

**Lois Lowry's**  
*Number the Stars:*  
**A Discussion Guide**

**David Bruce**

**Dedicated with Respect to Abby Jacobs**

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## Preface

The purpose of this book is educational. I enjoy reading Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*, and I believe that it is an excellent book for children (and for middle-aged adults such as myself) to read.

This book contains many questions about Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars* and their answers. I hope that teachers of children will find it useful as a guide for discussions. It can also be used for short writing assignments. The questions in this little guide refer to writing, but students can answer selected questions from this little guide orally or in one or more paragraphs.

I hope to encourage teachers to teach Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*, and I hope to lessen the time needed for teachers to prepare to teach this book.

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## Chapter 1: Why Are You Running?

- **Write a short character analysis of Annemarie Johansen.**

Annemarie is a typical pre-teen. Her school has races every Friday, and she wants to do well, so she races against her best friend, Ellen, whom she beats. When she races, she leaves her younger sister, Kirsti, behind her.

Annemarie is described as being lanky. She is Danish. She has silvery-blond hair.

She is resentful of the German soldiers. For one thing, the German soldiers have been in Denmark for three years, yet they cannot speak Danish well. Annemarie is intelligent enough to know that when the German soldiers question her, she ought not to volunteer additional information to them. Instead, she should simply answer their questions, and say nothing more.

Annemarie does not want her mother to worry, so she does not want to tell her about the German soldiers, but Kirsti tells her mother about the soldiers.

Annemarie knows that Kirsti exaggerates.

Annemarie is 10 years old, as we find out later, on page 26.

- **Write a short character analysis of Kirsti Johansen.**

Kirsti is Annemarie's younger sister. She is too young to keep up when Annemarie races Ellen.

Kirsti can be stubborn. She can put her hands on her hips and be angry.

Kirsti is too young to be afraid of the German soldiers. When one German soldier touches her curls, she brushes his hand away and tells him, "Don't."

Kirsti is too young to think that she ought not to tell her mother about the German soldiers — to protect her (the way Annemarie wanted to).

Kirsti exaggerates a little. She tells her mother that she hit and yelled at the soldier.

Kirsti has a good memory for a little girl. She can remember yellow cupcakes with pink frosting.

Kirsti cannot remember a time when there were no German soldiers standing on every corner.

• **Write a short character analysis of Ellen Rosen.**

We will find out that Ellen is Jewish and therefore in danger.

Ellen is dark haired, which makes her stand out in Norway, where so many people are blonde. Ellen has dark pigtails in Chapter 1.

Ellen is a stocky 10-year-old girl who cannot beat the lanky Annemarie in a race.

Like Annemarie, Ellen is afraid of the German soldiers.

• **Write a short character analysis of the two Nazi soldiers.**

Lois Lowry makes the German soldiers the bad guys, but they are not cardboard-character bad guys. The tall soldier with the long neck (known as the giraffe) has a pretty little girl like Kirsti. In my opinion, good writers will at least usually not portray everything in black and good. Even a bad guy such as a Nazi can have a good point about him. (In the “Afterword,” Ms. Lowry will write about a good high-ranking German official.)

The two Nazi soldiers, of course, are bad guys. They are in a country that is not their own. The Danish people do not



want the Nazi soldiers in their country, and they have formed a Resistance movement in opposition to the Nazi soldiers.

The Nazi soldiers are suspicious. Two 10-year-old girls (Ellen is 10, so Annemarie is probably 10) are running, so they stop them and ask why they are running. Two young girls running would not arouse suspicions in a time of peace.

The Nazis have been in Denmark for three years, but these Nazi soldiers do not speak Danish well.

The Nazis can be insulting. A soldier asks Annemarie if she is a good student, and he seems to sneer as he asks her.

**• Write a short character analysis of Annemarie's mother and Ellen's mother.**

They are typical mothers who love their children and worry about them.

Clearly, they are friends. Their families live in the same large apartment building, and they visit to have "coffee." Of course, there is no real coffee or real tea for civilians, but they call their hot water flavored with herbs coffee.

Annemarie's mother reads an underground newspaper titled *The Free Danes*.

Both mothers want their children not to be noticed by the German soldiers.

**• What advice does Mrs. Rosen give the girls? Is it good advice?**

Mrs. Rosen tells the girls to walk a different way to school the next day. German soldiers are on every corner, but she knows that these two particular German soldiers who saw the two girls running will remember their faces.

Mrs. Rosen tells the girls, “It is important to be one of the crowd, always. Be one of many. Be sure that they never have reason to remember your face” (8-9).

This is good advice, and Ellen, who is dark haired in a nation of light-haired people, will have difficulty doing it.

### • What is the Resistance?

In Chapter 1, Lois Lowry gives important background information about the Danish Resistance.

We read:

The Resistance fighters were Danish people — no one knew who, because they were very secret — who were determined to bring harm to the Nazis however they could. They damaged the German trucks and cars, and bombed their factories. They were very brave. Sometimes they were caught and killed. (8)

One of the things the Resistance does is to publish an underground newspaper titled *De Frie Danske* (*The Free Danes*).

### • What do we learn about Peter Neilsen in Chapter 1?

Peter Neilsen brings copies of *The Free Danes* to Annemarie’s mother and father. After reading their copies, they burn them.

Peter Neilsen will be an important character later. In Chapter 1, we get this hint that he may be involved in the Resistance.

### • What is the time and setting of the novel?

The novel is set in Denmark in 1943. We know because Annemarie lets us know that the German soldiers have been in Denmark three years. German soldiers occupied Denmark in 1940. Lois Lowry chose the year 1943 because that is when almost all Danish Jews were taken to safety in Sweden. In

May of 1945, the German forces in Denmark realized that Germany had lost the war; they surrendered to British forces.

• **What is the effect of the war on the Danish families?**

Bad.

Things that we take for granted such as coffee, tea, sugar, and butter are now unavailable luxuries.

The good things in Denmark are now going to German soldiers.

Denmark declared itself neutral, yet German soldiers occupy it.

The Danish citizens live in fear.

## Chapter 2: Who Is The Man Who Rides Past?

### • What important historical and geographic background information does Lois Lowry give in Chapter 2?

Sweden is free still, and it is very close to Denmark. We know Sweden is close to Denmark because Annemarie remembers looking across the water and being told that she was looking at another country: Sweden.

We know that the Nazis have invaded many countries. In Norway, the Norse fought back, but despite having mountains to hide in, they were crushed by the Nazis. The Nazis are also in Holland, Belgium, and France. But Sweden is still free.

We know that Denmark did not fight back because their king, Christian X, knew that many of his people would die if they fought back and that his country would be conquered anyway.

We know that the Danes support their king. Christian X rides his horse every day without a bodyguard. The Nazis are so ignorant that they don't know who the king is when he rides. They are also astonished that he doesn't have a bodyguard, but a Danish boy tells them, "All of Denmark is his bodyguard" (14).

### • Lois Lowry does not simply state important historical and geographic background information. How does she give it?

She makes it part of the story.

A lot is learned from a conversation that the family has among themselves.

In addition, Annemarie herself sees how close Sweden is to Denmark.

**• If you feel like doing research, write about King Christian X of Denmark.**

King Christian X of Denmark stayed in Denmark rather than fleeing to a safer haven. This is something that endeared him to his people, just as the British royal family declined to move the princesses, including future queen Elizabeth, out of London during the time that German bombers were attacking the city day after day. King Christian X really did take a daily ride on horseback each day — without a guard to accompany him. King Christian X lived to see Nazi Germany defeated; he died in 1947.

The king sent a letter of sympathy to Rabbi Marcus Melchior in December of 1941 after someone deliberately set fire to the Copenhagen synagogue.

**• If you feel like doing research, write about Hans Christian Andersen of Denmark.**

Hans Christian Andersen (April 2, 1805-August 4, 1875) is a Dane who is most famous for his fairy tales. In addition, he wrote poems and novels and travel books. He loved literature and plays, and he used puppets to act roles in plays, including plays by William Shakespeare. His fairy tales include “The Ugly Duckling,” “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” “Thumbelina,” and “The Princess and the Pea.”

