

NUMBER THE STARS

2013 Edition

At opening, in black (or empty stage), you hear Annemarie's voice.

ANNEMARIE

Ready? On your mark, get set.....go!

Lights and sound come up to paint a street scene, sound of foreign bells and horns. Inger is standing there as light comes up, directly addressing the audience.

INGER

The days of summer had already passed, and school was back in session in Denmark.

Annemarie comes into the picture, running, she stops and turns to Ellen, offstage.

ANNEMARIE

Come on! You can do it!

FATHER

Annemarie Johanssen had just begun her sixth year in her school in Copenhagen, where she sat right next to her best friend since kindergarten, Ellen Rosen.

ELLEN

(enters, fast walking, wearing glasses and appearing physically awkward)
You know I can't keep up with you! My legs are too short. Can't we just walk, like civilized people?

ANNEMARIE

I need the practice for Friday. Come on, race you all the way back to the house!

KIRSTI

(from offstage) Wait for me!

ANNEMARIE

Come on, quick, before Kirsti catches us!

ELLEN

Annemarie! She's your sister, that's a terrible thing to say!

ANNEMARIE

You're just afraid that *she'll* be able to beat you too.

INGER

But there was a dark cloud over Denmark in those days. Everywhere they turned, the Danes saw foreign soldiers wearing grey and green uniforms, with a menacing red mark attached to their sleeves.

ANNEMARIE

C'mon, let's go!

She takes off running when the Giraffe walks on, running right into him.

GIRAFFE

Halte! Why running you as?

ANNEMARIE

(confused) I'm sorry? Why running I as? I don't understand.

FATHER

Three years since the Germans invaded, and their Danish was still so poor.

GIRAFFE

(irate) I said why you running.

ANNEMARIE

Oh, why are we running. We're having races. We have races every Friday at school, so me and my friend were....*(realizes she may have said too much)*

GIRAFFE

(starts poking at AM's backpack) What's in there now?

ANNEMARIE

Books. My school books.

GIRAFFE

Are you a good student?

ANNEMARIE

I try to be.

GIRAFFE

(stares at her, then) What's your name?

ANNEMARIE

Annemarie. *(realizes he wants more)* Annemarie Johannsen.

GIRAFFE

Where live you do?

ANNEMARIE

On Oegsbergastrade.

GIRAFFE

(to Ellen) And you? What's your name?

ANNEMARIE

That's Ellen. My friend. She's shy.

GIRAFFE

Are you a good student too?

ELLEN

(Tries to speak, but is too scared)

Kirti comes running in, 8 years old and pigtails

KIRSTI

Annemarie, I said to wait!

GIRAFFE

And who is *this*?

ANNEMARIE

That's Kirsti, my little sister.

GIRAFFE

(starts caressing her hair, playing with her pigtails) Ahh...you're a pretty little thing. How many years do you?

KIRSTI

What did he say?

ANNEMARIE

He asked you how old you are.

KIRSTI

I'm eighty four.

GIRAFFE

(didn't understand it) Gut.

ANNEMARIE

Kirsti!

GIRAFFE

You remind me of my little one at home. She is very naughty. Good thing her mother knows how to discipline, jah?

(looks at the three of them)

It's getting late. Go home now, all of you. Study your books. Be good citizens of the Reich. But no running – you look like Jewish hoodlums if you run. *(and he walks off in the direction he was headed)*