

Snow Treasure Study Guide

Snow Treasure by Marie McSwigan

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Plot Summary

Snow Treasure by Marie McSwigan is historical fiction based on the real life accounts of the children of Norway who helped to smuggle out the nation's gold reserves under the noses of the occupying German military during World War II.

The novel begins by introducing four children: Peter (13), Lovisa (10), Michael (12), and Helga (11). They are playing in the snow, which has remained later into the season than usual, when they see Peter's Uncle Victor and his first mate, Rolls, coming over the hill from the seaport. They all wave enthusiastically, but are concerned when Victor hardly acknowledges them. This is unusual for Peter's normally gregarious Uncle.

Later that night Peter tells his father at dinner time that he's seen Victor and that Victor is back from tending his nets at sea. Peter is shocked that his father doesn't finish his meal, but leaves abruptly to find Victor. Later that night, Peter is wakened by voices in the front room. He gets out of bed to see who it is and overhears Victor and his father, Lars, discussing the possibility of war and what it could mean for Norway's money reserves.

Victor spots Peter and his eyes widen. He tells Lars that the children would never be suspected. Lars argues with him, but Victor turns to Peter and asks him if he would like to help his country in a time of war. Peter, wanting to be adventurous like his uncle, says that he would. Victor learns from Peter that there are more than 30 children that are of the age to participate in sledding the gold down the mountain to the waiting ships.

The next day Peter invites Michael and Helga to come to his and Lovisa's home. Though Lovisa is Peter's younger sister, she is also included as a team member. Peter tells the children what Victor has asked of them and they all readily agree. They take Peter's ancestral sword from over the fireplace, place their hands on it and swear to keep the secret about the gold and to refrain from speaking to a German, ever.

Later that day, at school, Uncle Victor visits the classroom and tells the children that air raid shelters have been built around town and that they must practice going to the shelters in an orderly manner. He also tells them that he's forming a War Defense Club and that if anyone is interested in joining, they should see Peter, who will be the president. Peter's father leaves to join the army with many of the other men in the village.

38 children, in all, join the club. In the middle of the night, Lars wakens Peter and has him follow Lars out to the railroad tracks where they meet up with some other men from the village, including Uncle Victor and Rolls. They take Peter to a manmade cave in the middle of the woods where they've stacked bricks of gold bullion from floor to ceiling. They tell Peter that he is to bring his team to the shelter every day, where someone will load the sleds for them, and then the children are to lay atop the bricks, belly-down, and sled them to the bottom of the mountain (nearly a 12 mile trip). They will stay overnight at the Holms' Farmstead, then walk the rest of the way home the next day.



Peter learns from Victor that the children will be broken into teams, but that only 2-4 children at a time will go down, so as to avoid suspicion. Peter goes and tells the rest of the children, making each of them swear the same oath to not speak to the Germans. Later that day, Peter, Helga, Lovisa, and Michael take the first run. It goes well until they reach the mid-way point. There they can see that the German soldiers are building a more permanent camp by the water's edge, and that they are using the only sledding trail to make their way up the mountain. The children are frightened, but Helga encourages them to look happy and normal.

They manage to get past the German soldiers as the Captain of the soldiers tells his men to stand aside to let the children through. He even tells Peter as he comes past that he used to enjoy sledding when he was a boy. When the children reach the bottom of the hill, they pull their sleds to a prearranged clearing, find two submerged trees, and then they bury the bricks as Victor has shown them. Then, to mark the spots so that Victor and Rolls can come under cover of night to get the bricks and load them onto the boat, the children are to build snowmen. This they do.

The sledding by the teams begins in earnest and half of the bricks are taken down the mountain when the weather threatens to shift. If it rains then the snow will melt and there will be no more sledding, and no more way to get the gold safely down the mountain. However, Per Garson, the man who works for Peter's family, says that his trick knee says that it will be fine. It is. That night the weather turns into a blizzard and everyone is snowed in for three days straight.

Afterwards, the sledding begins again. Peter sees, when he comes over the hill, that the Germans didn't fare so well during the blizzard. The new Camp Commandant is upset and is screaming at his soldiers when Peter sleds past. The Commandant stops Peter on his way back out of the woods and asks him if he would rather stay at the camp with him and be his servant. Peter remembers his vow not to speak to the Germans, and so he doesn't say a word. The Commandant believes him to be simple or rude and angrily sends Peter away.

A week passes without incident, until one day Helga tells Peter that she feels as if they are being watched. Then, as they reach the Holms' farm, they see a man on skis shoot out of the tree-line and head down the mountain. Peter fears that they have been observed and tells Herr Holms. Herr Holms goes out at night to go to the village and warn the other children not to come down the mountain until they can figure out what is to be done.

Mrs. Lundstrom, Peter's mother, arrives at the Holms' farm and tells Peter and the others that they should go ahead and continue with their sledding trips for now, but that they will all keep a sharp eye on things. Peter goes on another run a few days later and the Commandant stops him again. He says that Peter and the other children are stupid because they don't go to school. He announces that all children will go back to school starting the next day.



Peter's mother visits the doctor and they devise a way to make it look as if the children have a case of German Measles. Thus, the older children cannot go to school or risk catching it. This is relayed to the Commandant who now sees the village as disease ridden. Meanwhile, a blue-eyed soldier that Peter noticed on the first day down the hill comes into the village and sits in the pastry shop. This is shocking to Peter as none of the soldiers dare venture into the 'disease ridden' town. No one speaks to him, Peter notes. The soldier looks somehow very sad to him.

The gold continues to go down, and it is after Peter has just finished burying his gold and making his snowman when he feels he is being watched again. He quickly looks up and sees the blue-eyed soldier standing over him. Peter falls back into the snow, but before anything more can happen, Victor and Rolls come out of the trees and capture the German soldier. They take him back to their boat, the Cleng Peerson. Peter follows them.

