***Number the Stars***

***Chapter 15***

***Summary:***

### ***My Dogs Smell Meat***

* Annemarie tries to play dumb and go along with her mother's advice. She decides she will take her little sister Kirsti as a model. (This would be a good place for a joke about little sisters being dumb, but we'll resist.) Kirsti is protected by her own innocence, and Annemarie has to create that innocence for herself.
* So Annemarie lies to the soldiers when they question her, pretending that she is self-absorbed and interested only in what's going on with her own life.
* The soldiers' questions are pretty tough, but Annemarie weathers them. Hang tight, A.
* A single soldier seems to lead the others, and he steps up to go through all the things in Annemarie's basket—one by one. As he does so, he keeps asking her questions, while feeding each of the items in the basket to the two big dogs.
* It seems like the dogs can tell that Annemarie is hiding something in her basket (she is!), and so the soldier keeps taking things out and asking her about them.
* Talk about nerve-racking.
* Then, to Annemarie's great horror, he finds the secret package. She bursts into tears and says, without lying, that she doesn't know anything about it.
* The soldier opens the package and is totally unimpressed. It's just a hankie. Even the dogs lose interest.
* He gives Annemarie a mean message for her uncle, and then he and his fellows leave.
* Annemarie waits until they're gone, then grabs what's left of the basket, including the hankie, and runs to her uncle's ship.
* Can we breathe yet?
* Yes. She gets to the boat and is able to deliver the hankie to a super-grateful Henrik.
* She wants to ask him questions but she can't. He just reassures her and tells her to head back to the house.

***Brief Summary:***

Annemarie thinks immediately of her mother's advice. "'If anyone stops you, you must pretend to be nothing more than a silly little girl"' (p. 113). She remembers the soldiers who stopped her, Ellen, and Kirsti on the street. She and Ellen had stared fearfully, but Kirsti had been too innocent to feel fear. Annemarie draws on that memory and attempts to act just like Kirsti. She wipes the fear from her face and wishes the soldiers a cheerful good morning. They ask what she's doing here, and she tells them she's taking her uncle, who is a fisherman, his lunch. They ask why her he doesn't just eat fish. She giggles as Kirsti might and explains that her uncle hates to eat fish because he's so sick of the smell since he's around it all the time. She chatters on innocently about how much she likes her mother's breaded fish. One of the soldiers reaches for the loaf of bread and breaks it in half. She intentionally reacts the same way Kirsti would, admonishing the soldier for taking her bread. He ignores her, throwing the loaf to the dogs. She tells him she'll miss her uncle's boat, if they don't stop delaying her, but the soldier's now examining the cheese and the mealy apple in the basket.

The dogs are quite interested in the basket by this point, but when the soldier offers them the apple and the cheese, the dogs ignore it. The solder tells her his dogs smell meat, but she insists there's no meat in the basket. To her horror, he looks underneath the napkin and pulls out the package. He asks what it is, and she responds with irritation, as Kristi would, telling him she doesn't know. Inside the package, the soldier finds only a handkerchief. Irritated at having wasted his time, he tells her to move along, and the soldiers retreat into the woods. Annemarie replaces the items in the basket and races towards the harbor. Her uncle's boat, the *Ingeborg*, is still there. When her uncle sees the handkerchief his face lights up with relief. He tells her that because of her, everything is going to be all right. He sends her back home with the message for Inge not to worry, and that he will see them this evening.

***Brief Analysis:***

Annemarie has come so far along the path from childhood to the beginnings of adulthood that she is actually able to play-act being a child in order to hoodwink the German soldiers. Although her behavior is childlike, her decision to behave in that manner is mature beyond her years. It is fortunate for her that the unknown conspirators, who put together the important package were equally cautious. While we have been made aware of the importance of the package, it looks on the surface, like an ordinary handkerchief. We can only imagine at this point how an ordinary handkerchief will help the Rosens to escape, but the fact that whatever power it contains has been so well disguised is an omen of good fortune for the success of the Resistance.