**• What do we find out about Lise Johansen and Peter Neilsen?**

Lise died only two weeks before she was to marry Peter.

Peter used to be fun loving, but now he is much more serious.

The Johansen family no longer talks about Lise. Annemarie thinks about her, but her parents don’t mention her.

Lise had hopes for the future. She had a hope chest, which contained the wedding dress she never wore.

Lise was tall and beautiful.

**• Describe the relationship between Annemarie and Kirsti.**

They have a good relationship although Annemarie will sometimes ignore her younger sister as in Chapter 1 when she races Ellen, leaving Kirsti behind.

In Chapter 2, Annemarie tells Kirsti a fairy tale (Hans Christian Anderson was Danish). The heroine is Princess Kirsten, and the tale features pink cupcakes. Just as Kirsti wanted, a king and a queen are in the fairy tale.

Obviously, Annemarie cares about Kirsti. She is aware of what Kirsti wants.

### Chapter 3: Where Is Mrs. Hirsch?

#### • How does wartime affect family life in Denmark?

Wartime is hard on the civilians in Denmark. For one thing, there is a lack of fuel, so the apartments are very cold in the winter. Annemarie and Kirsti are able to keep warm by sleeping in the same bed, but Ellen Rosen does not have a sister, so on very cold nights she sleeps in the same bed as her parents.

The old chimney in the Johansens' home has been opened up, and they have installed a stove to use when they can get coal.

Diets are limited. The evening meal for the Johansens consists mostly of potatoes — they have very little extra to go with the potatoes.

Peter is able to smuggle two beers to Annemarie's parents.

Rubber tires are now unavailable, so one Jewish boy has wooden wheels for his bicycle.

No one takes vacations at the seashore anymore (20) — at least not since the war began. Of course, no one has pink-frosted cupcakes anymore.

#### • What do we find out about the Hirsch family?

Mrs. Hirsch and her family are Jewish, and thereafter they are targets of the Nazis.

Mrs. Hirsch has a store in which she sells buttons and thread, but the Nazis have closed the store. When Annemarie goes there to buy a button to replace a broken button on Kirsti's jacket, the store is closed and the door is padlocked and a sign in German is on the door (the sign has a swastika on it).

Annemarie does not care for the Hirsches' son, Samuel, who rides the bicycle with the wooden wheels. Samuel is described as "a tall teenager with thick glasses, stooped shoulders, and unruly hair" (20).

• **How are the Nazis treating the Jews in Denmark?**

For a while, the Nazis left the Jews alone. Now, they are beginning to persecute the Jews. One way of tormenting the Jews is to close up their stores. This is the beginning of a planned much-worse persecution.

The Rosens are also Jewish, so Annemarie is also concerned about what will happen to them.

• **Write a short character analysis of Peter.**

We learn that Peter's work takes him all over, but we don't learn what his work is. Later, we will learn that Peter is in the Resistance.

Peter is kind. He brings Kirsti and Annemarie gifts: two seashells. So we learn that Peter's work — whatever it is — takes him to the seashore, at least sometimes.

Peter is kind. He takes Annemarie's parents gifts: two bottles of beer. No doubt at this time beer is a luxury.

Peter is knowledgeable. He knows what the Nazis are doing to persecute the Jews in Denmark, and he is aware that the Nazis have also persecuted the Jews in other countries.

• **Discuss the theme of courage and friendship in Chapter 3.**

Annemarie is worried about the Jewish families she knows.

Annemarie does believe that friends will help take care of the Hirsch family. Her mother tells Annemarie, "Friends will take care of them. [...] That's what friends do" (24).



Annemarie thinks, “Friends and neighbors would go to the home of the Hirsch family, would take them fish and potatoes and bread and herbs for making tea. Maybe Peter would even take them a beer. They would be comfortable until their shop was allowed to open again” (24).

Annemarie also thinks, now that the Jews are in danger, “all of Denmark must be bodyguards for the Jews, as well” as bodyguards for King Christian X (25).

Annemarie does wonder if she would be brave if she had to be. Lying in bed, she remembers that when she was seven years old, she had stated, as did her parents, that she would die to protect King Christian X.

Now Annemarie is older, and “Annemarie admitted to herself, snuggling there in the quiet dark [in bed], that she was glad to be an ordinary person who would never be called upon for courage” (26).

## Chapter 4: It Will Be a Long Night

• **In Chapter 4, the girls play with paper dolls representing characters from *Gone with the Wind*. Why might Lois Lowry have chosen to refer to that novel here?**

*Gone with the Wind* is set during wartime: the American Civil War.

One possible reason for Lois Lowry to chose that novel to refer to is that it shows that life during wartime is difficult.

• **How does wartime affect family life in Denmark?**

Family life does go on. Pushy younger sisters sometimes annoy older girls. In addition, children still play with paper dolls — even if they have to make their paper dolls out of newspaper.

Danger exists — especially for the Jews in World War II.

Leather is not available anymore, and so shoes are difficult to get. However, people are inventive, and someone invents a way to make shoes out of fish. Little Kirsti gets a pair of green shoes on which the fish scales are visible. The shoes are ugly, but they are shoes. We do see some problem-solving here. Kirsti at first will not wear the “*fish shoes*” (28), but she says “maybe” (29) she would if they were black. Ellen promises to take the shoes to her father, who has very black ink. Kirsti also wants the shoes to be shiny.

Things such as chickens are difficult to come by, but they can be had for important occasions — no doubt at a very high price. The Rosens are able to get a chicken for the Jewish New Year.

The Germans have invaded Denmark and destroyed some things, and the Danes themselves have destroyed some things to keep the Germans from using them.

The Germans are persecuting the Jews. The Germans really did get lists of the Jews from synagogues. This is made part of the plot in this novel.

**• What important background information does Lois Lowry give in Chapter 4?**

We find out that the Danes blew up their own small navy ship by ship to keep the Germans from taking the ships over and using them. This is an important act of Resistance by the Danes against the Germans. Annemarie thinks that King Christian X must have been very sad to see his navy blown up, but her father thinks that the king must have been proud of this act of Resistance.

We find out that the Tivoli Gardens have been partly destroyed by the Germans. No one goes to the Tivoli Gardens anymore.

**• What are the Tivoli Gardens and what has happened to them?**

The Tivoli Gardens is an amusement park in Copenhagen. The Nazis destroyed some of the buildings to hurt the Danes.

Although we don't read this in the novel, the Danes quickly built temporary buildings to replace the ones that were burned down, and the amusement park opened again very quickly.

The Tivoli Gardens amusement park still exists today.

**• Lois Lowry does not simply state important background information. How does she give it?**

Lois Lowry makes the historical background information part of the story. For example, the night that the Danish navy is blown up is Kirsti's fifth birthday. Kirsti is awakened by the noise, and her mother tells her that the explosions are

fireworks to celebrate her birthday: “Imagine, such fireworks for a little girl five years old!” (31).

Again, we learn about the Tivoli Gardens because Annemarie remembers her and her family going there. Ellen mentions the Tivoli Gardens while the three girls are playing with paper dolls.

• **How are the Nazis treating the Jews in Denmark?**

Very badly.

The Nazis get lists of Jews from the synagogues. The rabbis let the Jews know what has happened, and rumors are that the Nazis will come for the Jews that night.

This leads to a crisis, and so Ellen comes to stay with the Johansens and pretends to be their daughter. Her parents are elsewhere — safe — but Ellen does not know where they are.

Peter is taking care of Ellen’s parents. This is important news. We can guess that he is involved in the Resistance.

Note that Ellen is given limited knowledge. We will find out later that this is true of everyone in the Resistance. People have some knowledge, but no one knows everything. This way if a person in the Resistance is caught and tortured, even if he or she tells everything he or she knows, the information revealed will be limited. This is for the safety of all.