Peter and the others learn that the man's name is Jan and that he is actually Polish. He'd been forced to join the German army after they learned that he could speak six languages. He tells them that all of his family has been killed or are in exile in other countries. He begs Victor to take him with them to America, which is where they will take the gold for safekeeping. Victor tells him that even if he believed his story, he couldn't take him to America without official papers. They lock Lars up and Peter goes home.

Because of this new development it is decided that the mothers with small children will also pull bricks down the mountain to the clearing, in addition to the children on their sleds. They feel that it is only a matter of time before the soldier is missed and a search party comes looking for him. When that happens it could all be over.

The next day the children have just finished building their snowmen when the Commandant shows up at the clearing. He asks Lovisa if she's seen a German soldier lost in the woods. Lovisa just stares up at him and refuses to speak. The Commandant becomes enraged and begins knocking her snowman down. Panicked, Peter picks up a snowball and hits the Commandant with it, then runs away. The diversion works and all of them chase Peter. Unfortunately, he is caught and placed in a jail cell in the German camp.

Later that night a soldier comes to take away his supper dishes. The soldier is Jan in disguise. He tells Peter that he's there to rescue him. He hands Peter a letter from Victor that tells him to do as Jan says. They manage to escape and make their way back to the boat. Because the Germans are likely to find them if they stay any longer, it is decided that they will all set sail for America immediately.

Victor has found out that the Americans are very interested in the information that Jan has, and so will grant him entrance to the country without papers. Victor sadly tells Peter that they can't risk taking him home, and that he needs to come with them. Peter understands but is sad to think that he might never see his family again. Victor tells him that they have an Uncle living in Wisconsin that they can live with until the war is over.

He tells Peter that what he and all of the other children did for their country will never be forgotten.



Chapters 1-5

Summary

Chapter 1

It is a holiday off from school and four children, Peter(13), Lovisa (10), Michael (12), and Helga (11), are playing and sledding in the snow. Set in Norway the children remark that even in April the snow has stayed longer than usual.

Helga, a tomboy of sorts, spots Peter's Uncle Victor and his first mate, Rolls, coming over the hill. They all wave at them, but the men only respond with a faint wave. Peter is confused by the greeting since his Uncle is usually very outgoing. Peter admires his Uncle Victor because he owns his own fishing fleet and gets to experience adventures, unlike his father who is a banker. Helga remarks that they are headed down to the Snake, which is a very narrow and winding waterway that leads to the sea. Victor has his fishing fleet moored there, replies Peter.

Later that night, Peter, and his sister Lovisa, tells their parents that Victor has come back from fishing runs early. Peter is shocked when his father stops eating his dinner and leaves immediately to go see Victor. The children become worried but their mother reassures them.

Chapter 2

Peter is wakened in the night by voices in the front room. He walks to his door and realizes that it is his Uncle Victor and his father who are talking. He hears them talking about gold, Nazis, and nine million dollars in their local bank. Victor sees Peter standing in his doorway and his eyes widen. He tells Lars, Peter's father, that the children would never be suspected. Lars says absolutely not, but Victor asks Peter if he'd like to help his country. Peter says yes because he wants to be a hero like his Uncle.

Chapter 3

Around town air raid shelters are going up. Each building is also built around important statues in the city, to protect them. The children are all afraid and at school can't speak of anything else. The teacher tells them that it is merely a precaution.

Uncle Victor visits the school and tells the children that the air raid shelters have been completed and that they will need to practice getting to them just as they would for a fire drill. He says that he also wants to start a club called the Defense Club, and that Peter will be its president. Everyone is eager to take part.

Chapter 4



Peter's father shakes him gently awake in the middle of the night and tells him to follow him into the woods. Once they get to the railroad tracks, near the woods, they meet up with some other men from the town. Each has a sled with them, loaded with large sacks.

Peter asks his father what is going on and Lars tells him that there is a war coming and that the money in their banks might be taken to use against Norway's people. So, like other countries, they are going to move their money to America to keep it safe.

Chapter 5

Peter is told to follow a family friend, named Olsen, into the man-made cave they've erected. Peter is to pay attention so that he can get back to the cave on his own. Peter asks Olsen about the cave since Peter is very familiar with this part of the woods. Olsen says they made the cave to store the bricks in. When they arrive, Peter sees that bricks of bullion are inside of the cave, stacked in neat rows against the far side of the room. The plan is to have the children take the bricks by sled, to the Snake, then on to America in Victor's boats.

Analysis

The theme of Friendship is evident in the first few chapters as the author shows the close friendship that is shared by Lovisa, Peter, Michael, and Helga. Each of the children likes the other and have known each other their entire lives. Their parents also know one another which shows that they have a very tight-knit community, something that will come into play later on in the novel.

Additionally, the theme of Family is introduced with the discussions of Victor and Lars and how they view the family. Victor is the single, younger brother, of Lars, and yet, he views all of Lars's children as if they are his own. It is clear that Victor also extends this custodial feeling toward the rest of the town as well. The interaction between Peter's mother and father also establish that Peter and Lovisa, and Bunny, live in a loving household, and that everyone's well-being is important.

The reader is told about Victor's boat, the Cleeng Peerson, and that it is one of the oldest boats in the area. Victor's boat is often laughed at because of its age, but Victor tells Peter that it is not only seaworthy, but she is dependable, stable, and can get the job done when others cannot. This is also highly symbolic of Uncle Victor because he embodies many of the same characteristics of his boat.

Peter's character is established in these early chapters as being a natural leader, not only because of his age, but because he thinks his way through things. The reader also sees that Helga is extremely bright and not afraid to take calculated risks. Lovisa and Michael are shown to be willing and able followers, and that they will do whatever Peter and Helga ask them to do. All of the children are patriotic as indicated by their discussions about the possibility of war.



Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Friendship in these early chapters.

Discussion Question 2

What is Peter and Lovisa's family like?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the symbolism of Victor's boat.

