

# *The Code Name Badass Discussion Guide:*

## *YA Version*

“ 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

[Click To Read  
An Excerpt](#)

# *Bienvenu, mes amis.*

Thank you so much for reading *Code Name Badass*. I hope you think Dindy is just as much a badass as I do - and I hope she inspires your own badassery.

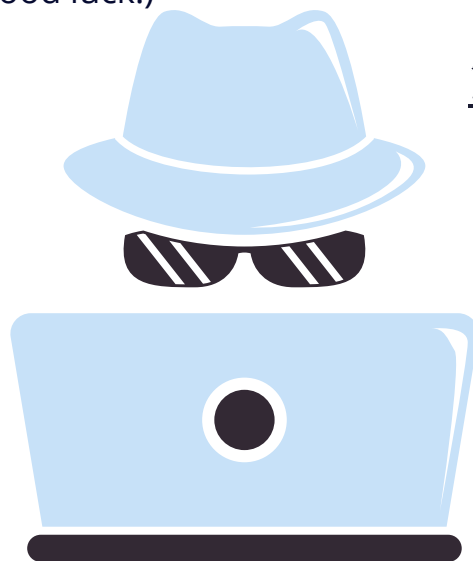
Before we get into the discussion guide, I wanted to make sure you knew about the **Badass Portal** - there are TONS of extra resources on there (you may have even gotten this guide on the portal itself).

Click below to visit the portal. You'll find:

- A CIA video about Virginia Hall
- The Comedy Central "Spies" episode featuring Dindy and other badass lady spies - LMFAO.
- A Virginia Hall scrapbook with loads of photos I couldn't put in the book.
- A timeline of Dindy's life and what was happening in the world when she was in it.
- Badass playlists! One is inspired by the book - contemporary femme boosts like Lizzo and MIA. The other is a super cool WWII playlist which includes air raid sirens, real BBC broadcasts, French *chansons*, and swing. Close your eyes and you can imagine secretly listening to this during a French Resistance meeting.
- You'll also find a BADASS blog to inspire your badass life (and give you insights into writing the book and what a life inspired by Virginia Hall looks like).
- I'll be updating the portal with new videos about Virginia Hall, as well.

As the Maquis said, "À bientôt, mon cher. Merde!"  
(See you later, my dear. Good luck!)

*Bisous,  
Heather*



Enter The  
Badass  
Portal

# Code Name Badass Discussion Questions

1. If you had a code name, what would it be?
2. How do you think you would respond if you'd shot yourself in the foot, as Virginia Hall did?
3. Describe Virginia Hall with three words (yes, yes, you can say "badass").
4. A lot of people told Virginia Hall "no." When was the last time someone told you "no" because of your gender, race, sexuality, learning style, or some other identifying part of you? How did you respond? If you didn't respond in a way that felt good to you, what do you wish you could have done differently?
5. Virginia Hall was pretty good in the field, but even she made mistakes. What do you think her biggest mistake was, and how would you have handled it differently?
6. The CIA's Six Guiding Principles are: Service, Excellence, Integrity, Courage, Teamwork, and Stewardship. Virginia Hall was chosen to represent "Service." Why do you think the CIA chose her for this quality?
7. Follow-up: Which of the above characteristics are your strengths? Which ones would you need to work on to become an agent?
8. Why do you think Virginia Hall chose not to share about her experiences in the war, even after she retired from the CIA, and many other spies had chosen to write memoirs or talk to the press?