• **What information does Lois Lowry give the reader about the Nazi concentration camps? Why is that information limited?**

Note that Ms. Lowry does not tell everything. She tells the audience in this novel, through Mr. Johansen, where the Nazis will take the Jews: “We don’t know where, and we really don’t know why. They call it ‘relocation.’ We don’t even

know what that means. We only know that it is wrong, and it is dangerous, and we must help” (36).

Lois Lowry does a wise thing here. Her audience is very young, and likely they should not be overwhelmed with the evils of the Nazi death camps. In addition, chances are the Danes did not know how bad the death camps were until after the war. Of course, the Danes already had plenty of reason to protect their Jews. Why should the Jews not be allowed to run businesses and to stay in their own homes? Why should the Jews be persecuted?

## Chapter 5: Who Is The Dark-Haired One?

### • What do we learn about Lise Johansen in Chapter 5?

The major thing we learn is that Lise died young. She had a hope chest that contained many items that were important to her, including her wedding dress.

We also learn that as an infant she had dark hair. That is very important in Chapter 5. Her dark hair fell out, and then grew in again light.

Mr. Johansen was very angry when Lise died.

Later, we find out that Lise was a member of the Resistance and was killed by the Nazis.

### • How are the Nazis treating the Jews in Denmark?

Poorly. They want to take the Jews to death camps.

Ellen and her parents and the other Jews are in grave danger.

### • Write a short character analysis of the Nazis in Chapter 5.

They are different from the soldiers we saw in Chapter 1. Those soldiers were young, and the long-necked soldier the children call the Giraffe had let his tough-guy exterior drop for a moment as he talked about his young daughter.

These soldiers are older and not kind. They really want to capture the Jews and take them to concentration camps.

These soldiers are aware of tricks. They think that Ellen, because she is dark haired, is likely to be a Jew and not Annemarie's real sister. (Annemarie and Kirsti are both light haired.)

These soldiers are rude. They accuse Mrs. Johansen of having an affair with the milkman because one of her “daughters” is dark haired and the others are light haired.

The soldiers say that the Johansens will not mind if the soldiers look around their apartment. This is not a question. The soldiers mean to look around whether the Johansens mind or not.

One soldier tears Lise’s baby photograph in two, then grinds the pieces under his boot heel. He is a bully.

**• How do Mr. and Mrs. Johansen protect their family and guest?**

They do not have much power — or any — but they do a few things to protect their family and Ellen.

Mrs. Johansen repeatedly asks the soldiers to be quiet and not awaken the children. Of course, if the children do not wake up the soldiers are unlikely to get a good look at them.

Mr. Johansen tells the soldiers not to insult his wife (after a soldier had made a comment about the milkman); Mr. Johansen also threatens to report the soldiers — this is likely to be an empty threat.

The main thing Mr. Johansen does to protect Ellen is to tear out a baby photo of Lise from a family photo album. The photo shows that Lise was born with dark hair. This is quick thinking on Mr. Johansen’s part, and it does protect Ellen.

**• How does Annemarie protect Ellen?**

Ellen has a necklace with the Star of David on it. Annemarie tells Ellen to take off the necklace, but Ellen has so infrequently taken it off that she can’t remember how to take it off. Therefore, Annemarie grabs the necklace — a thin gold chain — and tears it off of Ellen’s neck, breaking the chain.

Annemarie has the necklace in her hand when the Nazi soldiers are present. She is grasping the necklace so tight that the Star of David is imprinted on her palm.

Annemarie will end up taking care of the necklace until Ellen is able to return to Denmark from Sweden.



## Chapter 6: Is the Weather Good for Fishing?

### • What new things do we learn about Ellen, Kirsti, Annemarie, and Annemarie's parents?

We learn that Annemarie's mother's name is Inge.

We learn that Ellen and her parents value education. (Ellen is worried about missing school, but of course her safety must come first.) Ellen says, "My parents have always told me that education is the most important thing. Whatever happens, I must get an education" (51).

We learn that both of Annemarie's parents and her uncle Henrik are in the Resistance. This makes sense. Family members are less likely to turn each other in.

Annemarie's mother is intelligent and caring and brave. She believes that a mother and her two children will be less likely to arouse suspicion on the train than a father, a mother, and two children. Therefore, she wants to visit her brother without her husband coming along.

The main thing we learn about Kirsti is that she is now proud of her brand-new shiny black shoes. Otherwise, she is the same Kirsti, wanting to hear stories of kings and queens, and naively talking to Nazi soldiers.

### • How are the Nazis treating the Jews in Denmark?

Very badly. They are trying to find the Jews so that they can send them to concentration camps.

The Nazis know that the Danes are hiding and helping the Jews, and many Nazis want to find the Jews.

**• What is the correct interpretation of the conversation in code?**

The conversation is odd, and Annemarie is intelligent enough to learn its true meaning.

“Is the weather good for fishing?” is an odd question, because Uncle Henrik fishes in every kind of weather. It is his livelihood.

Annemarie’s father also says that he is sending Inge and a carton of cigarettes to Henrik. However, no cigarettes are available in Denmark. The “carton of cigarettes” (53) is a reference to Ellen.

Annemarie’s father also says that many cigarettes are available in Copenhagen if you know where to look. In other words, many Jews are hidden away and need transportation to Sweden.

**• Write a character analysis of the two German soldiers on the train.**

They are inquisitive. They ask Inge (Mrs. Johansen) where she and her family are going.

At least one is tricky. He turns back to Mrs. Johansen to ask if she is visiting her brother for the New Year. The month is October, so the New Year the German soldier is referring to would be the Jewish New Year. Mrs. Johansen knows that, but she plays dumb and looks puzzled, saying that it is only October.

**• What important background geographic and historical information does Lois Lowry give in Chapter 6?**

The main geographical information that she gives is how close Sweden is to Denmark. Mrs. Johansen tells Annemarie

that she will be able to see Sweden from the meadow at Henrik's place (52).

The main historical information that Lowry gives is the way that the German soldiers are treating the Jews and searching for them.

**• Lois Lowry does not simply state important background geographic information. How does she give it?**

Lois Lowry dramatizes the information or has it come out in conversation between characters.

Conversation: The main geographical information that Lois Lowry gives is how close Sweden is to Denmark. Mrs. Johansen tells Annemarie that she will be able to see Sweden from the meadow at Henrik's place (52).

Dramatization: The main historical information that Lois Lowry gives is the way that the German soldiers are treating the Jews and searching for them. The scene on the train is dramatic. Annemarie is afraid that Kirsti will tell the German soldiers that the New Year of their friend Ellen is coming up. That, of course, would reveal to the German soldier that Ellen is a Jew.

**What is the aesthetic function of the deer and the dog in Chapter 6?**

The deer are hiding (54). This is similar to the Jews hiding from the Nazis in Denmark.

At the end of Chapter 6, Mrs. Johansen talks about a dog she had when she was young (58). The dog would walk along a path with her to school in the morning, and he would meet her when she returned from school in the afternoon. The dog would walk along the path in the woods, but would not go into the town. This dog she named "*Trofast* — Faithful" (58).

Similarly, the Danes are faithful to the Jews and are protecting them. Just like the dog does not go into town, the Danes will simply deliver the Jews to Sweden, then leave them there. This, of course, is all right. The Swedes will take care of the Jews.

Note that Mrs. Johansen's childhood is different from the childhood of the girls in the novel. Mrs. Johansen grew up in a time of peace.

• **Write a short character analysis of Henrik.**

What we learn about him is good. He is a fisherman. He has a boat, and he is useful in the Resistance because he can use his boat to take Jews to Sweden.

He gets along with his sister now, and he got along well with her when they were young. He would tease his sister and her best friend, Helena, and he would scare them by telling them ghost stories (57-58).

He lives at the homestead where he and his sister grew up. Apparently, he inherited the property.

## Chapter 7: The House By The Sea

### • Describe the location of the events of Chapter 7.

The location is very close to the water. Uncle Henrik is a fisherman, so he has a boat and he lives near the water. At his home, there are the house, meadows, and the sea.