Vocabulary

Norway, paused, accustomed, fjords, fleet, voyage, equally, stumbled, abruptly, bullion, kroner, tons, protested, primer, air-raid shelter, secrecy, audience, safeguard, calculation



Chapters 6-10

Summary

Chapter 6

The next day is another day off from school as the entire town anticipates creating a blackout situation. All day Peter and his friends help to drape windows, cover doors, and make everything light proof. Peter learns that his father, along with many others in town, are going to meet that evening to discuss the defense of the town. They are to bring their weapons. Lars tells Peter that in his absence he is the man of the family.

Peter wants to know when he and the other children are to begin their sledding. Lars says that he hopes that they won't be needed after all. Right now, everything is in a holding pattern. Lars tells Peter that he needs to wait for Uncle Victor's word before taking action. Peter is frustrated, but does as he's told. Night comes and the entire town looks as if it doesn't exist. Peter wants to go out and see what it is like completely dark, but he doesn't because it is his father's last night at home for a while. Later, Lars leaves. Uncle Victor arrives several hours later to tell them that the Nazis did land on the beaches that night. The children are to be used after all.

Chapter 7

Victor tells Peter, and three others that join them at Peter's house, that they are to go outside and play, just like any other day. This will accustom the soldiers to seeing children playing in the snow. Then when they sneak the bricks out, there will be no reason to suspect anything.

Victor tells them to sled to a certain point in the woods, to bury the bricks under a submerged tree, then build a snowman so that he and Rolls can find the bricks at night. They will take the bricks from that point to the boat.

Peter worries that not all of the mines have been discovered, but Victor tells him that he has people working on that and all of the mines' locations will be known by the time all of the bullion has been moved. Victor tells him that they will split all 38 of the children from the school into teams, who will each, then, work in smaller groups of 2-3 to avoid suspicion.

Chapter 8

Victor leaves and Per Garson skis over his tracks to hide them. Helga, Peter, Lovisa, and Michael set out to play in the snow, but before doing so, Peter makes them all swear on his family's ancestral sword that they won't talk about what they are doing to anyone, even if they are tortured. They all swear, then head out into the snow to look as if they are playing. Later, Peter takes them to Thor's Rock, which is where the man-



made cave was the night before. But, when the children reach Thor's rock, the cave is gone.

Chapter 9

Per Garson's face peeks out at them from some young trees and he laughs at them. Peter says that he was sure this was the right place. Per Garson tells him that it is the right place but that the men came back after Peter had left and placed trees in front of the snow walls to make it look more natural. And it worked. Peter and the others follow Per Garson into the cave where he shows them how to untie the bricks. Peter offers to help tie them, too, but Per Garson says that they should never be the one to load or tie the bricks. One brick falling from the sled and it would all be over he tells them.

Per Garson tells them that the trip home would take too long so the men have arranged for the children to stay at a local farmhouse near the shore. The girls will stay in the house and the boys in the barn. He gives them parcels filled with food for their lunches and wishes them good luck. Each sled would have 4 billion bricks tied down to the bottom. Then the sledder would lie, belly down, on top of them. They would not be visible to anyone looking. He wishes them good luck.

Chapter 10

The children start their descent, but halt after a short while to have their lunch. While stopped they walk over the hill to look into the valley. They see a large freighter in the harbor down below and hundreds of soldiers camped on the banks. A long row of soldiers are making their way up the hill, right on the only path used for sledding.

The children discuss walking down, but that is discarded. The bricks are too heavy. They decide to just go ahead with the sledding and hope that the soldiers aren't coming all of the way up the hill. They start down the hill but the soldiers are coming all of the way up the hill. In a few moments Peter and the others will plow into them. Suddenly, an officer orders the soldiers to stand aside to let them slide past. He tells Peter that as a boy he'd loved to sled, too. The German soldier smiles at Peter.

Analysis

These chapters indicate the continued themes of Friends and Family as the reader sees the children come together to discuss the task they've been asked to undertake. All of them are very willing to do what is being asked of them. Peter wants them to make a solemn vow to each other that they will never speak to the Germans, not one word. To seal the pact between them, Peter lifts the ancestral sword from over the fireplace and has each child place their hands on the sword and swear to keep the secret of the gold. Each of the children do. This sword represents their pledge to one another and to helping their country.

The theme of War is also introduced in this chapter as the children understand that the Germans have landed and that their village has had to go into blackout mode. Their way



of life has been interrupted, and Peter, especially, is aware that his father and other adults in town could be subject to harsh punishments if any of their activities were to become known.

The bricks, themselves, represent all of the hopes and dreams of the Norwegian people, as without the money, after the war, they would never be able to rebuilt their homeland. Their very survival depends on the children moving these bricks to safety.

Per Garson is introduced more fully in these chapters. He is an elderly man who remembers World War I, and does what he can to help out on the homefront. He is the one that shows the children how to untie the bricks from the sleds, and urges them to use their heads and not act rashly. He is also the one that spends his days blotting out the children's sledding trails with his skis.

The theme of Courage is also demonstrated when the children realize that they are going to have to sled right past the German soldiers as they make their way up the only sledding path. Helga and Peter encourage the others to do as they do, and everyone makes it down the path fine. One German soldier even stands aside and allows them to go past, telling them that he hates to interrupt their sledding time.

Discussion Question 1

What are the dangers that the children will be facing as they take the gold down the mountain?

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the theme of Courage in these chapters.

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the symbolism of the bricks.

Vocabulary

sepulchers, pearly, produced, lashed, laced, toboggan, descent, spoiled, grim, tenpins, fir, corridor, massive, swerved



Chapters 11-15

Summary

Chapter 11

In this chapter Peter and the others make it safely past all of the guards. Peter wonders if Victor knew how many soldiers they'd have to go past. When they all reach the safety of the woods near the waterway, they all start to giggle over the absurdity of it all.

The children pull their sleds into the clearing where they quickly find the fallen trees Victor and Per have told them about. They quickly untie their sleds as they were shown, bury the bricks, then have fun building snowmen to mark the spot.

