea that many of the agents and their recruits working in France during the war were women. A good portion of these women were couriers or wireless operators—arguably the most dangerous jobs behind enemy lines. A few of these dames even ran whole cells within the French Resistance, led sabotage missions, rescued downed Allied pilots, and engaged in a constant game of chicken with the Gestapo, who were hunting them. They killed a few Nazis along the way too. Most of them were spies when James Bond was still in diapers.

I came across Aussie Nancy Wake wearing her military uniform and looking chill AF even though she was a superstar thorn in the Nazis’ side on D-day, giving them what-for while commanding hundreds of men in successful guerrilla warfare ops.

The heavy-lidded eyes of the beautiful Violette Szabo, a Brit who joined up after her husband was killed in the war, looked out at me from a series of photographs, along with the confident, direct gaze of Polish countess Christine Granville—a legend who, as one newspaper would later say, “flirted with men, and with death.”¹ (#lifegoals)

And then—and then, *mon cher*—I came across a glass case that contained a wireless radio and a selection of identification documents for a woman named Virginia Hall. I liked her face: serious, but with a slight upturn of the lip that suggested she had secrets there was no way she’d be telling you. A little smug. I liked that, too. Next to a photo of her receiving the Distinguished Service Cross—the only female civilian in WWII

to receive what is one of the highest honors in the United States—there was a small box of text with the title “America’s Incredible Limping Lady.”

Intrigued, I read on. The phrases “artificial leg,” “spy network,” and “French commandos” had me at hello: I had to find out everything I could about this woman. The more I read and researched, the more I realized that Virginia Hall was the baddest bitch in any room she walked into—and I wanted to be just like her when I grew up. The Nazis didn’t call her one of the most dangerous Allied spies for nothing.

So how does a girl who was a pirate in the school play and loved nothing more than jumping on a horse or shooting hoops end up getting on the Gestapo’s most wanted list?

I AM SO GLAD YOU ASKED.

Grab a pair of dark sunglasses, your favorite wig, and a Sten gun or two—it’s time to do some spying.



A young Virginia Hall hangs out on the family farm.

A Note on Reading: I’ve endeavored to use the true name of an agent or *résistant* whenever possible. Code names are in italics.

Height 5 feet 7 inches

Hair brown

Eyes brown

Distinguishing marks or features

none

Place of birth Baltimore

Date of birth April 6,

Occupation Student

Virginia

Signature of

Hall

Lucy

PART ONE

THE MAKING OF A SECRET AGENT

• a likeness of the person to
whom this passport is issued



Dindy is far right, a spy in the making wearing the first of many costumes.

“When a woman finally learns that pleasing the world is impossible, she becomes free to learn how to please herself.”¹

GLENNON DOYLE

1

BIG REPUTATION

1931

To say Virginia Hall was ambitious would be an understatement.

She was that girl at your high school who makes everyone else look like a slacker, no matter how hard they're working: a perfectly well-rounded résumé that would please any college admissions board, with a nice balance of extracurriculars and decent grades. Good family. Money. Fancy all-girls school. She was the class president who somehow managed to get the best part in the school plays (the villain, naturally), edit the yearbook, *and* rock it on the field hockey team.

This was the girl who'd get into Harvard but find it boring, choosing to ditch the hallowed halls of Cambridge in favor of studying abroad and sending home pictures of herself posing in front of castles and perched in gondolas with intriguing foreign men. Someday she'd receive prestigious awards from the president of the United States and the king of England.

You know this girl—we all do. The girl who goes hard. Who’s hungry. Who makes things happen for herself. And you’re either the kind of person who loves her for it, admiring her swagger, or you hate her, jealous because she has the ovaries to hustle for what she wants. Right here, right now, let’s decide to be Team Virginia. Let’s celebrate the hell out of a woman who would have left us all in the dust.

MEET YOUR NEW SHERO



Dindy as a wee lass

Those who knew Virginia Hall best called her by her family nickname, Dindy. The name—bestowed upon her by her big brother, John²—suits our gal pal just fine: It’s scrappy, meant for someone who goes on adventures and has, as Jo March of *Little Women* might say, “a capital time.”

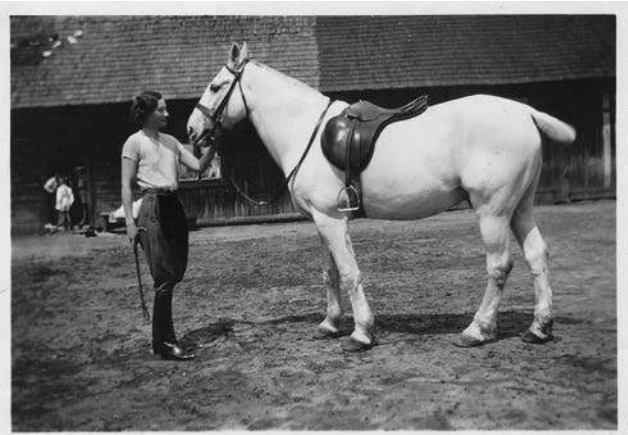
Writing about a real-life spy is tricky, given that most of the work an intelligence officer does is highly classified. While many former WWII spies became famous after publishing memoirs about the things they *could* spill about, Dindy remained tight-lipped until her dying day, in large part because

she stayed operational for decades after the war.

I got my Nancy Drew on and decided to travel to Maryland and hang out with Dindy’s niece to do some proper sleuthing.

I met Lorna Catling not long after I began my work on our gal in earnest and had a ball hearing old family stories, sifting through dozens of photographs, and ambling down memory lane. It was here that I got the best accounts of Dindy's early life, long before she was a war heroine.