This is still a dangerous area. Mrs. Johansen points out that there are soldiers here — the soldiers are everywhere throughout Denmark. Mrs. Johansen does not want An-nemarie and Ellen to talk to anyone — even friends of Uncle Henrik. It can be dangerous explaining who Ellen is.

The water is cold, but the water is cold even during the summer. Currently, the water is too cold even for wading.

### • What important background geographic information does Lois Lowry re-emphasize in Chapter 7?

Again, we hear that Sweden can be seen from Denmark. An-nemarie and Ellen look across the water and see Sweden, and they wonder if two girls their age are standing in Sweden, looking across the water and saying, “That’s Denmark!” (62).

Again, we learn this information in a dramatic scene. Lois Lowry finds a way to make it interesting, rather than simply telling us the information.

### • Denmark is pretty much surrounded by water. Why hasn’t Ellen been to the seashore?

Ellen’s mother is afraid of the sea, so Ellen and her family don’t visit the sea.

Ellen has been to the harbor in Copenhagen many times.

• **Does the kitten at the beginning of Chapter 7 play an aesthetic role in this novel?**

We read three things about the kitten:

- 1) The kitten comes out of nowhere.
- 2) The kitten pounces on imaginary mice.
- 3) The kitten looks back at Annemarie and Ellen once in a while — it is pleased to have playmates (60-61), it seems.

Some of what we read about the kitten is nonthreatening; some of what we read about the kitten is threatening (at least to mice).

Nazi soldiers can seem to come out of nowhere.

It can be difficult to tell who is threatening and who is non-threatening.

• **What kind of relationship do Mrs. Johansen and Henrik, her brother, have?**

They are close. Very often, Mrs. Johansen will tease her brother and say that he needs to be married and have a woman take care of him. Henrik will tease her back and say that she ought to live with him so she can do the chores.

Henrik does like his sister. He even named his boat after her: *Ingeborg*.

Usually, lots of laughing takes place when Henrik and his sister get together. However, this night there is no laughter. Serious business is afoot.

Mrs. Johansen is able to do chores. She finds apples for applesauce. (We were told earlier that overripe apples are on the trees.) That is the kind of chore that a wife could do for Uncle Henrik.

## Chapter 8: There Has Been a Death

- **Who was Thor, God of Thunder? In your opinion, why would Lois Lowry have Kirsti name a kitten Thor, God of Thunder?**

Thor is a mighty god; a kitten is a baby cat. This is a juxtaposition of two things that seem not to go together.

This is relevant to the story because Annemarie is a little girl who will be asked to show great courage soon.

- **Write a short character analysis of Uncle Henrik.**

Uncle Henrik is a bachelor. He does not clean very well, which is why his sister wants him to have a wife.

His sister looks at his house, and she tells Annemarie that her brother never dusts.

Mrs. Johansen cleans the house while Uncle Henrik is fishing. He comes home to a clean and polished house, and Mrs. Johansen has opened the double doors to the living room.

As usual, his sister tells him that he needs a wife, and teasing, he asks why he needs a wife when he has a sister.

Uncle Henrik does take care of his sister. He has a cow, and he has saved some of the cream and butter for his sister, Annemarie and Ellen. (Usually, the cream and butter go to the German soldiers.)

- **What is unusual about all the conversation concerning whether the weather is right for fishing?**

Once again, Henrik goes fishing no matter what the weather is (as long as a hurricane is not approaching, anyway).

Therefore, no conversations about the weather need to be held.

**• What do we learn about Great-aunt Birte in Chapter 8?**

Supposedly, Great-aunt Birte is very, very old, and she has died. Because she was so very old, her death is not a tragedy.

However, her death is unusual in that Annemarie has never heard about Great-aunt Birte before. And Annemarie knows a lot about her relatives, including which wife was such a scold that her husband moved into another house although the couple continued to eat the evening meal together.

Most importantly, Annemarie believes that no Great-aunt Birte ever existed. Annemarie comes to the conclusion that she is being lied to.



## Chapter 9: Why Are You Lying?

### • How does Annemarie figure out that people are lying to her?

Annemarie has never heard of a Great-aunt Birte before. In all the photographs of her family that she has seen, there has been no Great-aunt Birte.

That is why she tells her Uncle Henrik that she knows that he and her mother have been lying to her.

### • Why is Annemarie being lied to?

It is simply safer for Annemarie not to know much. In addition, not knowing much can make her braver.

Even Uncle Henrik and the others don't know everything. They know only what they need to know. That way, if the Nazis capture anyone, the person they capture will not endanger the entire Resistance movement.

### • Why doesn't Annemarie let Ellen know about the lies?

Annemarie knows that it is better and safer for Ellen not to know more than she needs to know. Ellen believes that Great-aunt Birte has died. She believes that Great-aunt Birte is in the coffin. If Nazi soldiers were to arrive and ask Ellen about the funeral, Ellen would be able to say with complete conviction that Great-aunt Birte died, and that this is her funeral. She would say that with complete conviction because she would believe it. (Of course, it is not her Great-aunt Birte who died, but Ellen believes that it is Annemarie's Great-aunt Birte who died.)

We read that Annemarie “knew that it was better, *safer*, for Ellen to believe in Great-aunt Birte” (79).

• **Discuss the theme of bravery in Chapter 9.**

If you don't know everything, you can be braver. When the Nazi soldiers accosted Annemarie in Chapter 1, she did not then know that the Nazis would try to round up the Jews in Denmark and take them to relocation camps. That made it easier for her to answer their questions.

Annemarie wonders about how brave she could be. Uncle Henrik thinks that she can be brave:

I think that you are like your mama, and like your papa, and like me. Frightened, but determined, and if the time came to be brave, I am quite sure you would be very, very brave. (76)

However, Uncle Henrik goes on to say that it is easier to be brave if you don't know everything.

• **What are the mourners of Great-aunt Birte like?**

They are quiet. At Lise's funeral, people were sad, but they talked quietly of happier times when Lise was alive.

Of course, at this funeral no one can talk of happier times when Great-aunt Birte was alive. They can't share happy memories of Great-aunt Birte. Why? Because there never was a Great-aunt Birte.

We will find out later that the mourners are actually Jews who will be taken to Sweden the following day.

The mourners are all ages. There is an infant and her mother. There is Ellen, and her parents also arrive at the end of Chapter 9. There is an old man who prays.

## Chapter 10: Let Us Open the Casket

### • What lie does Mrs. Johansen tell in Chapter 10? Why does she tell it?

The German soldiers arrive because they had noticed that an unusual number of people are gathered here in Henrik's house.

The German officer in charge knows the customs of the Danes, and he realizes that usually the casket would be open so that everyone could see Great-aunt Birte one last time.

When the German officer in charge wants to open the casket, Peter's hand moves to his side. Chances are, he has a gun hidden, and he is prepared to shoot it out with the German officers if necessary.

Mrs. Johansen, thinking quickly, says that Great-aunt Birte died of contagious typhus, and the doctor, who is an old man and only a country doctor, advised them to keep the casket shut in case the typhus were still present and still deadly.

### • Discuss the theme of bravery in Chapter 10.

Both Annemarie and Mrs. Johansen have to be brave in Chapter 10.

Annemarie has to lie to the German officers and tell them that Great-aunt Birte died. Of course, she knows that there is no Great-aunt Birte, and she realizes that it would be easier for her to lie if she did not know the truth.

Mrs. Johansen is able to stop the Nazis from opening the casket by lying and telling them that Great-aunt Birte died of contagious typhus.

And, of course, Peter has to be brave. What he is doing can get him killed.

**• Why does Lois Lowry choose this particular psalm to be read in Chapter 10?**

This is the psalm (the beginning of Psalm 147):

O praise the Lord.

How good it is to sing psalms to our God!

How pleasant to praise him!

The Lord is rebuilding Jerusalem;

he gathers in the scattered sons of Israel.