Chapter 12

The children reach the Holms' farmstead and are welcomed in. Herr Holms wants to know immediately how it went for them, but Fru Holms tells him to let the children warm up and eat some dinner. Afterwards, the children grows excited as they tell him about the soldier and how he'd not wanted to spoil their sledding. Herr Holms roars with laughter along with the children. Fru Holms calls them all brave and courageous.

It is not long before Peter and the others begin to grow very weary. The exertions of the day and the stress, along with the warm fire and warm food combine to make all of them ready to go to bed. Herr Holms leads the boys out to the barn and says good night.

To Peter it seems he has just gone to sleep when Herr Holms is shaking him awake. It is later in the morning and time for the children to make their way home. Peter says that there's no rush, but Herr Holms says that the snow may not hold. It could wreck all of their plans.

Chapter 13

All of the townspeople ask only one question for the next three weeks: how long will the snow hold? As long as the snow stayed on the ground the children would be able to get the bricks down the mountain. However, it was already late into April and spring would eventually come. Plus, many of the younger children, it had been discovered, could not carry four bricks. It was just too much for them and they'd been given only two bricks to carry.

As a result, not as many bricks had been moved, and by Peter's estimation it would take another three weeks to move the rest. None of the other children and the teams of children were ever stopped by the guards, though the soldiers tried many times to make friends with the children. Peter says that they offered many of the children sweets, cakes, and chocolates, but not one of the children spoke to the soldiers, nor took their gifts. They simply smiled pleasantly, then walked on.



That night at home, Per makes the fire inside the house too warm and both he and Peter step outside into the dark. As usual, now, the entire town is blacked out. Peter wonders what is bothering Per, who had said earlier his bad knees were foretelling a change in weather. Suddenly, Per shoves his hand out, knocking into Peter. In a moment Peter knows why. It has started to rain.

Chapter 14

It rains heavily and throughout the night Peter worries that the rain will create one big large mud pit on the mountain. If that happens there will be no more sledding and their plans will be ruined. However, when he wakes in the morning, Per Garson is laughing. Peter sees why. In the middle of the night the rain turned to sleet, then ice. The entire town of Riswyk is in the middle of one of the most ferocious blizzards that the town has seen in fifty years.

Per says that his bones had told him that this was going to happen, and no one bothers to argue with him. The blizzard lasts for three days and during that time there is no sledding that can take place. The children enjoy resting and playing quietly inside with their brothers and sisters. They are all content knowing that the cold snap and additional snow would make their sledding adventures continue a little longer.

Chapter 15

The weather lets up and Peter and his team make ready to sled the gold down the mountain once more. However, when they enter the woods Peter sees ski tracks and snowshoe prints headed into the forest, right into the area where the cave is. Peter tells his team to hide behind some bushes until he can check it out. Per steps out of the cave and waves Peter over. He tells the children as he loads their bricks up that he and some of the other men spend time making many trails all over the mountain so they can hide the sled trails.

The children stop in their usual place to have lunch and to look over the hill onto the small outpost the Germans have set up by the water's edge. It has survived the blizzard but there has been damage to some of the buildings. The camp's Commandant is shouting orders at people. Helga, who understands some German, tells Peter that the officer is upset that the buildings were not built better.

The children begin the last leg of the journey down the hill. They are on their way back up the hill, after burying the bricks, when the Commandant stops Peter. He demands that Peter become his servant boy, but Peter refuses to speak to him. The man screams that all Norwegians are stupid and need to be in school. He tells Peter that there will be no more sledding and that the next day all Norse children will be required to be back in school.



Analysis

The snowmen become an ingenious way for the children to mark where they have buried the gold. They represent the clever and creative way in which the Norwegians had to think in order to protect their country's assets. The thought that the weather might not hold is cause for concern for everyone in the village. Too much rain would eventually melt the snow, even though the snow is many feet deep in most places. Peter laments the fact that it is already April, a time when the snow should have been long gone. However, Per, who is one of the oldest men in the village, tells Peter that his arthritic knee tells him that it is going to be okay, that the snow is going to hold. The next day, of course, it is a whiteout situation with a full blown blizzard gathering strength.

The symbolism of the fire is notable in Chapter 13 when Per builds it so hot that it is almost uncomfortable. This represents the ability of the Norwegian people to withstand the cold and the inhospitable climate, that they are survivors. It is also the literal flame of hope.

Later, after the blizzard passes by, the children notice that the German camp has suffered some damage. The Commandant is shown to be a merciless individual, who looks at the Norwegians as if they are inferior to him. He also seems to treat his soldiers with little regard, too. Both Helga and Peter are glad to be clear of him after the first brief encounter.

The sleds, themselves, represent freedom and act as a vehicle for the children's courage. The theme of Courage is evident in these chapters, particularly in Chapter 15, when the Commandant stops Peter and asks if Peter would rather live in the barracks and act as his cabin boy. Peter pretends he doesn't understand and the Commandant dismisses him. Peter knew that he was facing a terrible person in the Commandant and yet he did not break his vow to the other children to remain silent when confronted by a German.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Courage in these chapters.

Discussion Question 2

Why is the weather such a significant factor in this story?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the symbolism of the sleds.

Vocabulary

situation, bobsled, particular, Commandant, serenely, copse, thicket, blizzard, whiteout, sleet, camouflage, disguise



Chapters 16-20

Summary

Chapter 16

The next day the Commandant orders signs to be posted throughout Riswyk demanding that the children go back to school and that normal activities begin in the village. The regular teacher is not there any longer, so the people are told that a German soldier, who had been a teacher, will instruct the children.

The people in the village patently ignore the soldiers, going about their business as if they are not even there. Peter goes with his mother to the pastry shop where he sees a blue-eyed soldier that he recognizes from the beach. Peter is able to observe him closer this time and realizes that the soldier isn't but about a few years older than he is. He can also tell that the soldier is sorry for what he is having to do.