Her adventures really began when she finished high school, but a youth spent traipsing about her native Baltimore and romping around the countryside at her family home on the city's outskirts, Box Horn Farm, set the groundwork for a lifetime of derring-do. Though the phrase has gone out of fashion—and with good reason—Dindy, and all who knew her, would have described herself as a “tomboy.” If there were a tree, she'd climb it. A horse, she'd ride it. A duck, she'd shoot it. Lest anyone think she couldn't dominate in the domestic arts as well, Dindy learned how to make her own cheese. Her mother told Dindy nothing she ever learned to do



would be wasted, and, boy, was Mrs. Hall right—one day, her daughter's cheese-mongering skills would give her the cover she'd need to raise hell with the Nazis.

Dindy was especially close to her father, who had no

problem with his daughter acting like one of the boys, despite the fact that she grew up in the prim and proper days of the early twentieth century. Dindy was born in 1906, which meant childhood photos of her included family members in corsets and bustled gowns. Old-school. Her family split their time between an apartment in Baltimore and their elegant digs in the countryside.

When she wasn't attending the Roland Park Country School, a somewhat posh institution that survives to this day, Dindy spent her early years going to movies at the Baltimore theaters her father invested in or goofing off on the farm with her brother, John. She milked goats, scrambled about the property, and got up to all kinds of antics—photos of these years show her in trousers and knee-high boots, dressed more like a Prohibition booze smuggler than a lady of means.

Class president, editor of the yearbook, yada yada yada: This was Virginia in the 1920s, at a time when most women who finished high school were discouraged from pursuing their studies or choosing a career; being a wife and mother



Dindy and her brother, John

was very nearly the only path offered to the well-bred ladies of Baltimore. Other paths, I imagine, included trying on hats, gossiping about the exploits of those flapper harlots, and batting one's eyelashes at eligible bachelors. Virginia was having none of that. She wanted to be in the room where it happens, not on the sidelines while her man went off to do all the cool things. Dindy didn't give two figs about marriage and babies and

crinoline gowns. She craved adventure, much like her enterprising paternal grandfather, John W. Hall, who'd made the family fortune in shipping after running off to sea at the tender age of nine, stowing away on one of his father's clipper ships and then becoming a captain himself one day. Fun fact: His granddaughter would be a captain too—in the US Army.

Virginia was beloved by her classmates (they called her the “Fighting Blade”³), her independence admired rather than frowned upon. She had big reputation, as evidenced by this description of Hall in her senior yearbook:

She is, by her own confession, cantankerous and capricious, but in spite of it all we would not do without her; for she is our class president, the editor-in-chief of this book, and one of the mainstays of the basketball and hockey teams. She has been acclaimed the most original of our class, and she lives up to her reputation at all times. The one thing to expect from Dindy is the unexpected.⁴

*Team Player:
Dindy is in the
back row, second
from right.*



Barbara Hall was likely disappointed by her youngest child's divergent ways. I suspect she'd been dreaming of marrying her only daughter off to a nice Baltimore society boy, visions of white gowns and babies in prams dancing in her head. Her own marriage to Edwin Hall had been a real coup, given that Ned, as most people called Dindy's father, had been a wealthy banker—and Barbara his secretary. Ned's parents had a fine town house in Baltimore, where they “lived high on the hog,” according to Lorna. The new Mrs. Hall had likely been hoping for a similar arrangement, but it was not to be: Ned was one of seven kids who had to share the inheritance, and as he struggled to hold on to the family's fortune, Dindy's mother found herself living in a rented apartment in Baltimore during the school year and then at Box Horn, where they spent the entirety of their summers. Though the house was imposing, it lacked the comforts of central heating or modern plumbing.⁵

Dindy was a smart cookie: She knew it would help her family out a great deal if she married well and brought the



Box Horn Farm

Halls back up to snuff. Given the times, her mother likely saw the investments made in Dindy—her expensive education, the childhood trips to Europe, and the German nanny—as stepping-stones to an altar with a boy of means at the end of it. These things were all indeed stepping-stones—to various positions with both the United States and British governments.

KNOWING WHICH FORK IS THE
SALAD FORK AND OTHER SIGNS
OF PRIVILEGE

Let's hit the pause button for just a moment, shall we?

So far, Dindy's life has been pretty easy-breezy—with the exception of the societal pressure nearly all young women of her time felt to marry well and stuff themselves into the corseted view the culture had of them. She had two parents who loved and supported her, she had a nice older brother, and everyone in the Hall clan seemed to like one another. They had lovely homes to live in, and she was educated in German, French, and Latin. Her summers at Box Horn were nothing short of idyllic. The property had a *tenant farmer*, which I thought only happened in historical romance novels about saucy aristocrats in the English countryside. Then there are the family trips to Europe and all the ways in which her parents would fund her future endeavors.

Today, we talk a lot about privilege and access—as we should—and Dindy had quite a bit of both. Yes, she was a woman in the 1920s and, therefore, mad oppressed. But she was also white. And rich. And—at the time—able-bodied and healthy. She was given excellent educational opportunities at elite private institutions in the States and around the world. Her family had influential connections—the kind of people who could literally write the president on her behalf when things didn't go her way. Dindy had a lot of luck. Buckets of it. She had a lot of bad luck, too, but, with one major exception, that bad luck stemmed only from the fact that she had a vagina.

Would Virginia Hall still have become a badass if she hadn't had the privilege she did growing up?

Yes, I believe she would.

It was Dindy's access to specific education—language

fluency and the ability to navigate foreign cultures, which is only really possible through living abroad extensively—that allowed her to become a game changer in World War II. But there is much about Virginia that has nothing to do with her money or race. Without those privileges, she just would have been a different *kind* of badass. I don't think she would have been able to be one of the greatest heroines of WWII, at least not as a spy in France, if she'd been a woman of color or if she'd been too poor to get the kind of education needed to access foreign languages and cultures. But I bet she would have rocked some Rosie the Riveter action, helping to build planes at a factory, or maybe through joining the armed forces as a nurse.⁶

I'd say most of what we celebrate Virginia Hall for is audacious courage and the ability to stay calm, cool, and collected in the face of personal tragedy and under enemy fire—all of which you'll see for yourself soon enough.