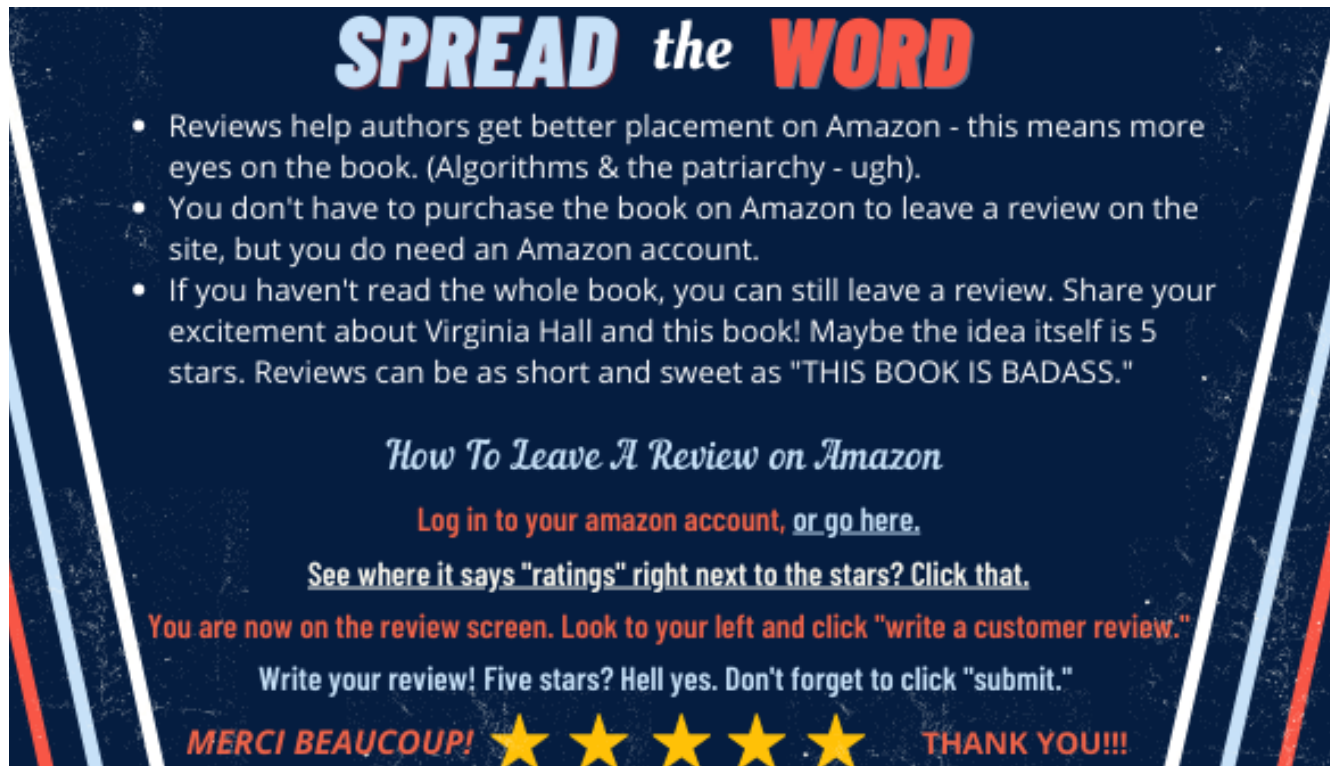
9. Virginia Hall once said, "I was no heroine." Why do you think she said that? Do you agree with her?
10. **Let's talk patriarchy and discrimination: What part of the book made you the most angry in terms of how Virginia Hall was discriminated against, either because she was a woman or because she was disabled?**
11. Why do you think the State Department fought so hard against Virginia Hall becoming a Foreign Service Officer?
12. **Did you agree with Maurice Buckmaster when he told Dindy SOE couldn't send her back to France because it would be too easy for the Gestapo to identify her? Why or why not? Follow-up: Did she make the right choice to go anyway?**
13. What would be the hardest part about the life of a spy for you?
14. **Do you think you could have been a spy in WWII France? Why or why not?**
15. If you could ask Dindy one question, what would it be?
16. **Tell us one way you're going to help smash the patriarchy.**
17. Are you a feminist? What does feminism mean to you? How do you define it?
18. **What is one thing Virginia Hall did that inspires you? Why?**
19. Who is a badass you look up to in your life? Why are they a badass? Bonus points: Tell them they're a badass some time this week. Write a letter, compose a song, give them a high-five.
20. **Finish this sentence: "I am a badass because \_\_\_\_\_."**

*Write your favorite quote from the book below:*

# Spread The Word

If you loved *Code Name Badass* and are inspired by Virginia Hall's story, please spread the word!

*A few ways you can help:*



**SPREAD** *the* **WORD**

- Reviews help authors get better placement on Amazon - this means more eyes on the book. (Algorithms & the patriarchy - ugh).
- You don't have to purchase the book on Amazon to leave a review on the site, but you do need an Amazon account.
- If you haven't read the whole book, you can still leave a review. Share your excitement about Virginia Hall and this book! Maybe the idea itself is 5 stars. Reviews can be as short and sweet as "THIS BOOK IS BADASS."

*How To Leave A Review on Amazon*

Log in to your amazon account, [or go here.](#)

See where it says "ratings" right next to the stars? Click that.

You are now on the review screen. Look to your left and click "write a customer review."

Write your review! Five stars? Hell yes. Don't forget to click "submit."

**MERCI BEAUCOUP!** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **THANK YOU!!!**

- Request the book at your local library and school library to make sure they have it!  
Ask a teacher to teach it.
- Email or text 10 friends and tell them about the book - send them this PDF to get them started or a link to the book.
- Share BADASS on social: bookstagram, impressions, pictures of Virginia Hall - anything goes! Use the hashtag #codenamebadass and be sure to tag me so I see it, too!

Insta: [@heatherdemetrios](#)

Twitter: [@HDemetrios](#)

- Buy the book for a badass in your life.

# 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 Gralley, 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

# 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](http://HeatherDemetrios.com)

