

# True Story of Love, Spies, and the Unlikely Heroine Who Outwitted America's Enemies

In the tumultuous years of the American Civil War, when the nation was torn apart and loyalties were tested, one woman emerged as an unlikely heroine. Elizabeth Van Lew, a wealthy and well-educated Southern belle, risked her life and fortune to spy for the Confederacy. Operating a spy ring in Union-occupied Richmond, she outwitted America's enemies and provided invaluable intelligence to her Confederate superiors.



## The Woman Who Smashed Codes: A True Story of Love, Spies, and the Unlikely Heroine Who Outwitted America's Enemies

by Jason Fagone

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 3801 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 464 pages



Van Lew was born into a prominent Richmond family in 1818. Her father was a wealthy merchant, and her mother was a devout Christian. Van Lew received a privileged education, and she was known for her intelligence and independent spirit. In her early twenties, she traveled to Europe, where she met and fell in love with a young Polish count. The two were engaged

to be married, but the count's family disapproved of the union, and the engagement was broken.

Heartbroken, Van Lew returned to Richmond and devoted herself to her work. She became a teacher and an active member of the city's social scene. She also became increasingly involved in politics, and she was a vocal supporter of the Confederacy. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Van Lew was determined to do her part to help the Southern cause.

Van Lew began by gathering intelligence on Union troop movements and fortifications. She used her social connections to gain access to information, and she often disguised herself as a washerwoman or a peddler to avoid detection. She also established a network of informants, who provided her with valuable information about Union activities.

In 1863, Van Lew was arrested by Union authorities and accused of spying. She was imprisoned for several months, but she was eventually released due to lack of evidence. Undeterred, she continued to spy for the Confederacy, and she even established a new spy ring after her release.

Van Lew's spy ring was one of the most effective in the Confederacy. She provided her superiors with valuable intelligence about Union troop movements, fortifications, and plans. She also helped to smuggle supplies to Confederate prisoners of war. Van Lew's work was instrumental in helping the Confederacy to prolong the war, and she is credited with saving countless lives.

After the war, Van Lew returned to Richmond and continued to work for the cause of reconciliation. She helped to establish a school for freed slaves,

and she worked to improve the lives of the city's poor. Van Lew died in 1900, and she is buried in Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery.

Elizabeth Van Lew was a remarkable woman who risked her life and fortune to fight for what she believed in. She was a true heroine who deserves to be remembered for her courage, her intelligence, and her unwavering dedication to her country.

## Legacy

Elizabeth Van Lew's legacy is one of courage, intelligence, and dedication. She was a true heroine who risked her life and fortune to fight for what she believed in. Her work helped to prolong the Civil War, and she is credited with saving countless lives.

Van Lew's story has inspired countless others, and she continues to be a role model for women and men around the world. She is a reminder that even the smallest of us can make a difference in the world.

## Further Reading

- Elizabeth Van Lew: A Southern Heroine in the Civil War
- The Confederate Spy Who Outsmarted the Union
- Elizabeth Van Lew



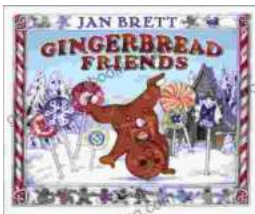
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