THE LOVE DODGER

Dindy's classmates called her “Donna Juanita,”⁷ a female Don Juan, a libertine for her times who had no trouble snagging the attention of prospective suitors.

Perhaps she played more than just the hockey field. The camera doesn't lie—Dindy was a looker; but I bet what really drove the boys wild was that secretive, teasing smile of hers that just begs you to give chase, the confident lines of her jaw that suggest she can hold her own with the best of them, and those eyes—an earthy brown with a disarming softness that left everyone who met her with the impression that she was *très charmante*.

But Dindy's classmates had her number: In addition to her “Fighting Blade” nickname in the senior yearbook, she had a



VIRGINIA HALL

*"I must have liberty, withal as large a charter
as I please."*

Entered—1912.
Captainball Team—1920-21.
Class Basketball Team—1923-24.
Varsity—1922-24..
Hockey Team—1922-24.
Captain Imps' Hockey Team—1923-24
Dramatics—1915-24.
Dramatic Committee—1921-24.
Stage-Manager Senior Play—1923-24.
Marshal of Commencement—1922-23.
Honor Board—1922-24.
Council—1923-24.
Class President—1923-24
Assistant Advertising Manager *Quid
Nunc*—1922-23.
Class Prophet—1923-24.
Editor-in-Chief *Quid Nunc* —1923-24.

30 30



THE "Donna Juanita" of the class now approaches. Though professing to hold Man in contempt, Dindy is yet his closest counterpart—in costume. She is, by her own confession, cantankerous and capricious, but in spite of it all we would not do without her; for she is our class-president, the editor-in-chief of this book, and one of the mainstays of the basket-ball and hockey teams. She has been acclaimed the most original of our class, and she lives up to her reputation at all times. The one thing to expect from Dind is the unexpected.

Dindy's senior photo

second classification—the “Love Dodger.”⁸ Dindy didn’t just play hard to get—she didn’t want to be caught.

Barbara Hall, considered by some family members to be a bit of a snob,⁹ was in a pickle: How to marry off a daughter who was most at home when there was a gun in her hand and dirt under her fingernails? I’m sure when Mrs. Hall opened her daughter’s 1924 senior yearbook and saw Dindy’s chosen quote beside her picture (“I must have liberty, withal as large a charter as I please”), then turned the page and saw her classmates fondly bequeathing her daughter with nicknames best suited for a femme fatale, she must have had a powerful urge to throw that yearbook across the family parlor. Liberty! Love dodging! Fighting blades? No, no, *no*. That would not do.

Despite her independent swagger, Dindy nearly found herself caught in the trap of married life she was so desperate to avoid. At the age of nineteen, somewhere between graduating high school and stepping into the role of college girl, she struck a deal with the devil (or perhaps her mother) and became engaged to a complete douchebag.¹⁰ Have no fear, though; Dindy wasn’t about to get tied down.

While she was trying Harvard on for size (Radcliffe College, which, at the time, was the women’s arm of the university), with a major in economics and a minor in languages, Dindy discovered that her no-good lousy fiancé was a cheater.¹¹ (The swine!) She dumped him, dodging the marriage bullet for what would be *decades*. The engagement obviously made very little impression on Dindy, who never mentioned it herself the few times she divulged personal details to the people she worked with or when she was interviewed later in her life. This is what her niece had to say of the ne’er-do-well fiancé in question: “I met his third ex-wife, who said Dindy did the right thing.”¹² I’d say that’s an open-and-shut case, if there ever was one. This wouldn’t be the last time Dindy gave a guy the slip, though in the future they’d usually be in uniform and trying to kill her.

Newly single and bored with Harvard's stodgy atmosphere, Dindy moved on to Barnard College in Manhattan in 1925 for her second year of university, where she again studied economics and languages, focusing on French.¹³ In her application to Barnard, Dindy had written that she was interested in a career with the diplomatic service and in international trade: "Both vocations would bring me into contact with many interesting persons and give me the opportunity to make use of foreign languages."¹⁴ Little did she know that those "interesting persons" would range from a Romanian émigré with a mysterious past to a French brothel owner to a wild World War I hero charged by himself to raise hell.



Dindy's trips to Europe during her childhood, her education, and her father's work as a businessman likely set the foundation for her interest in these subjects. However, it's clear that during high school and after graduation, Dindy was implementing her natural talent for organizing and strategy,¹⁵ leaning in to her boundless curiosity and audaciousness in order to build a future for herself well outside the conventional life of a Baltimore lady. All throughout *Quid Nunc*, the high school yearbook Dindy herself edited, we see a girl who's active and inquisitive, whose friends note her desire to go where the winds may take her. As a young woman in the twenties—a time when flappers were cutting their hair short and eschewing the corseted gowns their mothers had grown up

with—it's clear Dindy was on the hunt for adventure, arming herself with knowledge that would allow her to explore the world and make her mark on it.

I'd like to say that our tall,¹⁶ striking heroine kicked up her heels in New York City when she moved into her place on Broadway, enjoying all the fun the city that never sleeps had to offer in the Roaring Twenties. Think swilling gin in speakeasies (remember, Prohibition was in full swing this whole decade), dancing the Charleston, and catching a racy vaudeville show in Times Square. But this doesn't seem to be the case. In a September 1925 letter to a Mrs. Pitts back at her old high school, Dindy said this: "So far, I am delighted with everything here, but I know very few people outside of college and want to be able to call on someone occasionally."¹⁷

Big cities can be terribly lonely if you don't know anyone—and if the whole reason you're there bores you to tears. For the Fighting Blade, the lecture halls of Barnard were a snore, and, despite her smarts, our girl's academic performance was lackluster at best. She was pulling Cs, even in her favorite subjects, French and math. She failed her gym class because she simply didn't show up.¹⁸ (Gym class in college? *Ugh*. I wouldn't have shown up either). Obviously, she wasn't feeling it—"it" being American universities—so Dindy decided to pull the plug.

