

EXAMPLE LONG NONFICTION STORY BASED ON RESEARCH

Prompt: Write a biographic story about a real person who surprised the people around her or him. Show the challenges that this person faced and how those challenges were overcome. Make sure that the story contains at least eight paragraphs and all the elements of a story. Provide at least three references in a reference list and in-text citations where needed. Use the MLA style.

TITLE OF THE STORY: More than a Pretty Face

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More Than a Pretty Face

Hedy Lamarr was known as the most beautiful woman in the world for much of her adult life. To begin her story, she was born Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler in Vienna, Austria-Hungary in 1914 (“Hedy Lamarr” 1). Her father was a Jewish bank director, and her mother was a pianist who had converted from the Jewish faith to Catholicism. Her mother raised Hedy as a Christian. Because of her mother’s influence, her training was in the theatre. Her first job was as a script girl in the film industry. As she began working this job, she wished that she could become an actress and star in films. Not surprisingly, her beauty paved the way for her until she was able to star in many films.

In fact, when Hedy Lamarr was 18 years old in 1933, she starred in a film that made her famous (“Hedy Lamarr biography,” 1). As a result of being tricked by the director and the producer of the film, she appeared in close-ups and nude scenes in the film *Ecstasy*. Without her permission or knowledge, they used strong telephoto lenses to film her in various scenes. Excitingly, the film won an award in Rome, Italy. It also won acclaim throughout Europe as a work of art. In contrast, people in America, such as women’s groups, complained about the film. They said that it was immoral and inappropriate because of her scant state of dress.

Nevertheless, Lamarr continued to act in films and on the stage. She earned praise from the critics and had many admirers. Not surprisingly, men tried to visit her in her

dressing room and showered her with gifts and flowers. They became obsessed with her beauty. One of these men, Friedrich Mandl, a very wealthy businessman who manufactured weapons, visited her often (“Hedy Lamarr” 1). He soon charmed Lamarr into becoming his fiancé. In contrast, her parents were not charmed by him because he was involved with Mussolini and Hitler. Because of their heritage as Jews, Lamarr’s parents feared that marriage to Mandl would be dangerous for Lamarr. In the end, however, Lamarr ignored her parents. She married Mandl when she was 18 years old, and he was 33 years old.

As predicted by her parents, Lamarr’s marriage to Mandl was not a happy one. Unfortunately, Mandl did not want Lamarr to continue with her acting career. Based on the scenes he saw in *Ecstasy*, he did not want her body to be shown on the silver screen, and he was jealous of other men in the film industry. As a result, Lamarr felt like she was a prisoner in their home. She looked for ways to get out and learn about new things. Thus, when Mandl traveled to various places and conferences to learn about military technology, Lamarr went with him. She learned about military technology from the scientists attending the conferences. In fact, she studied all the information that was available to her on these trips. She became very knowledgeable about and skilled with technology.

During this time and because Mussolini and Hitler were often guests at parties in her home, she also became familiar with them and their plans to conquer Europe and kill the Jews. Naturally, these plans frightened her. She worried that these men would kill her Jewish family members and friends. Meanwhile, she became more and more frustrated and upset about her husband’s controlling ways. She began to understand that she would never be able to be an actress while she was married to Mandl. In her autobiography, she wrote about her husband, “He was an absolute monarch in his marriage... I was like a doll. I was

like a thing, some object of art which had to be guarded – and imprisoned – having no mind, no life of its own” (“Hedy Lamarr” 1). As a consequence of her worries about Hitler and her unhappiness, Lamarr eventually decided to run away from her marriage and her country. According to rumors, she dressed as a maid and left Austria with her jewelry.

In 1937, Lamarr arrived in Europe. In London, she met Louis B. Mayer who was a film producer and attracted to her beauty (“Most beautiful, “ 1). He had founded the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studio (MGM) in 1924 in America. He immediately recognized that Lamarr had great potential as an actress. He talked Lamarr into changing her name, helped her travel to America, and started calling her “The Most Beautiful Woman in the World” in ads (“Hedy Lamarr” 1). He helped her to make the transition to living in America and speaking English. Because of her intelligence, Lamarr made this transition very easily and successfully. Her first film in America was *Algiers* opposite Charles Boyer, a famous actor. After that, she appeared in many more films with other major actors including Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy, Bob Hope, and Robert Young.

Sadly, over time, Hedy Lamarr became lonely and bored with her life as an actress. Because of her celebrity, she did not go out in public because she would be mobbed by people who recognized her. Everyone wanted her autograph and to talk with her, but she did not understand why. She had stayed at home out of the public limelight, so she felt that no one knew her. Meanwhile, her film roles were very simple. She basically was told to look beautiful, and she was given very few lines. In short, her job just was not very challenging. She had very little to do or to think about.

As a result of her boredom, Hedy Lamarr decided to do something more with her life: she became an inventor. In her spare time, she started inventing new things. One of her

early inventions was a traffic stoplight. Another was a pill that a person could put into a glass of water to create a carbonated drink. Around this time, she met Howard Hughes, who was one of the richest men in the world. He was trying to make planes fly faster. When he learned that she understood military technology, he asked her for ideas. After studying the wings of birds and the shapes of fish, she showed him some ideas for changing the shape of the wings on planes, and they became partners in working on new designs.

Meanwhile, World War II was raging in Europe, and Hedy Lamarr decided that she did not feel good about earning a lot of money as an actress and not contributing to the war effort. People asked her to use her celebrity to sell war bonds to finance the war effort, which she did, but she did not feel that was the kind of contribution she was capable of making. Pretty soon, she started to study torpedos and how they were controlled by radio signals. She learned that torpedo signals could be jammed and sent off course. She did not want U.S. torpedoes to be sent off course; she wanted them to destroy their targets. Naturally, she knew that with her technical knowledge, she would be able to create a radio signal that could not be tracked or jammed. Because of her connections in the film industry, she knew a man named George Antheil who was a pianist and composer. She asked him to work with her to create the sounds for the special radio signal. They worked together to create a radio signal that involved a miniaturized player piano mechanism.

Unfortunately, although Lamarr and Antheil patented their invention, the U.S. Navy was not interested in using anything invented by anyone outside the military. Nevertheless, their special radio signal eventually became well known. In fact, it was later used on U.S. Naval ships in 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis (“Hedy Lamarr” 1). As it has evolved, their work has become part of Bluetooth technology and is similar to the methods used in

WiFi today. Thus, Hedy was a real pioneer in developing new technology that is currently being applied in many ways.

All in all, Hedy Lamarr certainly lived a full and productive life. Personally, she was married six times, and she had three children. Artistically, she made many well-known films. For example, during the years 1940 to 1949, she made 18 films (“Hedy Lamarr” 1). Scientifically, she invented some very useful technology for the U.S. military and the world. Her contributions were noticed by several organizations, and she received several awards before and after her death in 2000 (“Hedy Lamarr” 1). For instance, she has a star in the Hollywood Walk of Fame, and she was inducted in the National Inventors Hall of Fame. She earned the Electronic Frontier Foundation Pioneer Award and the Bulbie Gnass Spirit of Achievement Bronze Award. In other words, Hedy contributed to the world in more ways than one. She learned that the world would allow her to contribute the products of her thinking as well as her beauty. She was definitely more than a pretty face!

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