It is he who heals the broken in spirit

and binds up their wounds,

he who numbers the stars one by one ... (86-87)

This psalm is about the benevolence and the power of God (and presumably the wisdom of God since what God does takes wisdom). This brings up the problem of evil. If God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good, then why does evil exist? One possible answer is that free will accounts for moral evil and the necessity of having an environment that obeys fixed laws accounts for natural evil.

We have a reference to “The Lord is rebuilding Jerusalem”; of course, Israel was established as a homeland for the Jews after World War II.

We have a reference to “The Lord ... gathers in the scattered sons of Israel”; of course, the Danes (and Swedes) are doing God’s work by taking care of the Jews who lived in Denmark.

- **What does the phrase “number the stars” refer to?**

The psalm says that God “numbers the stars one by one”; this is a reference to the power of God.

The sea is vast and frightens Ellen’s mother. However, the sky (universe) is much vaster and frightens Annemarie.

This is where Lois Lowry got the title of the book. She will write a book without a title in mind. After the book is written, she will read the book. Often, while she is reading the book, she will run across a phrase that becomes the title of the book.

- **What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 10? Is the reader likely to keep on reading?**

This is an excellent ending for Chapter 10. Peter opens the lid of the casket.

The reader will keep on reading. There is no Great-aunt Birte, so the reader will wonder what is inside the casket.

## Chapter 11: Will We See You Again Soon, Peter?

### • What is inside the casket?

Clothing is inside the casket.

The clothing is for the Jews who will be taken across the water to Sweden. Norway and Sweden are both far North, it is not summer (the month is October), and warm clothing is needed for the Jews.

The clothing is not very good. Ellen's jacket is worn, patched, and has mismatched buttons. At this time, new clothes are hard to come by because of the war.

No jacket is available for the infant, but Mrs. Johansen gives the infant Kirsti's red sweater with heart-shaped buttons. (Kirsti loves that sweater.) The infant will survive and will one day be big enough to wear the sweater.

### • Who are the mourners?

The mourners are the Jews who will be taken across the water to Sweden.

### • What important task does Peter entrust to Mr. Rosen?

Peter gives Mr. Rosen a package, saying, "I want you to deliver this [to Henrik]. Without fail. It is of great importance" (91).

We find out later (at the end of the novel) that the package contains a handkerchief that has been treated with a substance that ruins dogs' sense of smell temporarily. (The dogs are used to smell out hiding Jews on Danish fishing boats.)

**• What precautions does the Resistance take to avoid discovery?**

One precaution is that infants are given a drug to make them sleep during the journey on boat to Sweden. The Resistance cannot risk having the Jews discovered because of a crying baby. (The mother says that the baby sleeps well, but it was crying earlier. Of course, the mother is worried about the baby and the drug that it is being given.)

Another precaution is that Peter does not tell Mr. Rosen what is in the package that is to be delivered to Henrik.

**• Compare and contrast the Rosens' past and present lives. What has and has not changed in their lives?**

The Rosens' present lives are not what they would want. They are going to a strange land. They are leaving behind their possessions and are relying on the kindness of strangers to help them.

They are wearing worn, ragged clothing to keep them warm.

Before, they had lives. Ellen was very good at the theatrical arts. Mr. Rosen was a teacher. Mrs. Rosen was able to have "coffee" with Mrs. Johansen, and she could celebrate the Sabbath.

What has not changed is that they still have straight (not stooped) shoulders.

At the end of Chapter 11, Annemarie is thinking to herself:

But their shoulders were as straight as they had been in the past: in the classroom, on the stage, at the Sabbath table. So there were other sources, too, of pride, and they had not left everything behind. (94)

## Chapter 12: Where Was Mama?

### • What is foreshadowing?

The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of *A Handbook to Literature* by C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon defines “foreshadowing” in this way: “The presentation of material in a work in such a way that later events are prepared for” (201).

Here are a couple of other definitions:

Foreshadowing is the use of hints or clues to suggest what will happen later in literature.

Source: [http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit\\_terms/foreshadowing.html](http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit_terms/foreshadowing.html)

Definition: A literary device used to hint at events that will follow later in the story, sometimes generating feelings of anxiety or suspense. Anton Chekhov once said that “if there is a gun hanging on the wall in the first act, it must fire in the last.” That remark captures the essence of foreshadowing.

Source: <http://contemporarylit.about.com/library/bldef-foreshadowing>

### • Which important event happens right at the beginning of Chapter 12? Why is it important? How was this event foreshadowed in Chapter 11? (To answer all of these questions, you will have to read beyond Chapter 12.)

There is a loose step, and Mr. Rosen trips over it. In Chapter 13, we will learn that when Mr. Rosen tripped, the important package that Peter gave him fell out of his pocket.

This event is important because the package contains a handkerchief that has been chemically treated so that it destroys dogs’ sense of smell temporarily, so that they cannot sniff out hiding Jews.



This event was foreshadowed in Chapter 11 because the old Jewish man also tripped.

• **What awakens Annemarie?**

The new dawn awakens Annemarie. The time is after 4 a.m., and her mother should have been home at 3:30 a.m. Annemarie is worried because she thinks that her mother would have awakened her when she returned home. She also thinks that it is possible that her mother went to bed without awakening her.

However, Annemarie looks outside and sees her mother on the ground, in trouble.

• **What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 12? Is the reader likely to keep on reading?**

This is another cliff hanger. Annemarie's mother is lying on the ground, and of course the reader will keep on reading to find out what happened to her.

### **Chapter 13: Run! As Fast As You Can!**

#### **• What has happened to Mrs. Johansen?**

Returning home after taking the Rosens to Henrik and his boat, she tripped over a root and broke her ankle. She has been forced to crawl home.

Some preparation (foreshadowing) for this event occurred in Chapter 12, where we read about the roots sticking out of the earth.

#### **• What errand and instructions does Mrs. Johansen give to Annemarie?**

Mrs. Johansen and Annemarie find out that the package that Peter gave to Mr. Rosen fell out of his pocket when he tripped on the loose step.

Mrs. Johansen wants Annemarie to take the package to Henrik. Mrs. Johansen cannot do it herself because of her broken ankle.

Mrs. Johansen tells Annemarie to get a basket, to put the package on the bottom of the basket, and to put cheese and an apple in the basket. (Annemarie adds bread.) Annemarie, if the Nazis stop her, is to pretend to be an empty-headed girl who is taking her absent-minded uncle the lunch that he has forgotten.

## Chapter 14: On the Dark Path

### • What does Annemarie think about during her journey along the dark path?

She thinks of how cold it is. Later, when the sun rises higher, it will be warm. However, right now it is cold, and she is wearing only a light sweater over a cotton dress, so she is shivering.

She also thinks of her sister, Kirsti, and of what Kirsti would think. For example, when hearing a noise on the path, Annemarie thinks that Kirsti would believe that the noise came from a wolf. Annemarie, however, knows that there are no wolves in these woods.

She also thinks of the story of Little Red Riding-Hood.

### • How does the story of Little Red Riding-Hood parallel Annemarie's story?

Both are carrying a basket of food.

Both are walking a path in the woods.

Both are in danger. Nazi soldiers will accost Annemarie. Little Red Riding-Hood will meet a wolf at the end of her journey.

### • What is your opinion of the ending of Chapter 14? Is the reader likely to keep on reading?

This is another cliff hanger. Annemarie hears a growling. It does not come from a wolf, but she runs into four Nazi soldiers and two growling dogs on leashes.

The reader will want to keep on reading to find out what happens next.

## Chapter 15: My Dogs Smell Meat!

### • What act does Annemarie put on in Chapter 15?

She does as her mother asked her, and she puts on an act of being a silly, empty-headed girl. She acts as Kirsti would act. Kirsti is too young to be afraid of the Nazi soldiers.

She tells the soldiers that she is taking her uncle's lunch to him because he forgot it.

When a soldier asks why her uncle is not eating meat, she tells him that Denmark has no meat — Denmark's meat now goes to feed German soldiers.