When Peter and his mother leave the pastry shop, they don't go home, but to the offices of Dr. Akers. Mrs. Lundstrom asks him about the health of the town and he tells her that never before has he seen a healthier town. Then, Mrs. Lundstrom leans forward and asks again about the children going back to school if everyone in town were ill. He understands what she's suggesting and tells her that he's been keeping it under wraps, but that indeed, he's concerned about a sweeping illness that seems to be going from house to house. Mrs. Lundstrom smiles and she and Peter leave.

Chapter 17

The next day there is an unexpected outbreak of German Measles among the very young children in the town. With such an epidemic, it was unthinkable to open the school. The older children that did not have the disease, the Commandant was told, were being urged to stay in homes away from their infected siblings, and to spend as much time as possible outside where the germs couldn't live.

The doctor visited the Commandant to personally tell him the news. The Commandant insists that his own doctor examine the infected children. Dr. Akers acts as if he welcomes the assistance saying that the disease is so virulent that he's shocked that there haven't been any cases in the German camp. At this remark, however, the Commandant asks to confer with the doctor. They decide that the best thing for the German camp is to stay very far away from the Norwegians.

The children begin their sledding again and the bricks slowly make their way down the mountain. One day, Peter sees Helga standing thoughtfully and concerned by a row of trees where they bury their bricks and build their snowmen. When he asks what is the matter, she tells him that she feels as if they are being watched. When they push through the bushes they don't see anything or anyone, and yet, Helga, who is usually



very brave seems worried. To make matters worse, Peter knows exactly what she means. He's had the same feeling.

Chapter 18

Peter helps build the last snowmen and they all head off to the Holms' farmhouse. There's a new rule by the Germans: everyone has to be in by sunset. Peter urges his team to move faster as sunset is close. Just as they cross the field for the Holms' house, Peter feels as if he's being watched again. He quickly looks over his shoulder and sees a German soldier shooting out of the treeline on skis. They'd been right. They had been watched. The question is, how much did he see?

Chapter 19

Peter wishes that he could talk to Uncle Victor. He would know what to do. Herr Holms says that they need to warn the other children in the town who would be starting down the mountain with their loads in the morning. Her Holms says that he will go and warn them but Fru Holms tells him that there is the curfew and if he is caught outside he will be shot.

Herr Holms takes a white bed sheet and throws it over his clothing, then places a white towel over his head. He tells them that in the dark, against the white snow, he will look only like more snow. He makes it to the town and back before midnight. When Peter wakes in the morning the rest of his team has gone home. Fru Holms tells him that his mother wants him to wait there until she comes to him.

A few hours later Mrs. Lundstrom arrives pulling a bobsled with Bunny and another small child on board. Peter asks her if she found Victor and she tells him that she has a map with an X drawn on it so that she can find him. She says that for the next few days, she and the other mothers with small children are going to pretend that they are taking their healthy children outside to stay well. In the meanwhile, they will also carry bricks under the children, and will hopefully throw off the spies who were watching the older children.

In the meanwhile, she wants Peter to go with her and help her pull the bobsled with the small children on it, so that if Peter ever needed to find Victor on his own, that now he will know how to find him. Peter agrees, but worries that the younger children won't be able to make the trip. His mother reassures him.

Chapter 20

They reach the beach where the barracks are. Peter is well ahead of his mother and zips on past the soldiers as usual. However, because his mother is on the bobsled with the little ones, she is slower. When she reaches the bottom of the hill she gets off to pull the children. The Commandant sees her, as do all of the rest of the soldiers. Peter doesn't like how they look at his mother. The Commandant asks if she would like to have one of the officers pull the sled for her. His mother just smiles and keeps on walking.



The Commandant looks as if he is about to be upset with Mrs. Lundstrom when another officer comes running up with a paper in his hands. He gives the paper to the Commandant. When the Commandant reads it he becomes upset. This gives Mrs. Lundstrom time to continue to pull the children away from the soldiers. Once she reaches the forest's edge, Peter reaches out a hand to help her.

They use the map and go down to the water's edge where they see trees miraculously dancing on the water. Only it isn't real trees, it is the excellent camouflage job that Victor has employed. A voice behind them makes them jump, but it is only Uncle Victor playing a joke on them. Considering what they've just gone through, Peter doesn't find it funny.

Analysis

The theme of Solidarity is strong in these chapters as the reader sees not only the children, but the townspeople willing and ready to do their part to continue to fool the Germans. First, they all agree to ignore the Germans whenever they venture into the town. They are to act as if they are not even there, and to certainly not speak to them. Secondly, they all agree to help with the subterfuge of the German Measles.

All over town iodine spots are painted on the children's faces, so that if any German should observe them they will see the disease's evidence. Then, the community rallies around the children when the spy is discovered, by loading up the very young children, sitting them on the bricks, then pulling them down the mountain.

Additionally, the theme of Courage is exemplified in several instances through these chapters. First, there is the courage of the Doctor to go and confront the Commandant and tell him that there is an epidemic. Then, there is Peter's mother's courage when she is confronted by the Commandant. Were it not for the interruption by a telegram the entire scene could have ended differently.

The blue-eyed soldier is introduced in this chapter and he is significant in that he shows remorse for the invasion of the Norwegians' way of life. He makes his way into town and sits in the pastry shop, looking very dejected when no one will speak to him. Peter almost feels sorry for him.

The introduction of a curfew serves to intensify the suspense and danger factor as Herr Holms has to go to bring Mrs. Lundstrom to the farmstead when they learn of the spy. It is too dangerous for the children to continue their sledding until the danger is neutralized.

The fact that Peter is upset at Victor's little joke in the woods indicates that Peter has gone well beyond seeing the project as an adventure, and fully understands the ramifications if they should be caught. This entire mission has matured him and made him into the leader that he had always hoped to be.



Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Solidarity as evidenced in the novel thus far.

