

1992

Lowry, Lois. *Number the Stars*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989.

SUMMARY:

In 1943, the third year of the Nazi occupation of Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen and her best friend, Ellen Rosen, who is Jewish, are stopped by soldiers on their way home from school. When the girls' mothers find this out, they are very alarmed. Then shops owned by Jews are suddenly closed by the Nazis and the proprietors disappear. The Johansens realize that they must help their Jewish friends find a way out of Denmark. Annemarie learns that her parents, her uncle Henrik, and others are part of the Resistance movement. They are helping Danish Jews escape across the sea to Sweden. Annemarie herself becomes involved when she must pretend that Ellen is her sister, and then she must deliver an essential package to Uncle Henrik, who is using his fishing boat to smuggle Jews to safety.

QUESTIONS:

How did you feel when the soldiers stop Annemarie and Ellen for running?
Why does Mrs. Rosen say that it is always important to be part of a crowd?
How does life change for the Danish people after the Nazi occupation?
Where does courage come from?
What does the Star of David represent? Why does Annemarie yank it off of Ellen's neck and hide it when the Nazi officers are searching the Johansen apartment?
Why do you think Annemarie thinks of *Little Red Riding Hood* as she is running through the woods?
If you have a friend in danger, how would you be able to help?

JOURNAL STARTER:

I think that King Christian X did (or did not) do the right thing by allowing the Nazis to be in Denmark. . .

ACTIVITIES:

Create a graphic novel based on this story.
Research the Danish Resistance. How did its members help save the lives of Denmark's Jews?
Draw a map of Scandinavia and label the countries, cities, and bodies of water mentioned.
Research places in Denmark, such as Amalienborg Palace, Kronborg Castle, and Tivoli Gardens.
Watch a movie version of *The Diary of Anne Frank*.
Read the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen.

INTEREST LEVELS: Grades 4-8

BOOKTALK:

It's 1943, and German forces have occupied Denmark for three years. The world of ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen and her best friend Ellen Rosen has changed completely from one of being carefree school girls to one in which they see Nazi soldiers on each corner. It's a time of shortages of food, clothing, heat, electricity, things that can easily be taken for granted. Now the Nazis are planning to arrest all the Jewish people in Denmark, and suddenly Ellen and her parents are in grave danger for they are Jewish. The Johansen family becomes part of a plan to help the Rosens flee Denmark, but it is up to Annemarie to secure the safety of their escape, and to do so she must survive a late night trip through a dangerous forest, four armed soldiers, and two large dogs eager to attack.

READ-ALIKES:

Benchley, Nathaniel. *Bright Candles: A Novel of the Danish Resistance*. Harper & Row, 1974.
Drucker, Malka. *Jacob's Rescue*. Bantam Skylark, 1993.
Frank, Anne. *Diary of a Young Girl*. Pan., 1976.
Levine, Ellen. *Darkness over Denmark*. Holiday House, 2000.
Matas, Carol. *Lisa's War*. C. Scribner's Sons, 1987.
Schnur, Steven. *The Shadow Children*. Morrow Junior Books, 1994.
Vos, Ida. *The Key is Lost*. HarperCollins, 2000.
Williams, Laura E. *Behind the Bedroom Wall*. Milkweed Editions, 1996.

RELATED WEB SITES:

Lois Lowry Author: www.loislowry.com
IPL KidSpace: www.ipl.org/div/askauthor/Lowry.html
Book Club Lesson Plan: www.planetbookclub.com/kids/archive/stars.99/starsintro.html
Carol Hurst's Children's Literature: <http://www.carolhurst.com/titles/numberthestars.html>
Glencoe Literature Library:
http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/pdf/number_the_stars.pdf
The History Behind the Story: http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/CITE/ns_history.html
SparkNotes: www.sparknotes.com/lit/numberthestars

OTHER RECOGNITION:

Newbery Medal, 1990
Winner of a Children's Choice Award in each of the following states:
Arkansas, 1992; Maine, 1991; New Hampshire, 1992; New York, 1992; Vermont, 1991;
Wisconsin, 1990.