

# the ways we hide

BY KRISTINA McMORRIS

## book club guide











Dear Reader,

I'm beyond thrilled to present you with my latest novel! But first, I'd love to share how the story came about. One day, seeking inspiration for a new book, I delved into my old collection of interesting photos and articles. Among the latter, "How Monopoly Helped Win World War II" by Mary Pilon described how game boards had been used to smuggle escape aids to Allied POWs. Reportedly, should the game ever need to re-up its wartime role, the British government kept this tactic classified under the Official Secrets Act for many decades thereafter.

Intrigued, I dove into a search on the topic and soon learned about Christopher Clayton Hutton (a.k.a. "Clutty"), the man responsible for tricking out Monopoly games and designing countless other escape-and-evasion "toys" for M19. (I'd venture to guess I wasn't alone in my surprise—despite it being perfectly logical—that many numbered sections of British intelligence exist beyond the widely famed M15 and M16.)

As I continued to read, my interest further piqued over Charles Fraser-Smith, who it is said—together with Hutton—inspired the gadget-supplying character known as "Q" in the James Bond film series. Equally fascinating was a description of a professional magician who used his unique skills to not only craft such devices as map-rigged playing cards, but also to lead the Camouflage Experimental Section in Cairo.

When I glanced back at my file of historical snippets, the Monopoly tale suddenly paired in my mind with a photo that had haunted me for years. I realized then: the image, documenting a heart-wrenching tragedy in Michigan's Copper Country, could provide the driving backstory for a fictional illusionist with M19. Like watching a movie at double speed, I envisioned a rush of scenes from what would ultimately become *The Ways We Hide*.

Author Kristin Harmel has generously described the novel as "*The Queen's Gambit* meets *The Alice Network*," a depiction I absolutely love. Given the story's combined elements of a shrewd female protagonist, of hardships and friendships encountered at an orphanage, and of high-stakes adventures through wartime spy work, I'm delighted to agree. At the novel's heart, however, is also a coming-of-age story full of love, loss, family, and redemption. With that being said, I truly hope you enjoy reading the novel as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Warm wishes,

Kristina





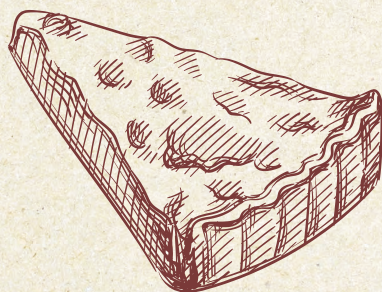
## RECIPES FROM FENNA

### Boterkoek

A favorite childhood dessert of Fenna's, this classic Dutch "butter cake" resembles a cross between a dense cake and a shortbread cookie, pairing perfectly with coffee or tea.

- 2 sticks salted butter, room temperature
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon almond extract (or 1 teaspoon vanilla with optional zest from one lemon)
- 2 cups flour
- 1 egg yolk, beaten, for brushing the top
- sliced almonds (optional)

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Grease a 9-inch round cake or pie pan and set aside. In the bowl of a stand mixer, blend the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg and almond extract. Beat well. Mix in the flour until well incorporated. Press the dough evenly (with wet hands if helpful) into the cake pan. Brush the top with the beaten egg yolk. Layer with sliced almonds if desired. Bake until the top and edges are lightly golden brown (20 to 25 minutes; to prevent dryness, do not overbake). Cool completely to help set, then slice into narrow wedges and enjoy!





### Hutspot

*Hutspot*, loosely translated as *mash pot*, is a popular Dutch winter dish also enjoyed year-round. Served annually at a festival on October 3 to commemorate the Dutch victory in the Siege of Leiden, *hutspot* bears an orange tint, the Dutch national color and a nod to the royal House of Orange, symbolizing the nation's freedom from oppression.