She cries at one point and tells the soldiers that now her uncle will be mad at her because the soldiers' dogs have eaten his bread.

### • Write a character analysis of the Nazi soldiers in Chapter 15.

They are rude and inquisitive.

One soldier breaks Annemarie's bread in half and feeds it to the two dogs.

The soldier sneers and does not think highly of women. He mocks Annemarie because her mother is sending Henrik a handkerchief.

These soldiers do not care to make friends with the natives of the country they are occupying.

The soldier lifts a napkin out of the lunch basket and finds the package underneath. The package, of course, is the handkerchief. The handkerchief appears to be innocent.

Note that the dogs lunge toward and sniff the handkerchief.

- **What important item is being sent to Uncle Henrik?**

A handkerchief. Uncle Henrik is relieved to see the package containing the handkerchief in the lunch basket that Annemarie brings him. (Of course, earlier Annemarie had no idea what was in the basket.)

The handkerchief has been chemically coated to temporarily destroy dogs' sense of smell so that they cannot sniff out hidden Jews.

## Chapter 16: I Will Tell You Just A Little

### • How are the Jews escaping from Denmark to Sweden?

The Jews are escaping in the boats of fishermen. At the bottom of Henrik's boat is a cramped hiding space where a few Jews can be hidden. When Annemarie arrived with the handkerchief, she looked around but did not see the Rosens. They were already hidden. The baby we saw earlier had been drugged to keep it quiet.

Peter is in the Resistance. He brings Jews to Henrik to ship across the sea to Sweden.

Often, Nazis search the ships, but they seldom find the hidden Jews. However, recently they have been using trained dogs that can sniff out human beings despite the smell of fish that is all around the fishing boats. Because of the dogs, the handkerchief is important. (See the next question.)

### • What is the importance of the handkerchief?

The handkerchief has been treated with chemicals to destroy dogs' sense of smell temporarily. When the Nazis and dogs arrive, the fisherman pulls out a handkerchief. The dogs sniff everything, including the handkerchief, and that way the dogs cannot find the hidden Jews.

### • Is it realistic for Annemarie to learn what she learns in Chapter 16?

This chapter makes aesthetic sense. The reader will want to know what has happened. However, it does not make realistic sense. It is dangerous for Annemarie to learn so much, although Henrik says that it is "just a little" (122). On the other hand, Annemarie showed a lot of courage, and she is a relative, so she can be trusted.

Annemarie really has shown courage. She was in danger from the Nazis — Uncle Henrik points out that she risked her life (122). Annemarie says that she didn't think about the danger, which is true. She was thinking about what had to be done. Of course, that is what a courageous person does.

Also, Annemarie is growing up.

**• Why might Lois Lowry have chosen to have the kitten fall into the milk at the end of Chapter 16?**

Annemarie has wondered if she will see Ellen again, and Henrik assures her that she will and that the war will end. In other words, there will be a happy ending. Similarly, the kitten's falling into the milk provides a happy (and funny) ending to Chapter 16.

## Chapter 17: All This Long Time

### • How old was Annemarie in the previous chapters?

She was 10 years old.

When the war ends two years later, Annemarie is 12 years old.

Kirsti is older. She is taller, no longer a chatterbox, and very thin. She looks the way Lise looked at that age.

### • What has happened to the apartments of the Jews in Denmark?

Their Danish friends have been taking care of them. The friends have been dusting the furniture, watering the plants, and polishing the candlesticks (128). Mrs. Johansen says, “It is what friends do” (128).

### • What happened to Peter and to Lise?

Both were members of the Resistance, and both end up dead.

Before the novel opens, Peter and Lise were attending a meeting of the Resistance. Peter was shot in the arm but escaped. Lise was run over and killed by a military car. After Lise’s death, Peter told her parents that she was a member of the Resistance. At Lise’s funeral, Peter wore a hat to cover his red hair, and he kept his injured arm covered with a coat — he knew that the Nazis were looking for him.

Peter ends up being captured and publicly executed by the Nazis. He is executed in a public square, then buried — but not beside Lise. He had requested to be buried beside Lise, but the Nazis did not allow that. Peter wrote to the Johansens before he was killed, saying he was not afraid, he loved them, and he was proud to have served his country.



- **What has happened to Ellen's necklace?**

Annemarie is keeping it safe. For the past two years, she has hidden it in the folds of Lise's stored-away wedding dress.

Now that the war is over, Annemarie asks her father to fix it — he can — and she will wear it until Ellen returns.

## Afterword

### • How much of Annemarie's story is true? What is fact, and what is fiction?

The geographical and historical information is true.

Annemarie, herself, is made up (fiction), but she grew from stories told to Lois Lowry by one of her friends, Annelise Platt.

The German occupation of Denmark is true.

It is true that King Christian X rode his horse everyday unaccompanied by bodyguards, and it is true that a German soldier asked who was that man who rode alone.

It is true that Denmark blew up its own navy.

It is true that Denmark surrendered to the much stronger German military.

It is true that there was a Danish Resistance.

It is true that there were handkerchiefs treated with cocaine and dried rabbits' blood. The blood attracted the dogs, and when the dogs sniffed the handkerchief, the cocaine temporarily destroyed the dogs' sense of smell.

It is true that nearly all of Denmark's 7,000 Jews were saved.

### • Who was G.F. Duckwitz?

G.F. Duckwitz was a high-ranking German official who in 1943 alerted Danish social democrat Hans Hedtoft that the Jews would be arrested and relocated; he wanted Mr. Hedtoft to alert the Jews, which Mr. Hedtoft did. Mr. Duckwitz' warning helped save many lives; over 7,000 Danish Jews fled to Sweden. He and Mr. Hedtoft are heroes. On March 21, 1971, the Israeli government named G.F. Duckwitz

Righteous Among the Nations, a term that the government of Israel gives to non-Jews who risked much to save Jews during the Holocaust. He died in 1973.

• **Who was Kim Malthe-Bruun?**

He was a member of the Danish Resistance. Peter is modeled on him.

Kim Malthe-Bruun died at age 21 when the Nazis executed him.

Many young men and women of the Danish Resistance died because the Nazis caught and executed them.

While in prison, he wrote many letters, and after the end of the war, his mother arranged to publish many of them in a book entitled *Kim*.

## Appendix A: Holocaust Stories

Some of the following stories may be appropriate to tell your students, depending on their age and maturity:

- The first three Muslims honored by Israel for risking their lives to save the lives of Jews during the Holocaust were Mustafa Hardaga; his wife, Zayneda; and his father-in-law, Ahmed Sadik. In 1941, the Nazi army attacked Yugoslavia. Mr. Hardaga was a merchant in Sarajevo, and one of his friends was a Jewish factory owner named Yosef Kabilio. The Germans destroyed the apartment building where Mr. Kabilio and his family lived, so Mr. Hardaga invited the Kabilios to move into his house with him and his family. He kept them there, safe from the Nazis, until they were able to move into the Italian-controlled part of Yugoslavia, which was safer. Meanwhile, Mr. Sadik was doing the same thing for the Papo family, who were friends of the Kabilios. This kind of heroism was dangerous, for the Nazis killed people who helped the Jews. Mr. Sadik himself died in a concentration camp because he had been found guilty of helping Jews. When Sarajevo was torn apart by war in 1994, the Muslims were endangered, and the Israeli government brought Mrs. Hardaga, by then a widow, to safety in Israel.<sup>1</sup>

- In May 1941, Maximilian Kolbe, a Catholic priest, was sent to Auschwitz. After a prisoner escaped, the Nazis chose ten prisoners to be sent to the starvation bunker to die a slow death in retaliation for the one prisoner who had escaped. One of the ten prisoners picked out to die begged for mercy, saying that he had a wife and children. Mr. Kolbe, who had no wife and children, volunteered to die in that man's place. To convince the Nazis to agree to the switch, he made the

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Darryl Lyman, *Holocaust Rescuers: Ten Stories of Courage*, pp. 45ff.

