

15. My Dogs Smell Meat!

Annemarie's mind raced. She remembered what her mother had said. "If anyone stops you, you must pretend to be nothing more than a silly little girl."

She stared at the soldiers. She remembered how she had stared at the others, frightened, when they had stopped her on the street.

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.

Annemarie willed herself, with all her being, to behave as Kirsti would.

"Good morning," she said carefully to the soldiers.

They looked her up and down in silence. Both dogs were tense and alert, The two soldiers who held the leashes wore thick gloves.

"What are you doing here?" one of them asked.

Annemarie held out her basket, with the thick loaf of bread visible. "My Uncle Henrik forgot his lunch, and I'm taking it to him. He's a fisherman."

The soldiers were looking around; their eyes glanced behind her, and scanned the bushes on either side.

"Are you alone?" one asked.

Annemarie nodded. "Yes," she said. One of the dogs growled. But she noticed that both dogs were looking at the lunch basket.

One soldier stepped forward. The other, and the two holding the dogs, remained where they were.

"You came out before daybreak just to bring a lunch? Why doesn't your uncle eat fish?"

What would Kirsti reply? Annemarie tried to giggle, the way her sister might. "Uncle Henrik doesn't even *like* fish," she said, laughing. "He says he sees too much of it, and *smells* too much of it. Anyway, he wouldn't eat it raw!" She made a face. "Well, I suppose he would if he were starving. But Uncle Henrik always has bread and cheese for lunch."

Keep chattering, she told herself, as Kirsti would. A silly little girl. "I like fish," she went on. "I like it the way my mother cooks it. Sometimes she rolls it in bread crumbs, and—"

The soldier reached forward and grabbed the crisp loaf of bread from the basket. He examined it carefully. Then he broke it in half, pulling the two halves apart with his fists.

That would enrage Kirsti, she knew. "*Don't!*" she said angrily. "That's Uncle Henrik's bread! My mother baked it!"

The soldier ignored her. He tossed the two halves of the loaf to the ground, one half in front of each dog. They consumed it, each snapping at the bread and gulping it so that it was gone in an instant.

"Have you seen anyone in the woods?" The soldier barked the question at her.

"No. Only you." Annemarie stared at him. "What are you doing in the woods, anyway? You're making me late. Uncle Henrik's boat will leave before I get there with his lunch. Or what's *left* of his lunch."

The soldier picked up the wedge of cheese. He turned it over in his hand. He turned to the three behind him and asked them something in their own language.

One of them answered "*Nein,*" in an bored tone. Annemarie recognized the word; the man had replied "No." He had probably been asked, Annemarie thought, "Do you want this?" or perhaps, "Should I give this to the dogs?"

The soldier continued to hold the cheese. He tossed it back and forth between his hands.

Annemarie gave an exasperated sigh. "Could I go now, please?"

she asked impatiently.

The soldier reached for the apple. He noted its brown spots, and made a face of disgust.

"No meat?" he asked, glancing at the basket and the napkin that lay in its bottom.

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

Please, please, she implored in her mind. Don't lift the napkin.

The soldier laughed. He dropped the bruised apple on the ground. One of the dogs leaned forward, pulling at his leash, sniffed the apple, and stepped back. But both dogs still looked intently at the basket, their ears alert, their mouths open. Saliva glistened on their smooth pink gums.

"My dogs smell meat," the soldier said.

"They smell squirrels in the woods," Annemarie responded. "You should take them hunting."

The soldier reached forward with the cheese in one hand, as if he were going to return it to the basket. But he didn't. Instead, he pulled out the flowered cotton napkin.

Annemarie froze.

"Your uncle has a pretty little lunch," the soldier said scornfully, crumpling the napkin around the cheese in his hand. "Like a woman," he added, with contempt.

Then his eyes locked on the basket. He handed the cheese and napkin to the soldier beside him. "What's that? There, in the bottom?" he asked in a different, tenser voice.

What would Kirsti do? Annemarie stamped her foot. Suddenly, to her own surprise, she began to cry. "I don't know!" she said, her voice choked. "My mother's going to be angry that you stopped me and made me late. And you've completely ruined Uncle Henrik's lunch, so now *he'll* be mad at me, too!"

The dogs whined and struggled against the leashes, nosing forward to the basket. One of the other soldiers muttered something in German.

The soldier took out the packet. "Why was this so carefully hidden?" he snapped.

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.

The soldier tore the paper open while below him, on the ground, the dogs strained and snarled, pulling against their leashes. Their

muscles were visible beneath the sleek, short-haired flesh.

He looked inside, then glared at Annemarie. "Stop crying, you idiot girl," he said harshly. "Your stupid mother has sent your uncle a handkerchief. In Germany the women have better things to do. They don't stay at home hemming handkerchiefs for their men."