- 2 pounds starchy potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1½ pounds carrots, cut into large pieces
- 1 pound white onions, thinly sliced
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ cup hot milk
- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- salt and pepper

Combine the prepared vegetables and bay leaves in a large pot. Cover with water and bring to a boil. Add a lid and cook over medium heat for 25 minutes. Drain and remove the bay leaves. Dry the rest on paper towels, then transfer to a large bowl and mash well. Mix in the milk, butter, and nutmeg. Salt and pepper to taste. Serve alone or with meat, such as smoked sausage and mustard, smoked bacon, or meatballs.





### Kaas-Uien Brood (Cheese-Onion Bread)

Adapted from TheDutchTable.com

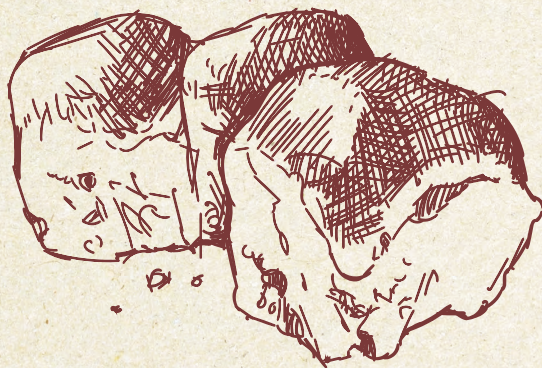
This traditional bread, which can be found at almost any bakery in Holland, is gooey and delicious and, with its inclusion of Gouda cheese, reminiscent of Fenna's European adventure.

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup warm milk
- ½ tablespoon active dry yeast
- Pinch of salt
- 1 medium sweet onion
- 2 cups grated Gouda or cheddar cheese

Place the flour in a large bowl. Add the warm milk and yeast. Knead quickly into a slightly sticky dough, then knead in the salt. Cover and set aside to rise until it doubles in size. Meanwhile, peel the onion, cut in half, then thinly slice.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Shape the dough into a log, cover, and let rise again until approximately 2/3 of its former size. Use a rolling pin to flatten the dough to about ½-inch high and place on the baking sheet.

Spread the onion slices over the bread and cover with the grated cheese. Set aside. Let the dough rise one last time until nice and puffy, then place in the oven and bake until the cheese is melted and gains a nice golden hue, approximately 20 minutes. Remove the bread from the baking sheet and let rest for five minutes before cutting into squares.



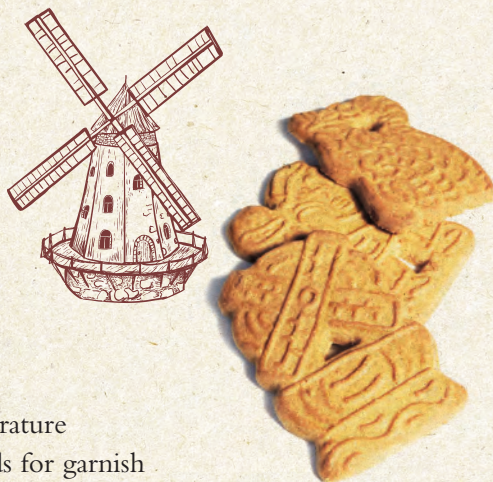


### Speculaas (Windmill Cookies)

Adapted from TheSpruceEats.com

This traditional Sinterklaas treat can be enjoyed year-round, though it is especially perfect on a cold winter's day served with coffee, tea, or a glass of brandy.

- 1¾ cups self-rising flour
- ½ cup raw cane sugar
- 7 tablespoons unsalted butter, more for the cookie sheets
- 2–3 tablespoons milk
- 1 tablespoon finely grated orange zest
- 3 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 large egg white, room temperature
- Brown sugar and sliced almonds for garnish



In a large bowl, use your hands or a stand mixer (fitted with the paddle attachment) to combine the self-rising flour, raw cane sugar, butter, milk, orange zest, pumpkin pie spice, and baking soda. The dough is ready when you can shape it into a ball without it sticking to your hands. Cover the ball with plastic wrap and set aside at room temperature for an hour.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease one or more baking sheets, or line with parchment paper. On a lightly floured work surface, roll the dough to ¼-inch thick. Using a windmill-shaped cookie cutter or speculaasplank, cut the dough and place the shapes on the prepared baking sheet(s). Brush the cookies with the egg white and sprinkle brown sugar and flaked almonds on top.