Discussion Question 2

What could a spy have seen when he observed the children?

Discussion Question 3

Why does Herr Holms risk breaking curfew in order to go back to the village?

Vocabulary

curfew, pelting, dumplings, goose-down, transferred, sullen, exalt, dared, drift, submerged, boasted, rummaged, tapered



Chapters 21-25

Summary

Chapter 21

Victor takes Peter and Mrs. Lundstrom aboard the ship. Rolls is there making tea which he offers them both. Mrs. Lundstrom tells Victor and Rolls that she left the young children playing in the snow so their meeting must be short. Peter tells Victor about the spy in the woods. Victor also tells them that the feeling of being watched was correct. Either he or Rolls have been watching over the children from a hiding place above them. They were being watched, lovingly watched, he says. This makes Peter feel slightly better.

Victor and Rolls will go back to the same hiding place and watch to see if the spy makes another appearance in the area. If so, he will watch to see what the spy does. Mrs. Lundstrom tells him to be careful. She tells Victor that Lars and the other men have been shipped off to fight at Trondheim where there's been heavy fighting. Victor says that he now knows where all of the mines are, so he will be ready to leave for America as soon as the last of the gold arrives safely, which he estimates will be one more week.

Chapter 22

Mrs. Lundstrom and Peter leave the boat and collect the children. They leave the same way they came, separately. Once over the hill and away from the German camp, Peter helps his mother make pull the children to the Holms' house. Once the children are tucked into bed Fru Holms pulls Peter and his mother aside and tells them that the German spy with the skis went into her barn and looked around. Then, he skied off.

Peter tells everyone what is going on when they return to Riswyk. Everyone takes as much additional load as they can down the mountain. They can only hope that the spy won't figure anything out until it is too late.

Peter places his last brick in the hole and starts to build his snowman when he hears something. He slowly turns and there standing next to him is the blue eyed soldier.

Chapter 23

Peter sinks to his knees in terror, but before he can blink Victor has quietly emerged from the forest, pinned the man's arms behind him and put a gag in his mouth. Rolls helps him, and then they slip back into the forest. None of the other children see anything and Peter wants to keep it that way. But, now he knows he has to go and see Victor to find out what to do. Peter sends Helga and the others back to the farmhouse without him. Helga argues with him as she wants to see Victor, too. Peter pulls rank on her and she reluctantly leaves with the others.



Aboard the boat Victor and Rolls have taken the gag off of the man's mouth. The man tells them that he's actually Polish and has been forced to be part of the army. He hates the Nazis and wants Victor and Rolls to take him with them to America. He offers to do anything they want. Victor tells him that there's no way the Americans would let him in without a passport, even if he did believe his outlandish story.

Chapter 24

The captive aboard the boat tells his story. His name is Jan, and he was a student in Poland. One day he was on his way to a boat that would take him to America where he would go to study in a University in Pittsburgh, when two soldiers took him and put him in a basement. They took his ticket and his passport. After two days they let him out and he found that he was in some sort of spy house, full of people wearing all sorts of different clothing. There were whole rooms full of nothing but different types of clothing for disguises.

One of the men there, whom Jan thought was a priest told him that he was actually Gestapo, but he's glad that Jan thought he made a convincing priest. Jan feared that the man would kill him, but instead, he seemed to like speaking with Jan. He gave him a tour of the entire house and explained that Jan's passport and ticket were being used by someone who is now named Jan Lasek. This essentially meant that the real Jan Lasek no longer officially existed.

Because he was a student of languages the spies found him useful and put a German uniform on him. He was sent with a regiment back to Krakow, which was where he was originally from. He learned that his father had been shot, both brothers were also dead, and that his mother and sisters had fled the country. The house he'd grown up in was leveled to the ground.

He begs them one last time to take him to America where he has the last remaining family living.

Chapter 25

Jan tells them that they may come looking for him that night, but surely will miss him at roll call the next morning. They still decide that they can't take him because he hasn't any papers. They wait until it is very dark, then they lock up Jan. Peter, Victor, and Rolls go to the snowmen and carry the bricks back to the ship. Not an hour later Victor hears sounds from the clearing. The German soldiers are looking for Jan.

Analysis

The theme of War is demonstrated in these chapters as the reader sees Peter and the others discuss various situations. Jan tells about his family being killed or captured, about his childhood home being destroyed. The devastation of war is illustrated and paints Jan in a sympathetic light as an unwilling player in Hitler's war.



The theme of Courage surfaces in Chapter 22 when it is determined that they are so close to finishing the task that they will gamble with the fact that by the time the soldiers do anything like investigating, they will have moved all of the gold to the boat. The fact that everyone is willing to take this risk, in fact the entire town, indicates how dedicated and how brave the town has decided to be. They understand that without the gold for after the war, they might as well surrender.

The threat of the spy intensifies as it is evident that Jan was not the spy that came from the woods. That means that there is another real spy out there. Everyone knows the risk that they are taking, and the theme of Solidarity is demonstrated in everyone's grim determination to continue with bringing the bricks down the mountain. The last few bricks are only brought down by the mothers and their small children. Only a few of the other, original children, the team captains, continue to sled their haul down the mountain.

Discussion Question 1

What is Jan's story?

Discussion Question 2

Why did the German's find Jan useful and keep him around?

Discussion Question 3

Discuss the theme of Solidarity.

Vocabulary

disguises, interned, Poles, barracks, quizzed, port hole, fir, trailed, churned, hollering, burrowed, runaway



Chapters 26-30

Summary

Chapter 26

The last of the gold is sledded down the mountain. Peter goes out to meet them and helps them unload. Suddenly, Lovisa, who has come down with the last load, stands up in fright. The soldiers are coming up over the hill. Peter tells everyone to bury their bricks quickly and begin building their snowmen. By the time the soldiers arrive, the children are already more than half finished with their snowmen. Just when Peter thinks they have fooled them he hears one of them say that they need to wait as the Commandant is coming. Peter is suddenly very afraid.