Of dropping out of school *again*, Dindy would say: "I could not get the subjects I wanted without a lot of uninteresting required courses, so Father let me go to Europe."¹⁹ Good thing she'd paid attention in French class.

The following year, 1926, at the age of twenty, the Love Dodger crossed the pond, stopping first at the École Libre des Sciences Politiques in Paris from 1926 to the autumn of 1927.²⁰ Dindy was living the dream. We're talking 1920s Paris, which is pretty much on everyone's time travel bucket list. Paris was the place to be, with scores of pretty young things with money traveling to the city on the regular to catch a

show at cabarets like the Folies Bergère and smoke loads of Gauloises cigarettes while debating politics and art and philosophy in late-night cafés. Can't you just see Dindy smashing about Paris, guzzling booze with Fitzgerald and Hemingway or flirting with Picasso whilst wearing Dior's latest? I bet she frequently scoured the stacks at Shakespeare and Company for books in English along with her fellow expat bohemians who left the States to live it up in Europe while America was in the midst of Prohibition. Though she was technically there to study, I suspect Dindy's real education was being unchaperoned on the Continent, where she could enjoy oodles of wine, long walks along the Seine, and perhaps a kiss or two in a candlelit café.

A passport photo of Virginia at the time shows a pretty girl with a string of pearls around her neck and a coat with a fur collar—you could almost cast her as a Russian aristocrat on the run. Her gaze is direct, confident. This is a woman who knows what she wants and what she's about.

There's a yearning there too—a hunger for something far outside the boundaries set around the young women of her time. How was she going to get a seat at the table when every chair was taken by a man?

Things started getting even more interesting when Dindy scooted over to Vienna the next year, where, from 1927 to 1929, she once again focused her attentions on political science and economics.²¹ Her study date—if they



actually *did* study—was a certain dashing Polish officer named Emil.²² Vienna was a pretty dope place to fall in love: sipping on famous Viennese coffee while sharing a slice of decadent *Sachertorte* at the super-luxe Café Central. Roaming the cobblestoned streets hand in hand, serenaded by the city’s famous buskers, all hoping to be the next Mozart. Popping into the Tiergarten, the oldest zoo in the world, to have a look at baby tigers and monkeys. Kissing in the cheap seats at the opera.

Over the next several summers, Virginia would gallivant around Toulouse, Grenoble, and Strasbourg for special courses between regular school terms in Vienna, so by now, she had a pretty good handle on French, German, and Italian.²³ At some point in her adventures, Dindy decided she was ready to have her torte and eat it too: A job as a Foreign Officer in the US State Department would allow her to get paid to live in other countries while using all this education she’d begun accumulating by studying languages and economics. Since her man was based in Europe, the idea of returning to the States was becoming less and less appealing.

Yet while Dindy had become successful academically—she ended up graduating in 1929 from the Konsular Akademie in Vienna and, get ready for this mouthful, from the Schule der Orientalischer Sprachen²⁴—this wasn’t the case in matters of the heart. At twenty-three, Dindy would once again become the Love Dodger—by order of her family.

D A D D Y ’ S G I R L

So, here’s the deal: You might read some stuff about Emil dumping Dindy or whatever—total bollocks. I got the scoop from Lorna, Dindy’s niece, and the breakup went down like this: Virginia and Emil got engaged, but her dad was not cool with her having a European husband, because it meant his

daughter might never come home. And he *adored* Virginia. So there was no way he was ever going to consent to this marriage. This would become a bit of a trend in Dindy's life: The next time she fell in love, a million years later, it would be her mother who would stand in the way. Though our gal was a trailblazing feminist (before anyone was using that word), Dindy was a pretty obedient daughter—not too hard for her, given the relative freedom her parents allowed Dindy compared to other young women of the time.

She broke off her engagement, and from family accounts, it appears as though Dindy never saw or heard from Emil again. There are no surviving letters, and Dindy threw out the only picture she had of him because she didn't want to upset her husband. (Oh, boy! Do I have story for *you*—KEEP READING, Y'ALL, it's not all doom and gloom.) One of Dindy's friends would later say it was wrong of her father to push her to break up with Emil, but I'm glad he did.²⁵ Mr. Hall wasn't a fortune-teller, but maybe a subconscious part of him saw the future: a world war that would tear apart countless lovers, families, and communities.

At any rate, the affair was over, and Virginia, perhaps resolved to put as much distance as possible between herself and the makings of a tear-jerking Billie Holiday tune, left Vienna and returned home to Box Horn Farm in July 1929, with no ring on her finger, but a diploma in hand. She'd struck out with love, but she was ready to play ball when it came to her career.

THE BACK DOOR OF THE BOYS' CLUB

Now, I will be the first to shake my fist and yell, *Down with the patriarchy!* but I wanted to make sure I got my facts straight before I talked shit about the State Department. . . . But now:

Yeah, I'm gonna talk some shit about the State Department—at least the one back in the day, which was a veritable boys' club. I'd say Madeleine Albright and Hillary Clinton settled some necessary scores when they took over the department in later years.

The State Department is a federal agency tasked with advising the president on foreign matters and leading in regard to foreign policy. The job of a State Department employee can include visiting other countries as a way to create good international relationships, negotiating trade treaties with other nations, and acting as a liaison between a foreign power and the United States. I personally think it's the sexiest department to work for in government: jet-setters welcome. Dindy thought so too. It was the perfect place for someone who was fascinated with other cultures and eager to live abroad. Someone who was intelligent, curious, well traveled, multi-lingual, et cetera et cetera—seems like a no-brainer she'd be part of the Foreign Officer crew, right?

