

Dear Lois Lowry,

My name is Naomi and I'm a fourth grader at the French American School of Puget Sound. I'm writing this letter to tell you about the personal connection I felt to your book, *Number the Stars*. My connection goes back to when my great-grandparents had to escape from Paris and survive World War II by hiding their family from the Nazis.

In 1942, a police officer warned my great-grandparents that they had to leave Paris or else the Nazis would arrest them because they were Jewish. They escaped from Paris and made a very dangerous journey south to cross into the free zone. To get there, they had to swim across a river, which was the border between the occupied zone and the free zone.

Once they reached the other side of the river, the French Resistance helped them travel the rest of the way to the house in Grenoble where they would hide until the war was over. While they were traveling they had to be very careful so no one found out that they were Jewish. Once they were at the house, they had to be very careful so the Nazis wouldn't know they were living at the house. They couldn't turn on the lights at night and couldn't leave footprints in the snow or they could be caught. They were lucky to have a kind family next door who helped them by keeping the secret that they were Jewish and helping them find enough food for my great-grandparents and their five children.

My grandmother's older sister, Anna, was the same age as Ellen when she and her family escaped to Grenoble. That's also the same age I am now. I realize how much Anna had to do to help her family survive and how difficult and scary that must have been. When they crossed the river into the free zone, Anna carried her little sister across while soldiers were shooting at her and her family and shouting to stop. She is a hero to me.

My grandmother was born in hiding in Grenoble. After reading your book, I understood a lot more about her experience. I talked to her about what it was like for her family. She told me it was really scary to be Jewish during that time. Jewish people either had to hide or pretend they weren't Jewish. Otherwise they would be caught by the Nazis and arrested, killed, or sent to a concentration camp. At the end of the war, the people called it the Holocaust because so many Jews were killed.

Like Ellen, my grandmother and her family would not have survived without the help and kindness of their neighbors and friends. Their friend warned them in time to leave Paris, members of the French Resistance helped them escape, and their neighbors in Grenoble helped

them with food and other things. All these people, just like Annemarie, risked their lives to help my grandmother and her family live.

Finally, I wanted to say that *Number the Stars* really made me think about who I am. It made me think about how if my grandmother had not survived, then I wouldn't be alive. It made me think about how proud I am of my family and how happy I am to be Jewish. Sometimes your book made me laugh and sometimes it made me sad. Before I read your book, I thought that maybe someday the Holocaust might happen again. Then I read your book and learned about how much people cared about each other during the war. It made me think that it wouldn't happen again in a million years, which made me really happy.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Naomi Ries". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke under the "i" in "Naomi" and a similar stroke under the "e" in "Ries".

Naomi Ries