

# Number the Stars Chapter 1 Summary

## Why Are You Running?

- When the book begins, Annemarie and her BFF, Ellen, are on their way home from school in Copenhagen.
- They decide to run a race. Now that's some old school fun.
- Annemarie's little sister, Kirsti, is with them. The two older girls race ahead, but their run is cut short when they encounter two soldiers.
- Turns out the soldiers are Germans—Nazis. Annemarie's thoughts reveal to us, as readers, that the Germans have occupied Denmark for three years at this point.
- Quick pause for a history lesson: the Germans occupied Denmark in 1940, so that means it's now 1943. (And you thought math was useless.)
- The soldiers have a bunch of questions for the girls, and Annemarie tries to take the lead. She and Ellen are scared, but little Kirsti doesn't seem to be.
- Luckily, the soldiers think Kirsti is cute and so let the three girls continue on their way, telling them that they shouldn't race. (Whew.)
- Turns out these soldiers are all over Denmark.
- At home, Annemarie and Ellen say goodbye to each other while Kirsti heads inside. The two girls decide that they'll keep their little encounter with the soldiers a secret. But when Annemarie goes into her apartment, she realizes that Kirsti has already spilled the beans. Ah, little sisters.
- Ellen's mom and Annemarie's mom are both inside, and they're both really worried. The mothers talk about recent activity by Resistance workers in the area.
- And that's our cue for another history snack. Resistance was a movement of Jews and non-Jews alike to, well, resist the Nazis. They were particularly successful in Denmark during the first few years of German occupation.
- Back to the story. Before leaving, Ellen's mom tells Annemarie that they have to be extra careful. Spooky.
- Annemarie and Kirsti's mom tells them they can have a snack, but their choices are limited because of the occupation by the soldiers. They don't have butter, sugar, or coffee. Boo.

# Number the Stars Chapter 2 Summary

## Who is the Man Who Rides Past?

- It's bedtime and Kirsti's having a hard time falling asleep so she asks Annemarie to "[t]ell [her] a fairy tale" (2.1). Awesome big sister that she is, Annemarie makes up a story about a princess living in a time without war. Sounds pretty nice.
- When Kirsti finally catches some zzz's, Annemarie starts thinking about the real-life royalty in their country: King Christian.
- More history, comin' at ya: **King Christian X** was the real king of Denmark, and he was majorly in support of the Jews in his country.
- Annemarie remembers seeing the king out and about when she was young. Nothing wrong with a celebrity sighting, but the memory makes her think about her big sister, Lise, who died.
- Annemarie thinks about a story that her father told three years ago.
- In the story, a German soldier interrogated a little boy about the way in which King Christian moved freely around the city. The little boy responded that "All of Denmark is his bodyguard" (2.21).
- The whole thing made Annemarie feel patriotic, and she talked with her parents about why King Christian allowed the German army to occupy Denmark. During this conversation, her sister was still alive, and their mother was in the process of making a trousseau for Lise. (P.S. That's the outfit a woman is given to wear after her wedding. Trousseaus used to be a big deal.)
- At that point, three years ago, the German army had successfully taken over countries that didn't resist, like Denmark, and even countries that did, like Norway. Annemarie's family talked about how one country, Sweden, remained outside of German control.
- And that's the end of Annemarie's memory.
- The situation in Europe now is pretty much the same as it was then. As her dad said, "Sweden is still free" (2.39).
- But in the meantime, Annemarie's sister has died. The family doesn't talk about her much, but Annemarie misses her like crazy.
- Her family still keeps in touch with Peter, Lise's fiancé (the guy she was going to marry before she died). Poor guy has become very serious since Lise died.
- Still lying in bed, Annemarie thinks about how much the Germans have changed everything around her. She tells the end of the princess story, even though Kirsti has fallen asleep.

## Number the Stars Chapter 3 Summary

### Where is Mrs. Hirsch?

- A couple weeks go by and fall arrives. You know what that means: it starts getting colder.
- The Danes (i.e., people from Denmark) have to make do with very few resources. They're limited in how much fuel they can burn, and they can't turn on regular lights in the evening. (Think about that next time the power goes out!)
- Annemarie and Kirsti are getting ready to go to school, and Annemarie gets all nostalgic with her mom about the sleeping arrangements they used to have.
- Their mother sees that one of Kirsti's coat buttons has busted, so she tells Annemarie to go to the button store later that day and get a new one. (Ever been to a button store? Shmoop sure hasn't.)
- So when classes are finished, Annemarie, Ellen, and Kirsti head to the button store, which is run by Mrs. Hirsch. But they can't get in—the store's closed. Bummer.
- As they head home, the girls try to figure out what has happened. The Hirsches are nice people.
- Kirsti thinks they must have just taken a vacation, but Annemarie and Ellen know better.
- When Annemarie tells her mother what happened, Mama gets really upset and leaves to find Ellen's mother.
- That night, Annemarie's mom gets her out of bed because Peter has come to visit them. Technically, Peter's visit is against the law—people are supposed to stay at home at that time of night. These rules are starting to sound pretty strange.
- Peter brought them all presents (seashells and beers) and more importantly, some news: the Germans are starting to treat Jewish people pretty badly. They're the ones who decreed that stores like the Hirsches' should be shut down.
- Annemarie hadn't even realized the Hirsches were Jewish. And she sure doesn't understand why the Germans are punishing them. But her mom says that the Hirsches' friends will step up to help.
- That's when Annemarie asks about her best friend Ellen's family, and her father tells her that they'll have to be very careful.
- Annemarie thinks of the bodyguard story her father told her and says that the Danes have to protect the Jews just like they would protect the king. Brave girl.
- When Peter takes off, Annemarie tries to go back to sleep. But all she can think about is how the Danes will be required to protect all the Jews, not just the king.
- It's a pretty scary thing to think about.