Bake 10 to 25 minutes, depending on the size and thickness of the cookies, or until the almonds are caramelizing and the cookies are turning a slightly darker shade of brown. Remove from the oven and allow to cool a few minutes on the pan(s), then transfer to a rack to cool completely.



### Warme Chocolademelk (Classic Dutch Hot Chocolate)

Adapted from TheSpruceEats.com (Karin Engelbrecht)

Dutch process cocoa, or “cocoa powder,” was invented in 1828 by Coenradd Johannes van Houten using a press that separated the fat from roasted cacao beans, allowing the caked cocoa to be powdered. In the process now called “Dutching,” he treated the powder with alkaline and produced Dutch chocolate with a dark color and mild flavor. The cocoa butter that was separated during the process could then be added back in, along with sugar and other ingredients, to make solid chocolate bars, chips, and other shapes.

This invention transformed hot chocolate from a spendy luxury to something nearly everyone could afford to make and enjoy at home. Today, the Dutch are still a major force in the chocolate world, with a 25 percent share of the cocoa powder and cocoa butter export business!

- 1/3 cup dark chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon Dutch process cocoa powder
- 1¼ cups whole milk
- 1 shot brandy or rum to taste (optional)
- Granulated sugar or sweetener to taste, optional
- Whipped cream (vanilla-flavored optional)
- Ground cinnamon and/or cocoa powder for dusting



Combine the chocolate chips, cocoa, and ¼ cup of the milk in a small saucepan over medium heat. Allow the chocolate to melt into the milk while stirring with a wooden spoon. Add the remaining milk and whisk lightly until well mixed and foamy. Add the brandy or rum if desired. Pour into small cups, top generously with whipped cream, dust with cinnamon and/or cocoa powder, and serve.



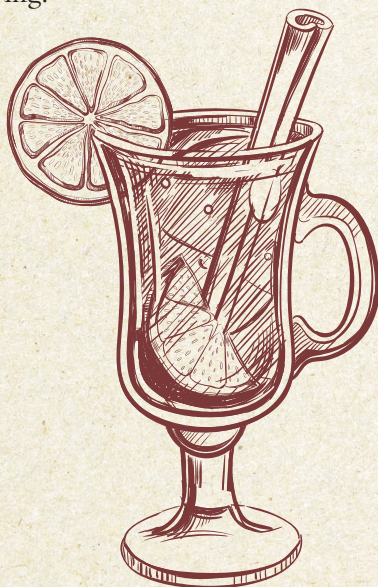
### Bisschopswijn (Dutch Mulled Wine)

Adapted from Else's recipe on [allrecipes.com](https://www.allrecipes.com)

Bisschopswijn, literally meaning “bishop’s wine,” is the Dutch version of mulled wine, a special hot drink ideal for sipping with friends.

- 1 (750 ml) bottle red wine
- ½ cup white sugar
- 3 cinnamon sticks
- 1 orange
- 8 whole cloves

In a large saucepan on medium-low heat, combine the wine, sugar, and cinnamon. Cut the orange in half, push the cloves into the outside of the orange halves, and place them in the wine. Heat slowly on low heat for about 30 minutes or until steaming; do not let it boil. Heat your glasses in warm water before removing the orange halves, pouring the wine into the glasses, and serving.



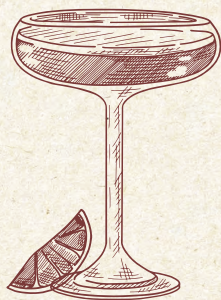


### Genever Sour

By 1880, thanks to exports of genever to the large population of Dutch immigrants in the U.S., about one in four cocktails mixed in America included the gin-like liquor, a favorite of Fenna's papa.