Chapter 27

The Commandant arrives and addresses the children, who go on with their work as if the man isn't even speaking to them. This enrages the Commandant and he goes over to Lovisa and screams at her. She looks up at him but won't answer his questions about whether or not she's seen a German soldier wandering in the woods. When she doesn't answer the Commandant kicks over her snowman, which makes Peter gulp with fear. They hadn't had time to bury the bricks as deeply this time.

The Commandant continues to knock and kick Lovisa's snowman until he is down to the bottom of it. Just as he's about to kick it one last time, and expose the bricks, Peter hurls a snowball at him. The snowball hits the Commandant on the side of the face. When he whirls around, Peter takes off running.

Chapter 28

The soldiers catch Peter and he is taken prisoner back to the German camp. He is placed into a small jail cell. Later, a soldier brings him some food and a drink of water, telling him that he will be back in an hour to take him to the Commandant. An hour later the soldier opens the door to take Peter to see the Commandant, but Peter can tell that it isn't the same soldier. He gets a closer look and sees that it is Jan.

Chapter 29

Jan hands him a note from Victor. The note says that his life depends on doing exactly what Jan tells him to do. They manage to sneak out of the barracks, narrowly avoiding detection. When they get to the water's edge they have to get into the sub-zero water and swim to the lifeboat that is waiting for them. Jan and Peter almost don't make it due to the water being so cold. They are lifted at the last minute into the lifeboat and wrapped in warm blankets.

Chapter 30



Peter wakes inside of Uncle Victor's cabin on board the ship. They are underway for America Peter realizes. He goes into the galley where Victor explains that he told Jan that he'd take him to America if he managed to get Peter free of the barracks. However, Victor tells him, there was no turning back to take him home. For better or worse, he will go to America with them. He had sent word through Lovisa about Peter's whereabouts.

Victor tells Peter that they he has an Uncle that lives in Wisconsin and they will settled there. He's talked to the American government who have agreed to give everyone official travel papers who need them. Peter will attend school in America and Jan will go to University. Meanwhile, the gold of their country will safely be in hands that will guard it well.

Analysis

Peter's courage, and the theme of Courage, are demonstrated in his actions at the drop off site. His quick thinking and bravery kept the gold from being discovered. As a result, though, he finds himself in jail. He is worried and terrified, but hopes that because he is a kid that they will go easy on him. He's heard rumors, however, about how the Germans treat their prisoners and he is very worried. When Jan comes to break him out and take him back to Victor, Peter comes to realize that they had all been wrong about Jan.

Jan hands him Victor's letter, and this symbolizes the trust that Victor has in Jan and indicates to Peter that he should trust Jan. Peter follows Jan and does everything the older boy tells him. They manage to escape, braving terrible weather conditions in the process.

The theme of Family is also strong throughout these last chapters as Peter realizes that he will most likely never come back to Norway, and that it will be a long time before he sees his family again. He will be living in America with Victor and an Uncle in Wisconsin that he's never met. Tied in with this is the theme of Courage as he agrees to go with Victor as there is no other choice. He places his country above his own desires to be with his mother and father, and instead, maturely accepts the trip to America.

Though it is not directly stated, the theme of War is also prevalent in this chapter as it indicates the great lengths that people had to go to in order to survive, and the sacrifices that many had to make in order to protect their country.

Discussion Question 1

Discuss the theme of Courage in these chapters.

Discussion Question 2

Discuss the symbolism of Victor's letter to Peter.



Discussion Question 3

What dilemma does Peter face once he is aboard Victor's boat?

Vocabulary

bulky, fancy, swagger, infantrymen, suspicious, handiwork, Fuhrer, hardships, stump, evidently, conquerors, barred, lapping, orderly



Characters

Peter Lundstrom

Peter Lundstrom is the main protagonist of the story. He is almost 13 years old, tall, and has a leadership quality about him. The children in the village look up to him. He is a natural choice to lead and organize the children to accomplish their task.

Peter loves his father, Lars, but he admires his Uncle Victor, whom he sees as a more adventurous person. Peter seems to identify more with Victor, and so, in the end, when it seems as if he is going to be living in America, he is comforted by the fact that his Uncle Victor will be there with him.

Peter, at the start of the novel, doesn't have much use for girls. He finds them bothersome and believes that they can't do as much physically as a boy. He changes his mind as the novel unfolds, and he comes to admire Helga who continues to carry a 'boys' load even when she is obviously very tired.

Lovisa Lundstrom

Lovisa Lundstrom is Peter's 10-year-old sister. She is one of the four team captains, but other than that is not featured as much as Peter is. She has blonde hair, blue eyes, and is the peacemaker of the four captains. She is always ready to inject humor into a situation to make things less tense.

Michael Berg

Michael is Peter's best friend. He is a year younger than Peter, and is not as bright as Peter is. It takes him a few times before he manages to understand how to exactly tie and untie the bricks onto the sled. Michael is fiercely loyal to his friends and his town, and so he is ready to do whatever is asked of him.

Helga Thomson

Helga is a year younger than Peter, but they are in the same grade at school. Helga has a reputation for being one of the brightest students in town, and as such she is often able to make connections and find solutions when no one else can. She is also fearless and has no problem sledding at breakneck speeds, or doing many of the things that the boys attempt.



Uncle Victor

Uncle Victor is the younger brother of Lars, Peter's father. It is evident that Victor is very close to Lars and regards Peter and Lovisa as if they are his own children. He is also very loyal and patriotic to his country and volunteers his shipping fleet to carry the gold out of the country to save Norway.

Lars Lundstrom

Lars is Peter's father. He is much like Victor in that he is dedicated to his family and his country. Early on in the book he must leave to fight with the Norwegian army in Trondheim.

Mrs. Lundstrom

Mrs. Lundstrom is Peter and Lovisa's mother and is a woman who is looked up to as a leader in the community. When there is trouble at the Holms farmstead, they turn to Mrs. Lundstrom for a solution.