He gestured with the folded white cloth and gave a short, caustic laugh. "At least she didn't stitch flowers on it."

He flung it to the ground, still half wrapped in the paper, beside the apple. The dogs lunged, sniffed at it eagerly, then subsided, disappointed again.

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

All of the soldiers pushed past her. One of them laughed, and they spoke to each other in their own language. In a moment they had disappeared down the path, in the direction from which Annemarie had just come.

Quickly she picked up the apple and the opened packet with the white handkerchief inside. She put them into the basket and ran around the bend toward the harbor, where the morning sky was now bright with early sun and some of the boat engines were starting their strident din.

The *Ingeborg* was still there, by the dock, and Uncle Henrik was there, his light hair windblown and bright as he knelt by the nets. Annemarie called to him and he came to the side, his face worried when he recognized her on the dock.

She handed the basket across. "Mama sent your lunch," she said, her voice quavering. "But soldiers stopped me, and they took your bread." She didn't dare to tell him more.

Henrik glanced quickly into the basket. She could see the look of relief on his face, and knew that it was because he saw that the packet was there, even though it was torn open.

"Thank you," he said, and the relief was evident in his voice.

Annemarie looked quickly around the familiar small boat. She could see down the passageway into the empty cabin. There was no sign of the Rosens or the others. Uncle Henrik followed her eyes and her puzzled look.

"All is well," he said softly. "Don't worry. Everything is all right.

"I wasn't sure," he said. "But now"—he eyed the basket in his hands—"because of you, Annemarie, everything is all right.

"You run home now, and tell your mama not to worry. I will see you this evening."

He grinned at her suddenly. "They took my bread, eh?" he said.

"I hope they choke on it."

16. I Will Tell You Just a Little

"Poor Blossom!" Uncle Henrik said, laughing, after dinner that evening. "It was bad enough that your mother was going to milk her, after all these years of city life. But Annemarie! To do it for the very first time! I'm surprised Blossom didn't kick you!"

Mama laughed, too. She sat in a comfortable chair that Uncle Henrik had moved from the living room and placed in a corner of the kitchen. Her leg, in a clean white cast to the knee, was on a footstool.

Annemarie didn't mind their laughing. It *had* been funny. When she had arrived back at the farmhouse—she had run along the road to avoid the soldiers who might still be in the woods; now, carrying nothing, she was in no danger—Mama and Kirsti were gone. There was a note, hastily written, from Mama, that the doctor was taking her in his car to the local hospital, that they would be back soon.

But the noise from Blossom, forgotten, un milked, uncomfortable, in the barn, had sent Annemarie warily out with the milking bucket. She had done her best, trying to ignore Blossom's irritated snorts and tossing head, remembering how Uncle Henrik's hands had worked with a firm, rhythmic, pulling motion. And she had milked.

"I could have done it," Kirsti announced. "You only have to pull and it squirts out. I could do it *easily*."

Annemarie rolled her eyes. I'd like to see you try, she thought.

"Is Ellen coming back?" Kirsti asked, forgetting the cow after a moment. "She said she'd make a dress for my doll."

"Annemarie and I will help you make a dress," Mama told her. "Ellen had to go with her parents. Wasn't that a nice surprise, that the Rosens came last night to get her?"

"She should have waked me up to say goodbye," Kirsti grumbled, spooning some imaginary food into the painted mouth of the doll she had propped in a chair beside her.

"Annemarie," Uncle Henrik said, getting up from the table and pushing back his chair, "if you come with me now to the barn, I'll give you a milking lesson. Wash your hands first."

"Me too," said Kirsti.

"Not you too," Mama said. "Not this time. I need your help here, since I can't walk very well. You'll have to be my nurse."

Kirsti hesitated, deciding whether to argue. Then she said, "I'm going to be a nurse when I grow up. Not a cow milker. So I have to stay here and take care of Mama."

Followed as usual by the kitten, Annemarie walked with Uncle Henrik to the barn through a fine misty rain that had begun to fall. It

seemed to her that Blossom shook her head happily when she saw Henrik and knew that she would be in good hands again.

She sat on the stacked hay and watched while he milked. But her mind was not on the milking.

"Uncle Henrik," she asked, "where are the Rosens and the others? I thought you were taking them to Sweden on your boat. But they weren't there."

"They were there," he told her, leaning forward against the cow's broad side. "You shouldn't know this. You remember that I told you it was safer not to know."

"But," he went on, as his hands moved with their sure and practiced motion, "I will tell you just a little, because you were so very brave."

"Brave?" Annemarie asked, surprised. "No, I wasn't. I was very frightened."

"You risked your life."

"But I didn't even think about that! I was only thinking of—"

He interrupted her, smiling. "That's all that *brave* means—not thinking about the dangers. Just thinking about what you must do. Of course you were frightened. I was too, today. But you kept your mind on what you had to do. So did I. Now let me tell you about

the Rosens.