Dindy wasted no time putting her plan into motion once she returned home in 1929. She was twenty-three and ready to make her mark on the world. But since she was no longer in school or engaged to a guy in Poland, she'd need a good reason to get back to Europe. Knowing how competitive entrance into the corps of Foreign Service Officers was, Dindy opted for a year of grad school at George Washington University in DC to continue her studies in French and economics in order to best the rest.²⁶ For Dindy, the stakes were the highest they'd ever been in her life to date: Just months after she returned home, the stock market crashed and the Great Depression began. The Halls were hit hard. Most of the family money disappeared along with countless other American families' fortunes. Her brother lost his job while her father struggled to keep his many business ventures afloat.²⁷

Never a stellar student—I suspect she absolutely hated

sitting still for so long in those classrooms—Dindy managed to squeak by in grad school, earning high enough grades to feel confident that she'd ace the Foreign Service exam that would allow her to become a legit diplomat. Ambassador Hall, anyone?

By all accounts, Dindy rocked the shit out of the test, but she was left out in the cold.²⁸ And while there's no actual proof in this patriarchal pudding, it's still a pudding seasoned with Old Spice and testosterone. It's a pudding made by The Man for The Man. (I'm going to stop talking about pudding now because I'm getting hungry.)

According to Dindy and her family,²⁹ she passed her exam the first time around with flying colors, but because the diplomatic corps rarely accepted women—only *six* of the fifteen hundred Foreign Officers at the time were female³⁰—Dindy was shut out. Was the family just defending their baby girl, or were the Halls onto something?

It gets worse. Not long after the disappointments with State, Dindy's beloved father, Ned, up and died right in front of his Baltimore office at the age of fifty-nine in January 1931.³¹ This must have been a terrible blow for Dindy, as the two were close. Now that she was finished with school in DC, Dindy's mother was expecting her daughter to stop this gallivanting around the world and come live at Box Horn, which had gotten even more crowded now that her brother and his family had moved in. The Great Depression, indeed.

Unwilling to turn spinster and live at home or to become Mrs. So-and-So in Baltimore society, Dindy needed a gig, and fast. She explained to her friend, a vice-consul at the American embassy in Warsaw called Elbridge Durbrow (a name so weird, we could surely cast him as the next Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher), that since top officials at the State Department did not welcome women into the service, she would enter it by the back door.³²

That back door—which is still the entry point today for so many women—was the secretarial pool. So Dindy became a clerk, which, let's be honest, really means you're only allowed to take notes in the room where it happens. The girl got into *Harvard* and spoke three languages, but, sure, have her push some papers around. Have her be a secretary, just like her mother. THAT MAKES PERFECT SENSE.

Dindy's first position with the Foreign Service, a wing of the State Department for postings abroad, was in Warsaw, Poland, in 1931³³—her ex-beau Emil's stomping grounds. She sailed from New York to Hamburg on the *George Washington*,³⁴ one of those big ships that you think would be cool to sail on until you watch *Titanic*.

I just *love* picturing Dindy on the deck of a steamship in a stylish suit, an independent lady of the world embarking on a grand adventure. Maybe she ate at the captain's table once or twice, had champagne while watching the sunset, and promenaded around the deck arm in arm with a feisty gal like herself. I picture her wearing fabulous hats and sneaking cigarettes from sailors while she practiced her German with them.

Virginia worked at the American embassy in Warsaw from August 1931 to early 1933.³⁵ It was her first-ever job—way cooler than *mine*, which was making cookies at the local mall in a too-short khaki skort.

Dindy was only pulling in \$2,000 a year,³⁶ so we know she wasn't doing consulate work for the money. Her lack of experience in typing and stenography—writing in shorthand or taking dictation—didn't seem to hinder her. Her superiors in future postings would feel confident enough to entrust Dindy with responsibilities far above her pay grade.

Still, it must have been a little hard being in Warsaw without Emil, who had no doubt regaled her with tales of his home country while they'd cuddled in Vienna. In Dindy's day, Warsaw was the perfect city for young lovers. Often referred

to as the “Paris of the East” before it was leveled during WWII when bombing left more than 85 percent of its buildings in ruins, Warsaw was dotted with colorful Baroque architecture, fashionably dressed Europeans, and restaurants serving up the delicious traditional fare the country is known for: savory kielbasa (sausages), pierogi (dumplings), and smoked cheese. One could take a trolley ride along picturesque Marszalkowska Street, stroll along the Vistula River near the stately royal castle, or pop into the city’s many cafés for *kawa*—coffee made the Polish way, with one or two spoonfuls of ground coffee placed directly in the glass with boiling water.

In between getting coffee, filing paperwork, and trying to be a Girl Boss at the consulate, Dindy decided to take the Foreign Service exam again.³⁷ (This exam drama would go on for—I kid you not—another *five* years.) By now, our girl is twenty-seven: In those times, she’d be viewed as an object of pity among her fellow women, many of whom were well into motherhood by their late twenties. Dindy’s career prospects were more important than ever; she’d taken a huge risk by choosing a much-less-traveled path for women in her day, and the last thing she wanted to do was move in with her mother. No badass dreams of becoming an old maid slouching home with her tail between her legs. The way Dindy saw it, a secretary is a secretary—whether she’s sharpening pencils in Wichita or in Warsaw. It was time to level up.

Failing once again to make any inroads at State, and perhaps tired of being treated like a basic bitch, Dindy peaced out of Warsaw soon after ringing in the new year in 1933 and transferred to the consulate in Izmir, Turkey³⁸—where life as she knew it was about to be irrevocably changed during a hunting expedition in the countryside.

“A woman is like a tea bag: you can’t tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.”¹

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

2

A LESSON IN GUN SAFETY

1933

Sometimes badassess can be dumbassess, and we should thank them for it, because it means there’s hope for the rest of us. And what’s *really* badass is when you can turn your dumbassery into an inspirational story.

We’ve all had moments when we royally screwed up—maybe not so bad as the former king of England who had a crush on Hitler, but still. The way I see it, when you make big, life-altering mistakes, you’ve got two choices: wallow in self-pity, bingeing on Netflix and Ben & Jerry’s, *or*, as Maui says in *Moana*, “Muscle up, buttercup.” Muscling up means we view life’s backhands as an invitation to be stronger, savvier, roll-with-the-punches dames.