- 2 ounces genever
- $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce honey syrup (2 parts honey dissolved in 1 part hot water)
- $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce lemon juice
- Lemon peel, for garnish

In a cocktail shaker filled with ice, combine all ingredients. Shake well and strain into a glass. Garnish with a lemon peel.



### Invisible Ink & Reagent

Fenna's recipe list would be incomplete without this special one—not to be eaten, of course, but used for secret messages.

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup rubbing alcohol
- 1 teaspoon turmeric



In a small bowl, thoroughly mix the water and baking soda to create the invisible ink. With a small paintbrush or cotton swab, write a note with the solution on a piece of white paper. Allow to dry, typically 15 minutes. In a cup, create the reagent by combining the rubbing alcohol and turmeric. (Apron recommended, as the solution can stain.) Atop layered newspapers to prevent discoloration of the surface beneath, paint over the sheet of white paper with the reagent and watch your message boldly and magically appear.



## READING GROUP GUIDE

1. Did your impression of the child on the cover change by the novel's end? What about the title? Describe the various meanings it holds throughout the story.
2. From the Italian Hall Disaster and its parallel tragedy at Bethnal Green Station to the efforts of MI9, Houdini, and the Dutch Resistance, plus those of the Engelandvaarders, *The Ways We Hide* highlights myriad stunning pieces of history. Which among them fascinated and/or surprised you most?
3. Love, loss, family, and sacrifice are major themes of the novel and the driving force behind many of Fenna's and Arie's actions. Did you largely agree or disagree with Fenna's decisions? What about Arie's?
4. Several objects throughout the story—including the toy train, buttons, and, most frequently, a ball of string—help forge lasting bonds between characters. Which item was your favorite? Likewise, which possessions in your own life carry deep sentimental value given their link to a person or relationship?
5. Were you familiar with MI9 prior to reading this book? Which gadgets did you enjoy learning about most?
6. From Fenna's childhood, the stampede on Christmas Eve contributed significantly to shaping her life, even decades later. What childhood experience(s) most altered your own life? Were there resulting obstacles you later learned to overcome?



## IMAGES FROM FENNA'S JOURNEY

Although Fenna Vos is a fictional character, many elements of her story were inspired by actual events, locations, people, and more. These chronological images from her life offer a visual glimpse of the many ups and downs of her journey.



**Miners in Calumet and Hecla Mine shaft No. 2  
in Calumet, Houghton County, Michigan.**

*Detroit Publishing Co. Collection, Library of Congress*





**Inside the Italian Hall the morning after  
the 1913 Christmas Eve tragedy.**

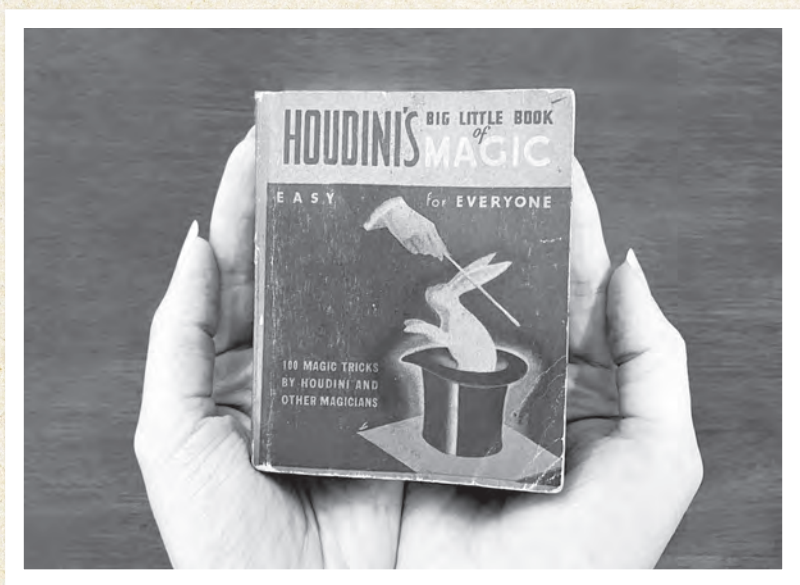
*Michigan Tech University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections*