persuasive points that he was older than the other man and that the other man was in better shape to work for the Nazis than he was. The Nazis agreed to let him die instead of the other man, and on August 14, 1941, Mr. Kolbe's corpse was burned in a crematorium along with the corpses of the other nine men. On October 10, 1982, Pope John Paul II consecrated him a saint.<sup>2</sup>

- In October of 1943, the Nazis were preparing to deport all Jews from the country of Denmark. H. Fuglsand-Damgaard, the Lutheran bishop of Copenhagen, urged all Danes to resist the Nazi effort, saying, "We must obey God before we obey man." Thousands of lay people agreed, and the Danes used their fishing boats to help 7,720 Jews escape to Sweden. A total of 464 Danish Jews did not escape and were deported to the Theresienstadt concentration camp, but the Danish government kept up pressure on their behalf and only 51 died before the war ended — a small number and percentage in comparison with the deaths of other groups of Jews in the concentration camps.<sup>3</sup>

- During the Nazi occupation of Denmark during World War II, Inger Peschcke-Køedt and a few of her friends bicycled past some Nazi bunkers near Hornbaek. Near the Nazis was a garbage dump that stank. Ms. Peschcke-Køedt held her nose, and the Nazis realized that she was insulting them. She protested that she was holding her nose because of the garbage, but the Nazis knew that she was lying. Her friends called the Danish police to say that the Nazis had detained her, and soon a Danish police officer arrived and said, "I'm here to pick up Inger Peschcke-Køedt." The Nazis handed her over to the Danish police officer, who whispered to Ms.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Ethel Pochocki, *One-of-a-Kind Friends*, pp. 153-155.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Wisdom*, p. 537.

Peschcke-Køedt, “Don’t say anything.” Then he said loudly so that the Germans would hear him, “Back to headquarters.” However, in the police car he asked her for her address, then dropped her off at her home, and said, “Next time be more careful.”<sup>4</sup>

- During World War II, Gertrude Babilinska helped save the life of a Jewish boy named Mickey in Poland during the Holocaust. His parents had died, and she had promised them that she would take care of him. During the war, Mickey became ill and Ms. Babilinska was forced to take him to a German doctor. After the doctor had treated Mickey, she tried to pay him, but he refused payment, saying, “No, you have helped feel like a man.” Because of this, she realized that he knew that Mickey was Jewish. After the war, Ms. Babilinska took Michael to Israel so she could fulfill her promise to his parents to raise him as a Jew.<sup>5</sup>

- Renata Eisen was a Jew in Yugoslavia during the Holocaust, but with the help of other people, including non-Jews, she managed to survive. She, her brother, and her father and mother and some cousins went to Merate, Italy, which was very close to Switzerland. Before they could escape over the Alps into Switzerland, the Nazis came looking for Jews in Merate. Renata hid in the house of a friend, while the other members of her family hid in hayfields. Renata says about Merate and its kind citizens, “It was such a small town. Everyone knew we were hiding there. Anyone in town could have turned us in to the Germans. ... No one in that little town turned us in. The whole town protected us even while

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Ellen Levine, *Darkness Over Denmark: The Danish Resistance and the Rescue of the Jews*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Gay Block and Malka Drucker, *Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust*, pp. 166, 168.

knowing that if we had been caught, they probably would have had to pay the price for hiding us with their own lives.” They made it to Switzerland, where a border guard — swayed by the persistence and determination of Renata’s mother — let them enter the country despite a lack of proper papers and passports. (Some border guards were kind and did not need persistent and determined mothers to sway them. For example, border guard Paul Grinninger disobeyed orders and allowed many Jews to illegally enter Switzerland. He and other kind border guards saved many, many lives.)<sup>6</sup>

- During the Holocaust, in 1939, when Irene Weber was only 10 or 11 years old, the Nazis invaded her hometown. She ended up in the Little Fortress of Theresienstadt, which was basically a sentence of death by starvation. Despite the privations, she says that the ghetto residents did not steal from each other and that the healthy people took care of the ill people. She took care of ill people, and when she became ill, healthy people took care of her. At one point, she was very ill and unable to eat, so she wanted her friend, who was taking care of her, to eat a piece of bread. She told her friend, “Please, you eat it. I can’t have it. I can’t swallow. You have it.” However, her friend told her, “No, Irene, I will keep it for you. I will save it for you. When you feel better, you will eat it.” Irene points out that at the time, her friend, like everyone else in the Little Fortress, was starving.<sup>7</sup>

- Giorgio Perlasca, an Italian fascist, became a rescuer of Jews during the Holocaust. During the Spanish Civil War, he fought for the fascist General Francisco Franco, and for

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Sandra Giddens, *Escape: Teens Who Escaped the Holocaust to Freedom*, pp. 46-48.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Eleanor H. Ayer, *In the Ghettos: Teens Who Survived the Ghettos of the Holocaust*, pp. 43-44.

his services he received Spanish citizenship. While living in Budapest, he witnessed a Nazi killing a Jewish child, and he decided to do what he could to help the Jews. In late 1944, the Spanish envoy left Budapest, and Mr. Perlasca told everyone that he was the envoy's replacement, even though he wasn't. He then worked to set up safe houses for Jews, so that they would be protected by the government of Spain. When several Hungarian Nazis tried to take some Jews from one of his safe houses, Mr. Perlasca told the Nazis that if they took the Jews, the Spanish government would immediately arrest 3,000 Hungarians in Spain. This was pure bluff, but it worked and the lives of the Jews were saved.<sup>8</sup>

- When it was time for her bat mitzvah, 12-year-old New York resident Rebecca Marmor decided to pay honor to one of the Righteous Gentiles who had helped save the lives of Jews during World War II. With the aid of the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, an organization that provides help to rescuers and is based in New York City, Rebecca researched rescuers and learned about Irena Sendler, a Polish social worker who had helped to save the lives of 2,500 Jewish children by taking them from the Warsaw Ghetto and hiding them in Gentile homes. To honor the 84-year-old Ms. Sendler, Rebecca sent her \$1,000 that she had been given as bat mitzvah gifts.<sup>9</sup>

- When the Danish people learned that the Nazis were planning to transport Danish Jews to concentration camps in October 1943, they took action to inform the Jews of the Nazis' plans. This allowed the Jews to hide with sympathetic Danes who then arranged for them to be taken to safety in Sweden. For example, when ambulance driver Jørgen Knudsen

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<sup>8</sup> Source: David K. Fremon, *The Holocaust Heroes*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Victoria Sherrow, *The Righteous Gentiles*, p. 91.



learned of the Nazis' plans, he tore a telephone book out of a telephone booth, circled every name that looked Jewish, then drove to their addresses to warn them. If a Jew had nowhere to go to hide, he took them to Bispebjerg Hospital because he knew that Dr. Karl Køster would help them.<sup>10</sup>

- In 1942, during the Holocaust, Gerda Weissman Klein was sent to a transit camp in Sosnowiec, Poland, where she stayed for a while before being sent to another camp to do slave labor for the Nazis. At Sosnowiec, she first saw terrible hunger and starvation. She saw a starving, emaciated girl there, and because she was still healthy, having just arrived at the camp, she gave the girl her bowl of soup. Before eating the soup, the emaciated girl told her, "God bless you. May you never know what hunger is."<sup>11</sup>

- During the Holocaust, many people risked their lives to save Jews. Monsignor Jules-Gérard Saliège, the archbishop of Toulouse, France, wrote a pastoral letter opposing the deportation of Jews by the Vichy government. The letter said, "Jews are men. Jews are women. They form part of the family of mankind. They are our brothers, a fact that Christians must not forget." The letter became known as the Saliège Bomb, and it inspired many Christians to rescue Jews.<sup>12</sup>

- The Dutch village of Nieuwlande, which had only 117 residents, is recognized as Righteous Among the Nations. During the Holocaust, every house hid one or more Jews. In addition, in France, the residents of a small town, Le Chambon-

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<sup>10</sup> Source: Ellen Levine, *Darkness Over Denmark: The Danish Resistance and the Rescue of the Jews*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>11</sup> Source: Toby Axelrod, *In the Camps: Teens Who Survived the Nazi Concentration Camps*, pp. 28-30.