I can think of few broads who muscled up more than Miss Virginia Hall, who took personal tragic plot twists in stride (pun, as you will see, intended) while giving the patriarchy the middle finger on the regular.

I'm guessing the former seat of the Ottoman Empire seemed just as good a place as any to plot world domination. Virginia was a pull-up-your-bootstraps kind of girl. Life was too short to moon over lost love or give up after failing a test or two. Besides, her work at the consul in Izmir kept her busy. Her duties as a clerk were again of a secretarial nature—not terribly exciting, but Virginia's job gave her the chance to see the world, and *that* was exciting. The ancient port city of Izmir was unlike anywhere Virginia had ever been. The stirring refrain of the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer from the city's mosques five times a day filled the air, along with the scents of *döner kebab* roasting on small carts and the salty tang of the sea, which Dindy could gaze upon from the consulate's position right on the waterfront. It must have been an intoxicating elixir for her senses. Each day on her way to and from the embassy, she'd no doubt pass old men sipping thick Turkish coffee flavored with cardamom and sugar from tiny, elaborate cups at the traditional *kahvehanes*—coffeehouses—that peppered the city. Ancient Greek ruins were around every corner, the once-magnificent structures bringing the myths Virginia had grown up with to life. All in all, not a bad posting for a twenty-seven-year-old with a thirst for adventure.



Dindy, expat extraordinaire

Dindy was a work hard, play hard kind of gal. Reports

from her supervisors all attest to her strong work ethic; she was the kind of person who'd give up her Saturday to come into the office if she was needed, who'd take on work way above her pay grade. Though she was enjoying the perks of working abroad, she was still holding out hope for using the servants' entrance to get into the Good Old Boys' Club of the Foreign Service. There is some legit snail mail drama surrounding Dindy's efforts to become an officer. It begins with polite requests from Dindy for tests that never arrive and ends with an exasperated letter on her behalf from President Roosevelt himself.

Just the fact that she wanted to be an officer and truly believed that she would be accepted into what amounts to a secret society reveals how tenacious our Virginia could be—and how much she believed in herself. While the other women who worked at the consulates and embassies seemed resigned to treading water in the secretarial pool, Virginia was amassing the skills that would one day save countless lives and help turn the tide in a world war. What set Dindy apart more than anything was her willingness to go where she was most needed: a necessary skill for a future spy.

Virginia came to play. She just didn't know what the game was yet—or what side she'd be playing for.

ENTER THE LIMPING LADY

I spent hours with Lorna Catling poring over photos her aunt Virginia sent home from her time abroad, many of them with funny little notes scrawled on the back in Dindy's messy handwriting. One fuzzy black-and-white shot of a picnic with friends, was given the caption: *a game of chess for dessert.*² You get the impression that Dindy made the most of her posting abroad, with excursions to castles and romps in rowboats

when she wasn't spending her free time traipsing about European streets draped in shadows, her feet, always in sensible shoes, tripping along the cobblestones. Little did she know that there was about to be a very big change to her wardrobe.

On a lusciously mild December afternoon in 1933, Virginia and a few of her friends were hiking outside the city, perhaps through the mountains that ring Izmir's glittering bay, in search of their quarry: snipe—small



birds that flitted about the wetlands of the lush Turkish countryside. Out here, among the natural wonders she so loved, I bet Virginia could almost imagine she was home at Box Horn Farm, exploring the Maryland woods with her big brother, John, or learning how to shoot with her father. She was probably delighted to ditch her office attire in favor of a hunting jacket that fit loosely over her tall, slender frame and a gun held comfortably between her hands. At five foot eight, she often towered above the women around her. Perhaps a light scarf wound around her neck and a hat covered her soft, wavy brown hair. Though Virginia wasn't dependent on her lowly clerk's salary alone and certainly could have afforded whatever fashions she desired, she tended toward comfortable, practical clothing, her only adornment a string of pearls. Most who knew Virginia never failed to comment that she cut a striking figure with her angular face and intense gaze—she didn't need eye-catching silk dresses that clung to her hips to get attention.

I'd like to point out here that the gun Virginia had with her was one she brought *all the way from America*.³ That's right—rather than agonizing over how to fit her shoes and hats in her snazzy luggage, Dindy prioritized packing heat in the form of a 12-gauge shotgun she'd inherited from her father. While most little girls were doing sedate indoor activities, Virginia and her father had been perfecting her aim. Edwin Hall had died two years previously, and I suspect that small reminders, such as this gun, made it seem as though he weren't so very far away. Virginia must have missed her father terribly—they'd been very close—but she had plenty of good memories to see her through.

Dindy had always loved the outdoors. She frequently hiked in all seasons, was an accomplished horsewoman, and seemed happiest among the flora and fauna of her family's 110-acre estate. She likely felt a sense of satisfaction as she and her friends traversed the wetlands, the clean, fresh air bringing a slight blush to her cheeks. I'm sure this Turkish December must have felt wonderfully warm—so different from the Decembers she was accustomed to in Maryland. Back home, Virginia wouldn't have been surprised if her mother had someone shoveling snow at the estate. Perhaps she would have engaged the services of one of the “hoboes” who roamed all of America then—a new term being slung around to refer to an unemployed man looking for a hot meal and maybe a warm place to spend the night.

The Great Depression had been going on for four years now; one out of every four Americans was unemployed, and nearly every bank was closed. The photographs in the papers were grim: soup kitchens for the hungry, stockbrokers shining shoes, children scrounging for their daily bread. But there was finally an end in sight. Dindy had no doubt heard the newly elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt's inaugural speech, and his words must have blazed inside her: *The only thing we have to*

fear is fear itself. For Virginia Hall, fear was a waste of time. Her lack of it was what had brought her to a hunting party all the way across the world.