**Thousands line the road at a funeral procession for victims  
of the Italian Hall Disaster in Calumet, Michigan.**

*Michigan Tech University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections*





**An original pocket-size edition of  
*Houdini's Big Little Book of Magic.***



**In 1908, Houdini prepares for his famed Milk Can  
Escape, which later inspires many escapologists  
(like Fenna and Charles) to attempt the same.**

*Photograph by Bill Orcutt, courtesy of HoudiniRevealed.com*





**On the Wilton Park estate, the mansion dubbed the “White House” served briefly as MI9 headquarters, then continued to host its highly classified work throughout the war.**



**The George Hotel on Wycombe End in Beaconsfield often boarded military visitors of nearby Wilton Park.**

*© The Francis Frith Collection*





**Christopher Clayton Hutton with his flying boots and other gadgets.**

*Courtesy of P. M. Froom Collection*



**A reproduction of a typical MI9 “map deck” card used for smuggling to escapers and evaders during WWII.**

*Courtesy of Zachary Womack*





**Memorial in London featuring names of the victims of the Bethnal Green Tube Disaster.**

© Stairway to Heaven Memorial Trust, London, 2018



**Londoners take shelter at Aldwych Tube Station during an air raid in 1940.**



## the ways we hide book club guide



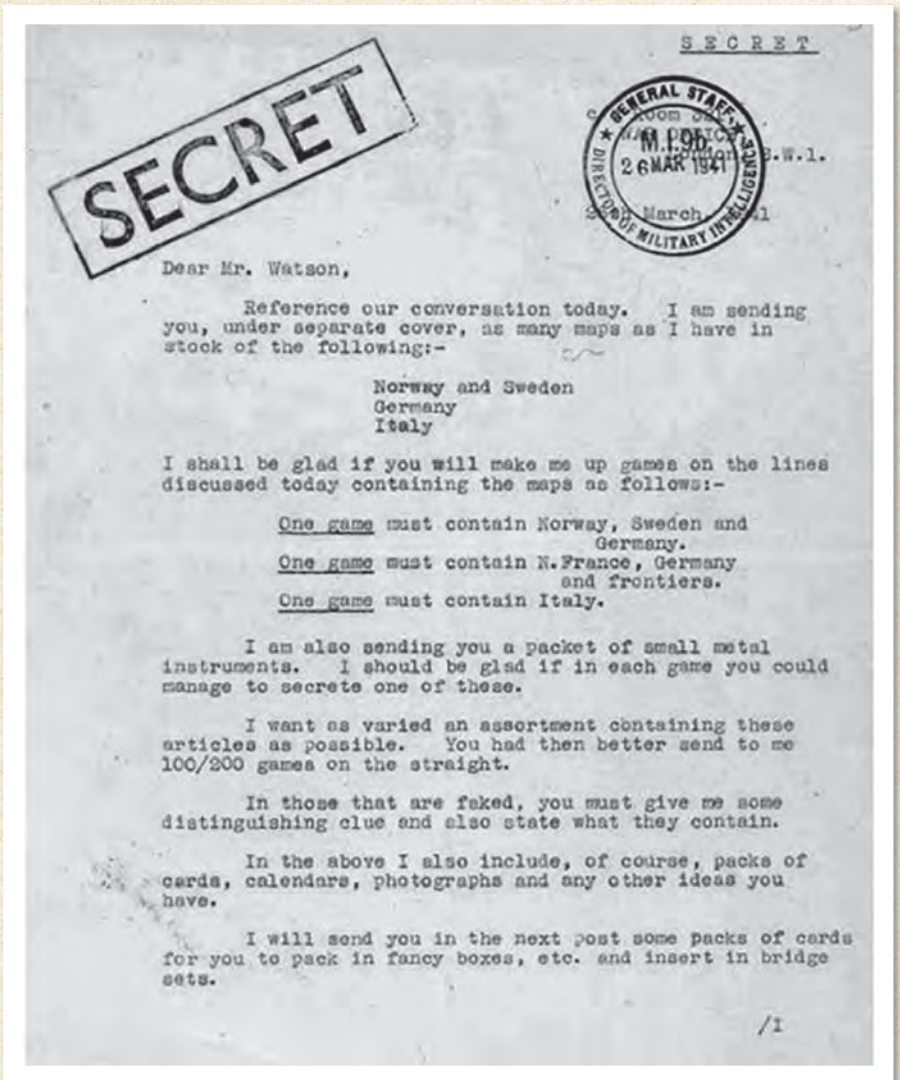
A WWII-era British Monopoly board with cardboard tokens (due to wartime supplies) and Reichsmarks, an example of currency often smuggled into POW camps by MI9.