<sup>12</sup> Source: David K. Fremon, *The Holocaust Heroes*, pp. 50-51.

Sur-Lignon, rescued 5,000 Jews. Again, the small town is recognized as Righteous Among the Nations.<sup>13</sup>

- In 1986, Elie Wiesel, author of the Holocaust memoir *Night*, won the Nobel Peace Prize. His father, mother, and youngest sister all died in the Holocaust, but to show that the Jewish people survive despite such oppression, when giving his acceptance speech, he asked his 14-year-old son to come to the podium with him.<sup>14</sup>

- King Christian X of Denmark was a good person. Although Denmark capitulated quickly when invaded by Germans during World War II, the Danes resisted the Holocaust by removing almost all of Denmark's Jewish citizens to neutral Sweden, where they were safe. Adolf Hitler admired the non-Jewish citizens of Denmark and once suggested to King Christian X that the governments of the two countries be combined into one government. King Christian X replied, "I have given your suggestion much thought. But at my age, I think I am too old to rule over two countries."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Source: Samuel P. Oliner, *Do Unto Others: Extraordinary Acts of Ordinary People*, p. 62.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Michael A. Schuman, *Elie Wiesel: Voice from the Holocaust*, p. 98.

<sup>15</sup> Source: David K. Fremon, *The Holocaust Heroes*, p. 70.

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### **An Important Web Site**

New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education

Many free, useful, detailed resources, including curriculum guides, for teachers.

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/curriculum/>

## Appendix C: About the Author

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine’s brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka “The Joker,” decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn’t been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don’t often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for “sounds like” and “two words,” then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn’t let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor’s degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a Master of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy. Yes, I have my MAMA degree.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as *Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10*, *The Funniest People in Dance*, *Homer’s Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*, and *William Shakespeare’s Othello: A Retelling in Prose*.

By the way, my sister Brenda Kennedy writes romances such as *A New Beginning* and *Shattered Dreams*.

## Appendix D: Some Books by David Bruce

### Discussion Guides Series

*Dante's Inferno: A Discussion Guide*

*Dante's Paradise: A Discussion Guide*

*Dante's Purgatory: A Discussion Guide*

*Forrest Carter's The Education of Little Tree: A Discussion Guide*

*Homer's Iliad: A Discussion Guide*

*Homer's Odyssey: A Discussion Guide*

*Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice: A Discussion Guide*

*Jerry Spinelli's Maniac Magee: A Discussion Guide*

*Jerry Spinelli's Stargirl: A Discussion Guide*

*Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal": A Discussion Guide*

*Lloyd Alexander's The Black Cauldron: A Discussion Guide*

*Lloyd Alexander's The Book of Three: A Discussion Guide*

*Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A Discussion Guide*

*Mark Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer: A Discussion Guide*

*Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: A Discussion Guide*

*Mark Twain's The Prince and the Pauper: A Discussion Guide*

*Nancy Garden's Annie on My Mind: A Discussion Guide*

*Nicholas Sparks' A Walk to Remember: A Discussion Guide*

*Virgil's Aeneid: A Discussion Guide*

*Virgil's "The Fall of Troy": A Discussion Guide*

*Voltaire's Candide: A Discussion Guide*

*William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV: A Discussion Guide*

*William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Discussion Guide*

*William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Discussion Guide*

*William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Discussion Guide*

*William Sleator's Oddballs: A Discussion Guide*

(*Oddballs* is an excellent source for teaching how to write autobiographical essays/personal narratives.)

### **Retellings of a Classic Work of Literature**

*Ben Jonson's The Alchemist: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The Case is Altered: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Catiline's Conspiracy: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The Devil is an Ass: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Epicene: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humor: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The New Inn: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's The Staple of News: A Retelling*

*Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: A Retelling*

*Christopher Marlowe's Complete Plays: Retellings*

*Christopher Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage: A Retelling*

*Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text*

*Christopher Marlowe's Edward II: A Retelling*

*Christopher Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris: A Retelling*

*Christopher Marlowe's The Rich Jew of Malta: A Retelling*

*Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Parts 1 and 2: Retellings*

*Dante's Divine Comedy: A Retelling in Prose*

*Dante's Inferno: A Retelling in Prose*

*Dante's Purgatory: A Retelling in Prose*

*Dante's Paradise: A Retelling in Prose*

*The Famous Victories of Henry V: A Retelling*

*From the Iliad to the Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's Posthomerica*

*George Peele: Five Plays Retold in Modern English*

*George Peele's The Arraignment of Paris: A Retelling*

*George Peele's The Battle of Alcazar: A Retelling*

*George's Peele's David and Bathsheba, and the Tragedy of Absalom: A Retelling*

*George Peele's Edward I: A Retelling*

*George Peele's The Old Wives' Tale: A Retelling*

*George-A-Greene, The Pinner of Wakefield: A Retelling*

*The History of King Leir: A Retelling*

*Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*

*Homer's Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose*

*Jason and the Argonauts: A Retelling in Prose of Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica*

*The Jests of George Peele: A Retelling*

*John Ford: Eight Plays Translated into Modern English*

*John Ford's The Broken Heart: A Retelling*

*John Ford's The Fancies, Chaste and Noble: A Retelling*

*John Ford's The Lady's Trial: A Retelling*

*John Ford's The Lover's Melancholy: A Retelling*



*John Ford's Love's Sacrifice: A Retelling*

*John Ford's Perkin Warbeck: A Retelling*

*John Ford's The Queen: A Retelling*

*John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Retelling*

*John Webster's The White Devil: A Retelling*

*King Edward III: A Retelling*

*The Merry Devil of Edmonton: A Retelling*

*Robert Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay: A Retelling*

*The Taming of a Shrew: A Retelling*

*Tarlton's Jests: A Retelling*

*The Trojan War and Its Aftermath: Four Ancient Epic Poems*

*Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 5 Late Romances: Retellings in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 10 Histories: Retellings in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 11 Tragedies: Retellings in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 12 Comedies: Retellings in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 38 Plays: Retellings in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's 3 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 3: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's All's Well that Ends Well: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's As You Like It: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Coriolanus: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Cymbeline: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Hamlet: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Henry V: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Henry VIII: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's King John: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Richard II: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Richard III: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Tempest: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Timon of Athens: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Two Noble Kinsmen: A Retelling in Prose*

*William Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale: A Retelling in Prose*

### **Children's Biography**

*Nadia Comaneci: Perfect Ten*

### **Personal Finance**

*How to Manage Your Money: A Guide for the Non-Rich*

### **Anecdote Collections**

*250 Anecdotes About Opera*

*250 Anecdotes About Religion*

*250 Anecdotes About Religion: Volume 2*

*250 Music Anecdotes*

*Be a Work of Art: 250 Anecdotes and Stories*

*Boredom is Anti-Life: 250 Anecdotes and Stories*

*The Coolest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Coolest People in the Arts: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Coolest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Coolest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes*

*Create, Then Take a Break: 250 Anecdotes*

*Don't Fear the Reaper: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Art: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Books: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Books, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Books, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Comedy: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Dance: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Families: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Families, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Families, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Families, Volume 4: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Families, Volume 5: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Families, Volume 6: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Movies: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Music: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Music, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Music, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Neighborhoods: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Relationships: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Sports: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Sports, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Television and Radio: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People in Theater: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People Who Live Life: 250 Anecdotes*  
*The Funniest People Who Live Life, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds, Volume 1: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Kindest People Who Do Good Deeds, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*

*Maximum Cool: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Most Interesting People in Movies: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Most Interesting People in Politics and History: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Most Interesting People in Politics and History, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Most Interesting People in Politics and History, Volume 3: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Most Interesting People in Religion: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Most Interesting People in Sports: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Most Interesting People Who Live Life: 250 Anecdotes*

*The Most Interesting People Who Live Life, Volume 2: 250 Anecdotes*

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