As Virginia and her friends moved through a field, eyes squinting at the sky in search of their prey, their conversation might have turned to the news coming out of Europe: Adolf Hitler had become chancellor of Germany earlier in the year, and just that past October, Germany had pulled out of the League of Nations, an organization created after World War I to peacefully settle conflicts. (RED. FREAKING. FLAG.) WWI had claimed more than thirty-eight million lives, and Hitler's rhetoric was making people uneasy; no one wanted to see German aggression again, especially so soon after the last war. Like everyone else, Virginia had been following the news, but none of it suggested that she herself was in any danger. Still, disturbing reports were coming out of Germany. The Nazis had ordered a nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses in April, and the world had taken notice. There were protests all over the globe, and many people boycotted German goods in return. This prompted Nazi propaganda director Joseph Goebbels to say that if the protests continued, the boycott of Jewish goods and services would be resumed "until German Jewry has been annihilated."⁴

Nice fella, Goebbels.

But this was not talk for a sunny outing so far from Hitler and his goons. Perhaps Virginia and her friends were instead trading consulate gossip and sharing their plans for the upcoming winter holidays or wishing they could go see *King Kong* and *42nd Street*, which had made quite the splash back in the States. No doubt they were throwing around some sick 1930s slang: *Aces! Swell! Murder!* (Translation: *Wow!*)

Dindy carried her gun pointed to the ground—she'd been hunting all her life, she knew how to handle firearms. But as she moved to climb over one of the wire fences in the field,

the gun slipped from her grasp.⁵ She grabbed for it, a sickening burst of adrenaline shooting through her. Picture the gun, falling, the woman—reaching. A fumble. Her finger hits the trigger.

The sound of the gun firing exploded in the quiet of the countryside. The shell ripped into her left foot, tearing past the skin and driving through cartilage and bone.⁶ Virginia collapsed, staring down at what had once been called a foot and was now little more than a mangled collage of blood, bone, skin, and ruptured shoe leather. Her friends acted quickly, well aware that if the wound became infected or she lost too much blood, Dindy could be dead before day's end.

They rushed her to the nearest hospital, and over the next three weeks, Dindy's body behaved just as her mind always did: with a dogged, stubborn will to survive and thrive. At first, it seemed like perhaps Dindy would be all right, that she'd pull through without too much trouble. The accident happened on December 8, 1933, and early reports looked good. But a telegram sent to the secretary of state on Christmas Day stated that, due to infection and "vital danger," it'd been necessary to amputate Virginia's left leg below the knee.⁷

And, just like that, Virginia Hall earned the moniker her compatriots in the French Resistance would one day give her: *La Dame Qui Boite*.⁸

The Limping Lady.

END NOTES

All sources cited as “SOE” come from the British National Archives in Kew, England. All sources cited as “OSS” were dug out of the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in College Park, Maryland. Wherever possible, I’ve endeavored to use original source material.

1. Quoted in Judith L. Pearson, *The Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America’s Greatest Female Spy* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2005), p. 22.
2. Quoted in Maurice Buckmaster, *They Fought Alone* (London: Odhams Press, 1958), p. 98.

Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept It

1. *The Argus* (Melbourne, Australia), September 1, 1956, p. 9.

Chapter One: Big Reputation

1. Glennon Doyle, *Untamed* (New York: Random House, 2020).
2. Lorna Catling, interview with the author, February 24, 2018, Baltimore. Apparently, John, then a child, struggled to pronounce her full name, so *Dindy* it was.
3. *Quid Nunc*, Graduating Class of 1924 yearbook, Roland Park Country School Archives (print), Parkton, MD.
4. Ibid.
5. Catling interview with author, February 24, 2018. Though the house no longer exists, Baltimore County recently put up a roadside marker near the site, lauding Dindy’s accomplishments.
6. Curious about the role of African American women in WWII? Check this out: womenshistory.org/articles/african-american-nurses-world-war-ii.
7. *Quid Nunc* yearbook.
8. Ibid.
9. Catling interview with author, February 24, 2018.
10. Lorna Catling, phone interview with the author, January 13, 2020.

11. Ibid. Note that we're talking old-ass memories and family lore. Like I said, Dindy never mentioned this in print anywhere, nor did anyone outside of her family. Her family is a great source of info, since Dindy seemed to let her guard down only with them.
12. Ibid.
13. Virginia Hall's Official Personnel Folder, CIA.
14. "Virginia Hall," Barnard Archives and Special Collections blog, August 13, 2010, barnardarchives.wordpress.com/2010/08/13/virginia-hall.
15. An interdepartmental memo between Special Operations Executive (SOE) leadership upon Dindy's transfer to a post in Madrid reads: "I think you will find her [Hall] both intelligent, useful and pleasant to work with. She certainly is capable of getting things done." Virginia Hall SOE Personal File, Memo "D.F.V." from D/F to H. X., May 5, 1943, HS 9/647/4, British National Archives.
16. Dindy was five eight, according to a sheet she filled out for the State Department. Those who worked with her in the field always noted her height.
17. Letter from Virginia Hall to Mrs. Pitts, September 28, 1925, Roland Park Country School Archives.
18. "Virginia Hall," Barnard Archives and Special Collections blog.
19. Letter from Virginia Hall to Margaret Rossiter, February 2, 1978, *Women in the Resistance* Papers, Box 3, University of Michigan Special Collections.
20. Personnel Qualification Questionnaire. 9 December 1952. Virginia Hall's Official Personnel Folder, CIA.
21. Personal History Statement. Virginia Hall's Official Personnel Folder. CIA.
22. Catling interview with author, February 24, 2018.
23. Personnel Qualification Questionnaire. 9 December 1952. Virginia Hall's Official Personnel Folder, CIA.
24. Ibid.
25. Catling interview with author, February 24, 2018. Okay, here's the deal: The Emil thing is tricky because Dindy, as I mentioned, rarely spoke of him and there are no surviving photos or letters—at least none that I've heard of—that speak of him. Lorna distinctly remembers Emil as Dindy's fiancé and that her father was opposed, and so she called it off. She also mentioned that one of Dindy's friends had commented that it hadn't been fair of Dindy's father to ask that of her. But that is where all certainty ends. Lorna said she believes—but is not certain—that

the romance happened while Dindy was in Vienna. However, she was stationed in Poland, so it's *also* possible that it happened in Poland and that's part of why Dindy requested a transfer to Turkey. Emil may or may not have survived the war, but he'd be very lucky to have done so as a Polish officer.