***Critical Study:***

Annemarie's mind rushes to what her mother told her. She must pretend to be nothing more than a silly, innocent child. She remembers how Kirsti acted when the soldier stopped them on the way home from school. Her sister was not afraid because she did not recognize the danger. Annemarie tries her hardest to act like Kirsti might. One soldier asks what she is doing. Annemarie holds the basket up. She says her uncle forgot his lunch, talking more than she needs to. The soldiers want to know if she is alone. The dogs grow at the basket. The soldier demands to know why her uncle doesn't eat fish like the other fishermen. Annemarie plays her part, giggling and babbling about how her uncle does not like smelly fish, particularly raw! The soldier reaches for the bread in the basket and throws it to the dogs. He wants her to tell him if she has seen anyone in the woods. Annemarie says she has not and innocently asks what he is doing in the woods.

The soldier keeps going through the basket. Annemarie silently hopes that he will not lift the napkin and see the packet. But he does see the packet, and demands to know what it is. Annemarie is lost. She tries to act like Kirsti and finds that she is crying and saying her mother will be angry and her uncle, too. She does not know what the packet is, she says. Annemarie realizes that it is true; she really has no idea what it is. The soldier tears the packet open and tells her to stop her idiot tears; it is only a handkerchief. The packet is thrown to the ground where the rest of the basket's contents already lie. The dogs sniff it, but are uninterested. All four soldiers push by her in the direction she came from.

Annemarie picks up the packet and runs to the harbor. Uncle Henrik's boat is still there. Annemarie calls out to him. He looks worried to see her, but he is relieved when Annemarie tells him she has brought his lunch. She says soldiers stopped her and took his bread. Henrik thanks her. Annemarie is confused; the boat looks empty. Henrik assures Annemarie that because of her, everything will be all right. Henrik tell her to go home and tell Mrs. Johansen that he will be home in the evening.

Annemarie mixes fiction with reality as she makes the trip to her uncle's boat. She tells herself the story of Little Red Riding-Hood the way she would to her little sister. Without realizing it, she is comforting herself the same way she would comfort Kirsti. Annemarie's instinct to go over the fairy tale in her head reflects the confusing position she is in. She must be brave and do an adult's job, but she is frightened. Annemarie is replacing her mother, but to protect herself she knows she may have to act like Kristi. Annemarie finds comfort and direction by thinking of herself as the heroine in a fairy tale that ends happily. The story of Little Red Riding-Hood is literally and metaphorically just like Annemarie's own. Both girls carry baskets given them by their mother and travel through the woods on their own. Though we do not know how Annemarie's story ends, we probably do know what happens to Little Red Riding-Hood.

The path that Annemarie travels conjures up memories of her childhood. The blueberry patch was a special place, as was the pasture of cows. She thinks of the country doctor who is probably on his way to the house. She also remembers going to see her uncle as he was bringing in the day's catch. These memories are interspersed with the scenes from Little Red Riding-Hood. The path Annemarie walks is symbolic of Annemarie's childhood. Her travel through the woods is a metaphor for the transition she is making from being a child to being an adult. It is not an easy path; there are roots that could make her stumble and the darkness makes it hard to see what lies ahead. But Annemarie knows she must keep on, just as all children must become adults.

Annemarie's encounter with the soldiers forces her to regress. She does as her mother has told her and acts as much like a "silly little girl" as possible. Innocence turns out to be her best protection. Pretending to be a clueless child is an extreme form of what she and Uncle Henrik talked about. Yet again Annemarie sees that knowing little or nothing at all can make you safe. Annemarie is safer because she does not know what she is really carrying. The encounter also shows that Annemarie is living in a world of extremes. One moment she is playing the role that her mother would, and the next she has to act like her little sister. When Annemarie reaches the boat, Henrik's assertion that "everything is all right" applies to more than the trip he is about to make. Now that Annemarie has delivered the basket, order will be restored in Annemarie's life, too. Henrik tells her to go home and make sure her mother does not worry. The role of worrying has been handed back to Mrs. Johansen. Annemarie has been relieved of heavy responsibility—she can be herself again.

