

Graphic Library is published by Capstone Press,
151 Good Counsel Drive, P.O. Box 669, Mankato, Minnesota 56002.
www.capstonepress.com

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Printed in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 11 10 09 08 07 06

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Robbins, Trina.

Hedy Lamarr and a secret communication system / by Trina Robbins; illustrated by Cynthia Martin and Anne Timmons.

p. cm.—(Graphic library. Inventions and discovery)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7368-6479-4 (hardcover)

ISBN-10: 0-7368-6479-2 (hardcover)

ISBN-13: 978-0-7368-7514-1 (softcover pbk.)

ISBN-10: 0-7368-7514-X (softcover pbk.)

1. Spread spectrum communications—Juvenile literature. 2. Lamarr, Hedy, 1915— Juvenile literature. 3. Motion picture actors and actresses—United States—Biography—Juvenile literature. I. Martin, Cynthia. II. Timmons, Anne. III. Title. IV. Series.

TK5103.45.R63 2007

621.384092—dc22

2006004104

Summary: In graphic novel format, tells the story of how Hollywood star Hedy Lamarr came up with the idea for a secret communication system, which would much later become the basis for wireless technology.

Designer
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Tom Adamson

Capstone Press thanks Hedy's son, Anthony Loder, for his kind help in preparing this book.

Editor's note: Direct quotations from primary sources are indicated by a yellow background.

Direct quotations appear on the following pages:

Page 12, quoted in "Popping Questions at Hedy Lamarr" by Helen Hover (*Motion Picture*, March 1945).

Pages 20, 25, 27, quoted in an e-mail message from Anthony Loder to the author (May 2005).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

PRISONER OF THE NAZIS 4

Chapter 2

FLIGHT TO FREEDOM 8

Chapter 3

A SECRET COMMUNICATION SYSTEM 16

Chapter 4

RECOGNITION AT LAST 24

MORE ABOUT HEDY LAMARR
AND HER INVENTION 28

GLOSSARY 30

INTERNET SITES 30

READ MORE 31

BIBLIOGRAPHY 31

INDEX 32

Chapter 1 PRISONER OF THE NAZIS

By 1937, Adolph Hitler, the leader of Germany and the Nazi Party, had a plan to take over all of Europe. But he needed more weapons. He attended a dinner party in Vienna, Austria, at the mansion of Fritz Mandl, a weapons manufacturer.

We are working on ways to control torpedoes by radio.

Does that work, Herr Mandl?

Herr Mandl should point out that the enemy can make the torpedo miss its target by blocking the radio signals.

I hate the Nazis. They are so cruel. I wish I could do something about it.

Herr Mandl's wife is very beautiful.

Don't you know? She is the film star Hedy Keisler.

Pardon me, Frau Mandl. I am a great fan of—

Excuse me, there's something I need to check on.

After the party . . .

Hedy, you must be nicer to the Nazis.

Why? Why be nice to such cruel people?

I am making a fortune selling weapons to them. When they have conquered all of Europe, they will make us even richer.

Mandl was already wealthy. He and Hedy had many servants and every luxury.

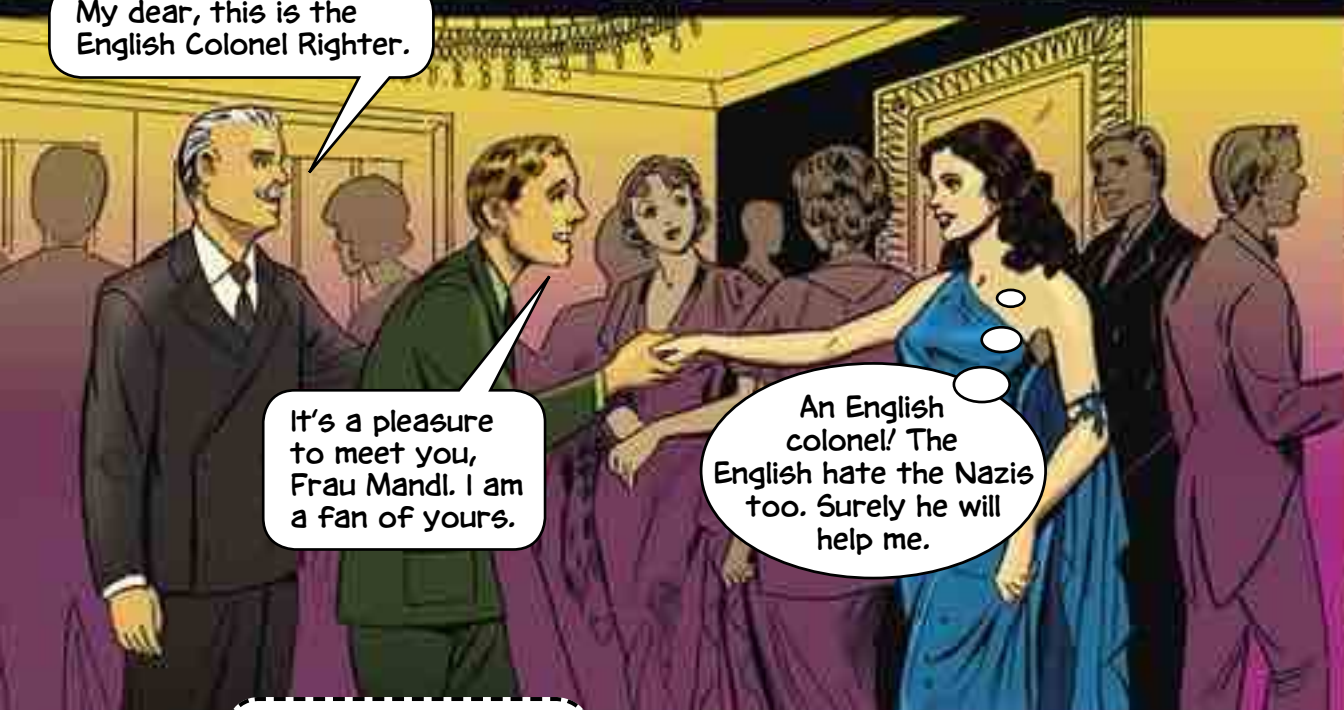
You see, Hedy, we need to keep impressing the Nazis.