"Many of the fishermen have built hidden places in their boats. I have, too. Down underneath. I have only to lift the boards in the right place, and there is room to hide a few people. Peter, and others in the Resistance who work with him, bring them to me, and to the other fishermen as well. There are people who hide them and help them, along the way to Gilleleje."

Annemarie was startled. "Peter is in the Resistance? Of course! I should have known! He brings Mama and Papa the secret newspaper, *De Fret Danske*. And he always seems to be on the move. I should have figured it out myself!"

"He is a very, very brave young man," Uncle Henrik said. "They all are."

Annemarie frowned, remembering the empty boat that morning. "Were the Rosens and the others there, then, underneath, when I brought the basket?"

Uncle Henrik nodded.

"I heard nothing," Annemarie said.

"Of course not. They had to be absolutely quiet for many hours. The baby was drugged so that it wouldn't wake and cry."

"Could they hear me when I talked to you?"

"Yes. Your friend Ellen told me, later, that they heard you. And they heard the soldiers who came to search the boat."

Annemarie's eyes widened. "Soldiers came?" she asked. "I thought they went the other way after they stopped me."

"There are many soldiers in Gilleleje and all along the coast. They are searching all the boats now. They know that the Jews are escaping, but they are not sure how, and they rarely find them. The hiding places are carefully concealed, and often we pile dead fish on the deck as well. They hate getting their shiny boots dirtied!"

He turned his head toward her and grinned.

Annemarie remembered the shiny boots confronting her on the dark path.

"Uncle Henrik," she said, "I'm sure you are right, that I shouldn't know everything. But, please, would you tell me about the handkerchief? I knew it was important, the packet, and that's why I ran through the woods to take it to you. But I thought maybe it was a map. How could a handkerchief be important?"

He set the filled pail aside and began to wash the cow's udder with the damp cloth, "Very few people know about this, Annemarie," he said with a serious look. "But the soldiers are so angry about the escaping Jews—and the fact that they can't find them—that they have just started using trained dogs."

"They had dogs! The ones who stopped me on the path!"

Uncle Henrik nodded. "The dogs are trained to sniff about and find where people are hidden. It happened just yesterday on two boats. Those damn dogs, they go right through dead fish to the human scent.

"We were all very, very worried. We thought it meant the end of the escape to Sweden by boat.

"It was Peter who took the problem to scientists and doctors. Some very fine minds have worked night and day, trying to find a solution.

"And they have created a special drug. I don't know what it is. But it was in the handkerchief. It attracts the dogs, but when they sniff at it, it ruins their sense of smell. Imagine that!"

Annemarie remembered how the dogs had lunged at the handkerchief, smelled it, and then turned away.

"Now, thanks to Peter, we will each have such a handkerchief, each boat captain. When the soldiers board our boats, we will simply pull the handkerchiefs out of our pockets. The Germans will probably think we all have bad colds! The dogs will sniff about, sniff the handkerchiefs we are holding, and then roam the boat and find nothing. They will smell nothing."

"Did they bring dogs to your boat this morning?"

"Yes. Not twenty minutes after you had gone. I was about to pull away from the dock when the soldiers appeared and ordered me to halt. They came aboard, searched, found nothing. By then, of course, I had the handkerchief. If I had not, well—" His voice trailed off, and he didn't finish the sentence. He didn't need to.

If she had not found the packet where Mr. Rosen had dropped it. If she had not run through the woods. If the soldiers had taken the basket. If she had not reached the boat in time. All of the ifs whirled in Annemarie's head.

"They are safe in Sweden now?" she asked. "You're sure?"

Uncle Henrik stood, and patted the cow's head. "I saw them ashore. There were people waiting to take them to shelter. They are quite safe there."

"But what if the Nazis invade Sweden? Will the Rosens have to run away again?"

"That won't happen. For reasons of their own, the Nazis want Sweden to remain free. It is very complicated."

Annemarie's thoughts turned to her friends, hiding under the deck of the *Ingeborg*. "It must have been awful for them, so many hours there," she murmured. "Was it dark in the hiding place?"

"Dark, and cold, and very cramped. And Mrs. Rosen was seasick, even though we were not on the water very long—it is a short distance, as you know. But they are courageous people. And none of that mattered when they stepped ashore. The air was fresh and cool in Sweden; the wind was blowing. The baby was beginning to wake as I said goodbye to them."

"I wonder if I will ever see Ellen again," Annemarie said sadly.

"You will, little one. You saved her life, after all. Someday you will find her again. Someday the war will end," Uncle Henrik said. "All wars do."

"Now then," he added, stretching, "that was quite a milking lesson, was it not?"

"Uncle Henrik!" Annemarie shrieked, and then began to laugh. "Look!" She pointed. "The God of Thunder has fallen into the milk pail!"