***Critical Analysis:***

Annemarie thinks of her mother's advice, and she thinks of her sister. She tries to act how Kirsti would, like a "silly, empty-headed" girl her mother told her to be if she encountered soldiers. The soldiers question her, suggesting her uncle could eat the fish he catches on the boat. Annemarie chatters on as she thinks her sister would do. The soldier takes her bread and tosses half to each of his dogs. She objects. He takes the cheese and offers it to the other three soldiers, who refuse it. Annemarie asks to leave. He examines and rejects the spotted apple, and then he asks if she has meat. Annemarie says no. "Your army eats all of Denmark's meat," she says. The soldier argues his dog smells meat, and he removes the napkin. In doing so he reveals the packet at the bottom of the basket.

The soldier asks why it was hidden, and Annemarie says it was not hidden "any more than the napkin was." The dogs are straining toward them, and the soldier opens the packet to reveal a handkerchief. The soldiers send her on her way. When she reaches the ship, [Uncle Henrik](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Number-the-Stars/character-analysis/#Uncle_Henrik) is extremely relieved to see her and the packet.

Annemarie looks around for the Rosens, but Uncle Henrik assures her all is well. "Because of you, Annemarie, everything is all right," he says. Then he sends her home.

One of the things this chapter highlights is the callousness of the soldiers. They have plenty, but still they steal from a child. Annemarie, as she faces them, continues to try to find courage and hopes she can reach her uncle's ship in time.

The soldiers' dogs are straining to reach her, and she has no idea what she is transporting in the basket. The handkerchief, revealed by the soldiers, is treated with something that has drawn the dogs. The soldier said his dogs smelled meat. When the soldier tears open the packet containing the handkerchief, "the dogs strained and snarled, pulling against their leashes." They are trying to reach the handkerchief because of the chemicals on it, chemicals that will prevent the dogs from picking up the scent of all the people who earlier walked along this path to the boat. The soldiers and Annemarie don't know this.

Once her encounter with the soldiers is over, Annemarie delivers the remaining food and that handkerchief to her uncle. When he sees the packet, knowing what it is, he lets her know that "all is well." She has delivered the method of tricking the soldiers.

This chapter is the culmination of the test of courage for Annemarie. [Lowry](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Number-the-Stars/author/) has been building up to this event since the first chapter when Annemarie stood up to the soldiers that stopped her and Kirsti from running home from school. Here, that fast running pays off as it enables her to reach the harbor and deliver the handkerchief.

***Significance:***

Annemarie remembers Kirsti’s interaction with the German soldiers at the beginning of the novel. Kirsti, not understanding the danger the German soldiers posed, had chattered confidently. The soldiers let her go because they did not take her seriously. Annemarie knows she must do the same thing now. When the soldiers ask her what she’s doing, she explains that she’s bringing [Uncle Henrik](https://www.gradesaver.com/number-the-stars/study-guide/character-list#uncle-henrik) his lunch. The German soldiers ask more questions. If Uncle Henrik forgot his lunch, why doesn’t he eat fish? Why is there no meat in the basket? Annemarie answers each question rudely, just like Kirsti did when speaking with the Giraffe. The soldiers take each item out of the basket and throw it on the ground for their dogs to eat, and Annemarie behaves like a petulant child.

Just as Annemarie asks if she can leave, one soldier lifts the napkin and notices the precious packet hidden in the bottom of the basket. Annemarie panics, thinking the whole operation is compromised, but it turns out that the packet holds only a white handkerchief. The Germans make fun of Annemarie and let her go. When she arrives at the harbor, she finds Uncle Henrik on his boat, looking worried. When he sees that Annemarie has brought the packet, he is very relieved and tells her that she has saved the mission. He laughs when he finds out that the Germans fed his bread to the dogs, and Annemarie hurries home.