Hmph. Guards watch me constantly. I have every luxury except freedom.



Now the guard is following me! I can't stand this life any longer. I must escape.

That night, Mandl had another dinner party.



My dear, this is the English Colonel Righter.

It's a pleasure to meet you, Frau Mandl. I am a fan of yours.

An English colonel! The English hate the Nazis too. Surely he will help me.

Colonel, now that Fritz is busy, I must ask for your help. Can you help me escape from Vienna? I am a prisoner in my own home.

Yes, I can help you.

Later . . .



Hedy dear, I have a new recording for you to hear. You like a good waltz, don't you?

Can you help me escape from Vienna? I am a prisoner in my own home.

Yes, I can help you.



Didn't you know that I hide a phonograph recorder in every room? My friend the Colonel won't help you. And I will have to increase your guard.

I can't count on anybody to help me escape. I must do it myself.

Chapter 2 FLIGHT TO FREEDOM

A few days later, Hedy came up with a plan. She began by hiring a new maid.

You're hired, Laura. You can start tomorrow.

Laura is perfect! The same size as me, with the same hair color.

Laura, you work too hard. Come join me for a coffee break.

Thank you, Frau Mandl.

Although Hedy seldom talked to other servants, she made friends with Laura.

Three sleeping pills should do the trick.


She should sleep for a few hours, enough time for me to escape.

If I can get to the train quickly, I can make it.

I'm safe!

One ticket for the next train, please.


Hedy had crossed the border into Switzerland. From there, she went to London and began acting in plays.

A woman in a yellow dress stands on the deck of a ship, looking towards a man in a suit who is walking towards her.

Later in 1937, Hedy sailed to America to explore more acting opportunities.

Excuse me, Miss Keisler? I'm Louis B. Mayer, head of MGM film studios in Hollywood. Can we talk?

You're from a movie studio? Of course!


A man in a suit sits at a table in a restaurant, talking to a woman in a yellow dress.

I've seen your films, and I think you're a great actress. I'd like to offer you a contract to star in American movies.

I'd love to star in American movies!


But we'll have to give you a new name that is easier for Americans to pronounce. From now on, your name is Hedy Lamarr.

Lamarr. I like it.

A collage of images showing Hedy Lamarr in various roles and settings, including a film set, a magazine cover, and a portrait.

Hedy Lamarr became a glamorous American movie star. Her face appeared everywhere.

While she enjoyed being famous and acting in movies, Hedy also became worried about the war in Europe.

A woman in a red dress sits at a table, reading a newspaper. The newspaper headline reads "GERMANS MARCH INTO PARIS JUNE 14, 1940".

All of Europe is at war against the Nazis now. America will surely enter the fight. How can I help defeat the Nazis?

At a Hollywood party, Hedy met a man who would change her life.

Hedy, this is the composer George Antheil. They call him "The Bad Boy of Music."

Why is that, George?

Because my music is not traditional. It's a bit offbeat.

You're also a writer. I read your article that says America will soon go to war in Europe. You're right that American involvement is inevitable.

What a surprise that such a glamorous woman is also so intelligent.

People seem to think that because I have a pretty face I'm stupid. I have to work twice as hard as anyone else to convince people I have a brain in my head.

Can you play piano?

Of course.

As they played, Hedy noticed something.

He keeps changing the key, and then I have to change the key to keep up with him. He's making it into a game!

This gives me an idea.

George, I have an idea that will help America. Can you help me work it out?

Sure, Hedy. But we can't talk in the middle of a noisy party. Come to my house tomorrow morning.

The next morning, Hedy visited George.

Now tell me how I can help you.