26. Rossiter, Margaret. *Women in the Resistance*. New York: Praeger, 1991. p.190.
27. Catling interview with author, February 24, 2018.
28. Rossiter, *Women in the Resistance*, p. 190. There was a written and oral portion, so one thing to remember is that the oral portion would have been highly subjective, given that men were likely administering the test. There's been some debate as to Dindy's performance on the test regardless, but seeing as her requests to retake it were conveniently lost and then she was prohibited altogether from taking the test once more—due to absolute assholery on the part of then secretary of state Cordell Hull—it makes her performance the first go-around relatively irrelevant.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Rossiter, Margaret. *Women in the Resistance*. New York: Praeger, 1991. p.190.
33. Virginia Hall State Department File, State Department General Records/RG 59/Box 526/Folder 123, NARA.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Letter from Virginia Hall to Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, March 10, 1932, Hall State Department File, NARA.
38. Ibid.

Chapter Two: A Lesson in Gun Safety

1. "60 Empowering Feminist Quotes From Inspiring Women." *Harper's Bazaar*. Web. 28 February 2020. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/features/a4056/empowering-female-quotes>.
2. Photo collection of Lorna Catling, courtesy of Lorna Catling.
3. Purnell, Sonia. *A Woman of No Importance: The Untold Story of the American Spy Who Helped Win World War II*. Viking, 2019. p. 14.
4. Ross, Steven J. *Hitler in Los Angeles: How Jews Foiled Nazi Plots Against*

- Hollywood and America*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2017.
5. Virginia Hall to Margaret Rossiter. 14 April 1982. *Women in the Resistance Papers*. Box 3. University of Michigan Special Collections.
 6. Hall, Virginia. State Department File. State Department General Records/RG 59/Box 526/Folder 123. NARA.
 7. Ibid.
 8. Simpson, William. *I Burned My Fingers*. London: Putnam, 1985. p. 37. Note: Oftentimes, this phrase gets attributed to the Gestapo, who described her as “the woman who limps,” but as Simpson, who knew Dindy in Lyon, makes it clear in his autobiography of his war experiences that it was the French underground who bequeathed this moniker to Virginia Hall. Likely, the Gestapo heard her referenced in this way, which is how they knew to be on the alert for “the woman who limps.”



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“ A ripping spy story with a generous side of stand-up comedy – a fresh twist on history.

- Steve Sheinkin, National Book Award Finalist and Newbery Honor Winner



About The Book

A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection

Code Name Verity meets Inglourious Basterds in this riotous, spirited biography of the most dangerous of all Allied spies, courageous and kickass Virginia Hall.

WHEN JAMES BOND WAS STILL IN DIAPERS, Virginia Hall was behind enemy lines, playing a dangerous game of cat and mouse with Hitler's henchmen. Did this shero have second thoughts after a terrible accident left her needing a wooden leg? Please. Virginia Hall was the baddest broad in any room she walked into.

When the State Department proved to be a sexist boy's club that wouldn't allow her in, she gave the finger to society's expectations of women and became a spy for the British. This boss lady helped arm and train the French Resistance and organized sabotage missions. There was just one problem: the Butcher of Lyon, a notorious Gestapo commander, was after her. But, hey, Virginia's classmates didn't call her "the Fighting Blade" for nothing. So how does a girl who was a pirate in the school play, spent her childhood summers milking goats, and rocked it on the hockey field end up becoming the Gestapo's most wanted spy?

Audacious, irreverent, and fiercely feminist, Code Name Badass is for anyone who doesn't take no for an answer.

About The Author

Heather Demetrios is the critically-acclaimed author of *Little Universes*, *I'll Meet You There* and *Bad Romance*. She received PEN America's Susan P. Bloom Children's Book Discovery Award for her debut novel *Something Real*, and is the editor of *Dear Heartbreak: YA Authors and Teens on the Dark Side of Love*. Visit her at HeatherDemetrios.com



Praise For Code Name Badass

“Demetrios tells this fascinating story in an uber-modern narrative voice that is snarky AF, LOL, with plenty of hits to the patriarchy and a glorious sense of celebrating Dindy's badassery. It's breezy and lighthearted in tone but meticulously well-researched, including interviews with Dindy's surviving family. A remarkable telling of an extraordinary woman.

— Kirkus

“Badass hardly seems adequate to describe Virginia Hall or this book! Heather Demetrios has found a tragically under-known World War II icon and not only brought her story to life, but done it in vivid, meticulous, fantastic detail. I devoured this book.

— Mackenzi Lee, *New York Times* Bestselling author of *A Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue* and *Bygone Badass Broads*

“Demetrios shines a bright light on a spy whose heroic life has been in the shadows for far too long. Like Virginia, Code Name Badass is irreverent, brash, smart and true. It's the real deal. Get it.”

— Craig Galley, former CIA Senior Intelligence Officer and author of *Hall of Mirrors*

“...an enlightening account of a heroine worth knowing

- Booklist

“.....Demetrios provides a thoroughly researched history of “La dame qui boite,” and those just discovering Dindy will be convinced that she was, in fact, a badass.

- BCCB, *The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*

Resources, Media, & More

The author is available for virtual panels and in-person events, as well as interviews.

Discussion guides for book clubs and classrooms, FAQ for students, a Virginia Hall photo gallery, BADASS playlist and more can be found at

heatherdemetrius.com/badass

“I'd give anything to lay my hands on that...bitch.

- Klaus Barbie, the "Butcher of Lyon" and head of the Lyon Gestapo, on Virginia Hall