For most of *Number the Stars*, Kirsti's outbursts make Annemarie nervous, even though the little girl's behavior is simply a result of her childlike innocence. At certain moments, Kirsti has put the Johansens and the Rosens in danger, like when she nearly mentions the Jewish New Year to the German soldiers on the train. However, Annemarie ends up channeling Kirsti’s naivete when she needs to convince the Germans that is only bringing lunch to her uncle, not delivering an important packet to the Resistance. By imitating Kirsti’s rudeness and her tendency to chatter, Annemarie successfully convinces the Germans that she is not a threat.

In this moment, Lowry shows the importance of childhood innocence. [Mama](https://www.gradesaver.com/number-the-stars/study-guide/character-list#mama) has tried to shelter her children, and in Kirsti's case, this has kept her safe from harm - the less she knows, the less she can potentially reveal. It also shows the importance of paying attention to the world around you. Annemarie act is successful because she has paid close attention to her sister’s behavior and knows exactly how the German soldiers will react.

Although the German officers in this chapter are scary, there are some important differences between them and the officers we see elsewhere in the novel. Like the Giraffe and his partner, they seem to be low-ranking enlisted men, assigned to patrol a quiet fishing village. Unlike the soldiers in Chapter 1, however, they do not have a soft spot for children and treat Annemarie cruelly. At the same time, they are not as cruel as the Gestapo officers that visit the Johansen house in Chapter 5. When they steal the bread and mock Mama, they are simply using petty insults to exercise their power over Annemarie.

Annemarie becomes a fierce Danish patriot over the course of her novel, following in her family's example. She resents the German soldiers for not bothering to learn Danish, and she frequently vocalizes her admiration for King Christian X. Insulting Denmark is just one way in which the German soldiers try to annoy Annemarie. They say that German women are better than Danish women because they do not spend their time on useless hobbies like embroidering handkerchiefs. However, Uncle Henrik’s comment at the end of the chapter shows that the joke is on the Germans—they may have given his bread to their dogs, but thanks to the "useless hobbies," he has been able to smuggle many Jews out of the country.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part:***

***Summary Part 1:***

[Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) remembers her mother’s advice to act like a “silly little girl” should she run into any Nazis. She tries to imagine herself as [Kirsti](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/kirsti-johansen) on the day the two of them and Ellen ran into soldiers on the street—a silly little girl who knows “nothing of danger.” Annemarie politely greets the soldiers, and when they ask her what she’s doing in the woods, she tells them she’s bringing lunch to her uncle, a fisherman.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Annemarie has been longing to know more and more of the truth of what’s going on around her—but in this moment, she tries her best to emulate Kirsti’s oblivious naivete, inhabiting a “fantasy” of who she really is and what she really knows.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) notices that the soldiers’ dogs are looking at her basket and growling with hunger. She tries to think of how [Kirsti](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/kirsti-johansen) would respond to the fear and danger of the moment, and decides to chatter on and on, attempting to bore the soldiers. One of them, however, reaches into her basket, takes the loaf of bread, and breaks it apart. After inspecting it, he tosses the halves onto the ground for the dogs, amidst Annemarie’s protests.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Annemarie is channeling Kirsti as best she can. She wants to convince the soldiers that she is nothing more than an ignorant little girl—she knows that there is more than just her own life at stake, and is determined not to fall apart and expose what’s really going on.

***Summary Part 3:***

The soldiers continue rifling through [Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen)’s basket, laughing at the brown spots on the apple and the meager piece of cheese. They taunt her for not bringing her uncle any meat—Annemarie, thinking like [Kirsti](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/kirsti-johansen), petulantly responds that the German army “eats all of Denmark’s meat.” Annemarie’s sassiness is just a front, though—internally, she is praying that the soldiers won’t lift the napkin, the only thing left in the basket. The dogs sniff the bottom of the basket hungrily, and the soldier tells Annemarie that his dogs can smell meat inside. The soldier reaches in and lifts up the napkin to Annemarie’s horror.