A WWII Allied military-issue silk map of Western Europe.



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A memo sent by Christopher Hutton to Norman Watson at John Waddington Ltd., ordering Monopoly games that covertly include maps and other escape aids.





**Barns, tractors, and even grazing cattle helped disguise RAF Tempsford, the secret WWII airfield used routinely for night-drop missions, as a farm to overflying enemy aircraft.**



**At the airfield that paraded as Gibraltar Farm, the barn in which agents were issued their kits and gear prior to their flights now serves as a memorial to honor their bravery.**

*© Adrian S. Pye, CC BY-SA 2.0*





**Domtoren (Dom Tower) and a tram viewed from Zadelstraat, the oldest paved shopping street in Utrecht.**

*Utrechts Archief, CC0*



**Oudegracht (“old canal”), the central canal that runs through Utrecht.**

*Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, CC BY-SA 4.0*





**Engelandvaarders who escaped German-occupied Netherlands are rescued by RAF High Speed Rescue launch 185 on February 24, 1944.**

*Film shot by Captain A.J. Hardy of the 8th USAAF Bomber Command, CC BY 2.5*



**Liberated Dutch citizens wave to passing Allied aircraft in 1945.**

*Nationaal Archief*



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR BOOK CLUB GROUPS

### PLAYLIST:

Listen to the official *The Ways We Hide* playlist during your meeting.



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### RECOMMENDED READS:

“Inside Monopoly’s Secret War Against the Third Reich” by Christian Donlan



“How Monopoly Helped Win World War II” by Mary Pilon (Deadspin)



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### RECOMMENDED VIDEOS:

This video about the Italian Hall Disaster will give readers insight into Fenna’s childhood and the tragic moment that defined the rest of her life.



Watching Harry Houdini’s legendary straight jacket escape will give you an idea of how Fenna’s illusions operated.





### RECOMMENDED VIDEOS:

These KCRW Santa Monica radio broadcasts from World War II are fascinating and offer some incredible information on how the war was being communicated to Americans.



If you're looking for more information on what the Netherlands looked like during WWII, look no further than this documentary.



The Bethnal Green Tube Disaster triggers tragic memories for Fenna in *The Ways We Hide*. This documentary does a thorough job of explaining what happened.



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## GROUP ACTIVITIES FOR BOOK CLUB GROUPS

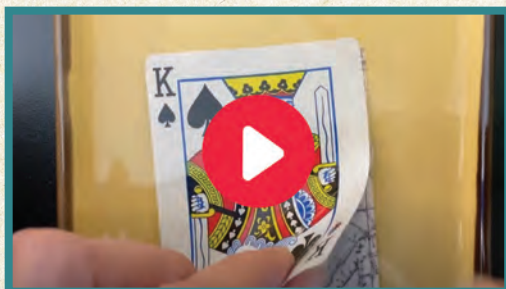
- Serve or gift *speculaas* (Spiced Dutch Cookies) in a decorative Delft tin.
- Take turns attempting various magic tricks from *Houdini's Big Little Book of Magic*.
- Distribute favors of spy pens with homemade invisible ink!
- Organize a WWII resistance network, beginning with secret code names.