Playing piano with you last night gave me an idea. We can keep radio-controlled torpedoes from being sent off course by the enemy.

How do you know about torpedoes?

My first husband made torpedoes to sell to the Nazis.

Fritz didn't know that I listened to everything he and the Nazis said.

They said that with radio-controlled torpedoes, the enemy could tune in to the sender's frequency and block the signals.

And you have an idea to prevent enemy interference?

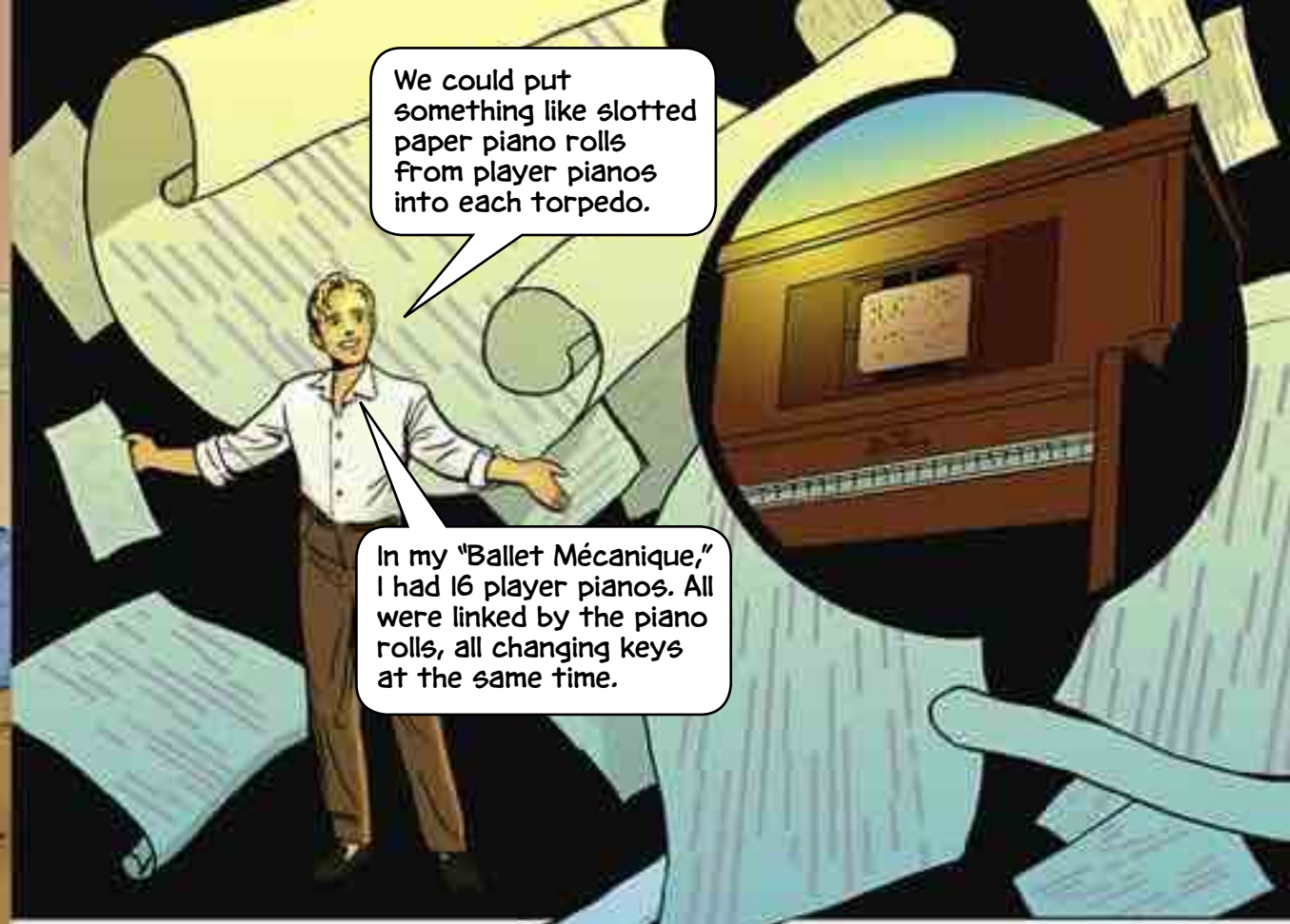
Yes, and I got the idea while we were playing the piano.

Chapter 3 A SECRET COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Hedy and George went to work right away.

What if we could keep changing the radio frequency that guides the torpedoes, just like you kept changing keys at the piano? Or the way we change radio stations?

We need a device that will allow the transmitter and the receiver to stay on the same frequency, even when it changes quickly.



We could put something like slotted paper piano rolls from player pianos into each torpedo.

In my "Ballet Mécanique," I had 16 player pianos. All were linked by the piano rolls, all changing keys at the same time.



Could a device like that fit into a torpedo?

Yes. I think your idea will work, Hedy.