***Analysis part 3:***

The more frightened Annemarie grows, paradoxically, the more bravely and brashly she is able to behave in front of the soldiers. Even as they verge on exposing her mission’s secret, she is able to keep her cool and maintain her naïve, petulant front.

***Summary Part 4:***

The soldier, seeing the paper packet at the bottom, asks [Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) what it is. She insists she doesn’t know, and even scolds the soldier for making her late and ruining her uncle’s lunch. The soldier lifts the packet from the basket and tears it open, asking what’s inside, but Annemarie insists she doesn’t know. She finds herself thinking of how grateful she is for her ignorance—she genuinely doesn’t know what’s inside. The soldier pulls a simple handkerchief out of the package, and throws it to the ground. The dogs sniff at it, but leave it alone. Having found nothing, the soldiers push past Annemarie into the woods, urging her to “go on to [her] uncle and tell him the German dogs enjoyed his bread.”

***Analysis Part 5:***

This is the first time in the novel when Annemarie considers that perhaps being ignorant of what’s really going on is indeed helping to make her braver. If she knew what the packet contained, she would not be able to keep up her petulant, childish façade in front of the Nazis so well. Luckily, the object in the packet is something quotidian and uninteresting, even to Annemarie, and she is able to escape with her freedom.

***Summary Part 6:***

[Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) collects the apple and the handkerchief, the only things left intact, and puts them back into the basket. She rushes down to the dock, and is relieved to find that [Uncle Henrik](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/uncle-henrik)’s boat is still there. She rushes aboard and delivers the basket to him, telling him briefly of her encounter with the solider. Uncle Henrik, visibly relieved, thanks Annemarie for bringing the handkerchief to him, though he doesn’t explain what it is, or why it’s important. He tells her to return home, and assures her he’ll be back later that evening. As she turns to go, she overhears Uncle Henrik saying that he hopes the German soldiers “choke” on the bread they stole.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Annemarie has faced the “big bad wolf” and emerged triumphant. She is able to complete the dangerous task set to her, and returns to Henrik’s house knowing that she has contributed something—though she doesn’t know what—very important to her uncle’s mission.

***Quotations***

***Quotation 1:***

Kirsti hadn't been frightened. Kirsti had been—well, nothing more than a silly little girl, angered because the soldier had touched her hair that afternoon. She had known nothing of danger, and the soldier had been amused by her. (15.3)

***Explanation 1:***

Kirsti doesn't really know enough to be scared. But does that mean she isn't acting bravely throughout the whole story? Can you be brave without knowing it? What do you think?

***Quotation 2:***

Annemarie wiped her eyes on the sleeve of her sweater. "It wasn't hidden, any more than the napkin was. I don't know what it is." That, she realized, was true. She had no idea what was in the packet. (15.39)

***Explanation 2:***

But then again, not knowing is still just as scary (and tear-inducing). Man, we keep going back and forth on this one! What's your final verdict? Is it better to know the truth or not in this kind of serious situation?

***Quotation 3:***

Annemarie gave him a withering look. "You know we have no meat," she said insolently. "Your army eats all of Denmark's meat." (15.27)

***Explanation 3:***

Withering? Insolently? Okay, time to break out your dictionaries. We'll give you a hint: insolent basically means rude. Whoa—rude? That's right. Despite how scary the soldiers are, Annemarie is brave enough to criticize the way they treat Denmark and its resources.

***Quotation 4:***

"Go on," the soldier said. He dropped the cheese and the napkin back into her basket. "Go on to your uncle and tell him that the German dogs enjoyed his bread." (15.44)

***Explanation 4:***

National identity is so important that even the dogs are singled out as being German rather than Danish. This statement is also meant as an insult to the Danes: the Nazis' dogs are treated better than the Danes themselves. Ugh.