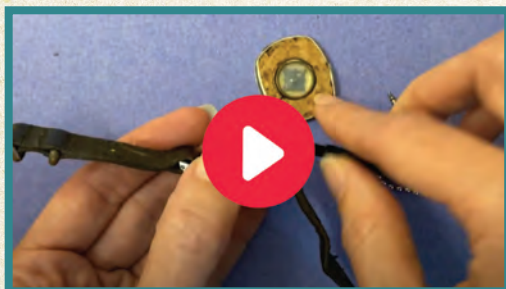
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- Watch videos that demonstrate how the MI9 gadgets from the book operate:

**Playing Card:** This replica from a typical MI9 “map deck” provided Allied POWs during WWII with far more than a leisurely pastime.



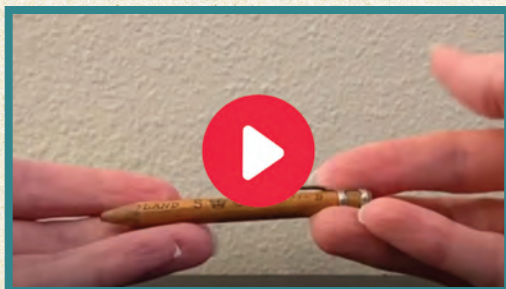
**Watch:** Designed by MI9, this seemingly ordinary wristwatch was assigned to RAF airmen during WWII—for a very clever reason.



**Razor:** For Allied POWs and downed airmen in German-occupied territory, these WWII shaving kits could literally be lifesavers.



**Pencil:** This RAF pencil clip, designed by MI9, served as a discreet escape-and-evade device during WWII.





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



© Holland Studios

Kristina McMorris is a *New York Times* bestselling author of two novellas and six novels, including the runaway bestseller *Sold on a Monday*. Initially inspired by her grandparents' World War II courtship letters, her works of fiction have garnered more than twenty national literary awards. Prior to her writing career, she owned a wedding-and-event planning company until she had far surpassed her limit of "Y.M.C.A." and chicken dances. She also worked as a weekly TV-show host for Warner

Bros. and an ABC affiliate, beginning at age nine with an Emmy Award-winning program. A graduate of Pepperdine University, she lives near Portland, Oregon, where she somehow manages to be fully deficient of a green thumb and not own a single umbrella.

You can keep up with Kristina's latest happenings by following her on social media or by subscribing to her newsletter:

[Kristinamcmorris.com](http://Kristinamcmorris.com)

 @KrisMcMorris

 /KristinaMcMorrisAuthor







“Just like her heroine, Kristina McMorris works magic in this twisting tale of James Bond’s Q meets World War II. I love this book!”

—**KATE QUINN**, *New York Times* bestselling  
author of *The Rose Code* and *The Diamond Eye*



## **The sweeping tale of a World War II**

### **illusionist inspired by stunning true accounts**

As a little girl raised amid the hardships of Michigan’s Copper Country, Fenna Vos learned to focus on her own survival. That ability sustains her even now as the Second World War rages in faraway countries. Though she performs onstage as the assistant to an unruly escape artist, behind the curtain, she’s the mastermind of their act. Ultimately, controlling her surroundings and eluding traps of every kind helps her keep a lingering trauma at bay.

Yet for all her planning, Fenna doesn’t foresee being called upon by British military intelligence. Tasked with designing escape aids to thwart the Germans, MI9 seeks those with specialized skills for a war nearing its breaking point. Fenna reluctantly joins the unconventional team as an inventor. But when a test of her loyalty draws her deep into the fray, she discovers no mission is more treacherous than escaping one’s past.

“*The Queen’s Gambit* meets *The Alice Network* in this epic, action-packed novel of family, love and loss, and one woman’s journey to save all she holds dear.”

—**KRISTIN HARMEL**, *New York Times* bestselling  
author of *The Forest of Vanishing Stars*

