

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Number the Stars

by Lois Lowry

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Chapter 1

1. Ellen and Annemarie are best friends, yet are very different in their size and capabilities. How are you and your best friend alike and different?
2. After the two Nazi soldiers stop the girls from racing and question them, both girls admit they were scared. Describe the last time you were truly afraid. Were your fears well-founded?
3. On her way home from this encounter, Ellen plans to shield her mother from the truth about the encounter with the soldiers. “But she was too late. Kirsti had gotten there first.” Do you think Ellen planned to tell her mother the whole truth? Rewrite the dialogue as though Kirsti had not “gotten there first.”
4. The two mothers are concerned that the Germans will recognize Annemarie and Ellen the next time they see the girls and advise them to walk a different way to school and blend into the crowd. “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.” In what ways do you see students your age trying to be “one of the crowd”? Why would they do this?

Chapter 2

5. Just as Annemarie had asked Lise, now Kirsti asks Annemarie, “Tell me a story, Annemarie,... Tell me a fairy tale.” What was your favorite fairy tale as a child? Why? With which character in the story do you most identify? Why?

6. Annemarie’s father tells her a story of a boy talking to a German soldier. He tries to explain the loyalty the Danish people have for their king by saying “All of Denmark is his bodyguard.” Explain to a classmate what this says, about the Danish people. Why would the Nazis be threatened by this attitude?

7. King Christian knew his main job was to protect the Danish people, and he had to surrender to do that. “Papa sighed. ‘We are such a tiny country,...And they are such an enormous enemy. Our king was wise. He knew that many, many Danish people would die if we fought.’”

Write a diary entry King Christian X might have written the day he decided to surrender to the Nazis.

8. Lise’s yellow dress with the full skirt always reminds Annemarie of a happy party. Name one thing in your room or home that reminds you of a particularly happy time, and tell about why it makes you happy.

9. Annemarie notices how much the people she loves have changed since the war began. “The whole world had changed. Only the fairy tales remained the same.” How has your life and world changed in the last three years? What things have stayed the same?

Chapter 3

10. In response to the news that the Germans are closing Jewish businesses, Annemarie's mom assures her that the Hirsch family will be okay. "Friends will take care of them,...That's what friends do." What do your friends do to take care of you? What do you do to take care of your friends?

11. As Annemarie becomes more aware of the danger for the Jewish people, she realizes how important it will be for the other people in Denmark to help protect them. What people in our society need to be guarded and helped? What do you believe is the most important thing we should do for them? Why?

12. Some of the tenderness Peter feels for Annemarie is apparent when he talks to her. He gives her a nickname that shows he recognizes how much she has grown. Give at least one nickname that someone has given you. What does it mean? Does it adequately describe you? Why or why not?

Chapter 4

13. Upon returning from shopping for shoes with her mother, Kirsti announces, "I won't!...I won't ever, *ever* wear them! Not if you chain me in a prison and beat me with sticks!"

What is the ugliest thing you ever had to wear? Why did you dislike it so much? Were you more upset about wearing something you didn't like or what people might think of you? Why?

Response Journal

14. The Rosens willingly share their Jewish customs with the Johansen family.

Do you have any friends who have customs or beliefs different from those of your family? Describe them and give your reaction to their customs. Have you ever shared customs of your family with a friend? What was their reaction?

15. When Mr. and Mrs. Johansen try to explain the idea of “relocation” to Ellen and Annemarie, they make the girls aware of the responsibility and risk of protecting their friends. “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.” Who or what would you be willing to risk danger to save? Why?

16. Annemarie admires Ellen’s dramatic ability and says, “You were great as the Dark Queen in the school play last year...You should be an actress when you grow up.” What talents do you see in yourself now that could become your career? What career would you most like to have and why?

17. Ellen remembers the night that Lise died and how sad her family was. “Mama was crying, and the rain made it seem as if the whole world was crying.” Describe an event in your life that was so sad the whole world seemed different. Why was it so intense for you?

Chapter 6

18. Ellen is amazed that the Germans might take the Jewish children out of the schools: “My parents have always told me that education is the most important thing. Whatever happens, I must get an education.”

Why is it necessary for you to get an education? What will you learn at school other than facts and rules of your academic subjects?

19. Annemarie’s father is faced with a decision that very well may change their lives. The author writes, “Annemarie watched his face and knew that he was struggling with the decision. Finally he nodded, reluctantly.” What is the most difficult decision you have had to make? Why was it so hard? Do you now believe you made the right one? Why or why not? Would you make the same decision today? Why or why not?
20. When Mrs. Johansen returns to Gilleleje and steps off the train, she is reminded of her childhood. Describe a place, using at least three of the five senses, that brings you happy memories.

Chapter 7

21. As Annemarie and Ellen look across the sea to Sweden, they realize how much in common they may have with Swedish children. “Maybe, standing over there are two girls just our age, looking across and saying, ‘that’s Denmark!’ ” Pick any other country in the world and explain to a student your age who lives there how much alike you probably are.