Rolls

Rolls is Victor's first mate on the ship. He helps rescue Jan and Peter from the water the night that Peter escapes from jail.

Per Garsen

Per Garsen is an elderly man that works as a part time worker in the Lundstrom household. He takes care of the family while Lars is away, and spends most of his time covering up the children's sled trails during the day.

Bunny Lundstrom

Bunny is the 4-year-old brother of both Peter and Lovisa.

Blue Eyed Soldier/Jan Lasek

Jan Lasek is known only as the blue-eyed soldier for most of the novel. The children take notice of him on their first sled ride down the mountain as the soldier looks at them sadly, as if he regrets where he is and what he must do. As it turns out, that's very true. Jan has been conscripted into the German army against his will. Later, he breaks free and helps Peter escape from the German prison. He goes to America with Peter, Rolls, and Victor.



Camp Commandant

The Camp Commandant is a hard and cruel man. He despises Norway and its people, and often says so. He regards the Norwegians as stupid, backwards, uncivilized, and rude. He tries to make friends with Peter at one point, but Peter refuses to speak to him. Later, the Commandant kicks Lovisa's snowman over and is about to discover the bricks when Peter distracts him.

Dr. Akers

Dr. Akers is the town's doctor. It is his idea to make it look as if the children all have some sort of German Measles or chickenpox.



Symbols and Symbolism

The Lundstrom Family Sword

This is the sword that Peter has all of the children swear on when they all agree to begin taking the gold down the mountain.

Cleeg Peerson

This is Victor's main ship in his fleet. It had been handed down in the family and had a reputation for being trustworthy and well made. This boat also represents Victor's personality as he is very much like his ship.

The Sleds

The sleds that the children use to take the gold down the mountain represent their desire to help, their courage to face danger, and their belief in the freedom of their country one day.

Fire

In Norway the ability to have fire and build a fire is representative of living and surviving. So, when Per stokes the fire to its hottest at the Lundstrom house he is, in effect, stating that they will survive and more than that, that they will outsmart the Nazis.

Shunning

All of the people in the town of Riswyk have decided that they will ignore the fact that the Germans are even there. As much as possible the people in the village don't look at them or acknowledge their existence. This is their way of making a statement about how unwelcome the Germans are in their country.

German Measles

Dr. Akers helps the people in the town pretend that their younger children have the German Measles by painting dots on their face with iodine. This represents the clever ways in which the people devised to continue to move the gold down the mountains, and how all of the people in the village, even the very young, were determined to see the gold remain out of German hands.



Gold

The gold bricks that the children take down the mountain represents Norway's ability to survive after the war. This is why it is so important that the gold make it out of the country.

Snow

The snow represents the link that the Norwegians have with the land. They use the snow and nature to hide and transport the gold, and in the end, it is a snowball that allows Peter to distract the Commandant from finding the gold when the older man kicks over Lovisa's snowman.

Victor's Note

When Peter is in jail and Jan comes to rescue him, it is a small note from Victor that allows Peter to believe what Jan is telling him.

America

Throughout the book there are references to America as the land of opportunity, safety, and hope. Whenever America is mentioned it represents the hope that everyone has that the future of Norway, and its way of life, might be preserved in the U.S. until the war is over.



Settings

Riswyk

This is the town where the children live. The author states in the forward that the name of the exact fjord was never made public in order to protect the children and their families.

Holms' Farm

This is the farm where the children spend the night after bringing the bricks down to the waterfront. The boys stay in the barn and the girls stay in the house.

The Snake

This is a long inland waterway that ends at the larger fjord. Then this opens onto the ocean. This is the route that Victor will take with his fishing boats to America to hide the gold.

The Cave

This is a manmade cave that the men of the village construct in the woods. It is a temporary housing for the bricks of bullion from the bank.

The Clearing

This is where the children bury the bricks and build snow men over them so that the men can find the bricks in the dark. This is also where Peter throws the snowball at the Commandant and ends up in jail because of it.



Themes and Motifs

Family

The theme of Family is prevalent throughout the novel. Early on it is established that Peter Lundstrom is part of a very close and loving family environment. Not only is his mother and father very nurturing, but his Uncle Victor is also a large part of his day to day family life.

It is this love of family, and love of country, that enables the children to accomplish the task they are given, traveling well over 12 miles one way down the mountain, each day. The children were allowed to do this by their families who understood the sacrifices and what was at stake.

Mrs. Lundstrom is very involved in the entire operation. She steps in when it seems that a spy might slow things down, and under the guise of young mothers out for a walk with their toddlers, she organizes the rest of the women to help get the bricks down the mountain. The close knit family relationship, as well as the relationship with the town, enables the gold to be safely taken out of the country.

War

The theme of War hangs over the entire novel. It is the inciting incident that drives the action in the novel. The threat of war initially gets the children to focus on what might happen. The air raid shelters go up and their fathers go off to join the army.

Later, there are air raid drills that the children participate in, and a club is formed at their school which is called the War Defense Club. This club is sponsored and encouraged by Victor, with the support of the rest of the town's leaders.

War is also driven home by the fact that Peter learns that if any of the adults are caught in the act of helping the children that they may be shot or sent to a work camp. The children must fight past this fear in order to accomplish their tasks. They worry that their parents will be taken from them.

Jan, toward the end of the novel, further discusses the theme of war when he shares his own story living in Poland. He tells how his mother and father were killed, as well as his brothers, and that his sisters fled for their lives. He doesn't know where they are. The house that he grew up in was leveled to the ground. War destroyed everything he had and everything he was.



Friendship

It is the friendship that the children have for one another that allows for the success of the mission. The four children, Peter, Lovisa, Helga, and Michael, are all very close friends. Each of them are leaders in their own right, and are able to organize and direct the other children in the mission.

The children also look out for one another. This is exemplified when Lovisa has finished building her snowman and the Commandant knocks it over. Just as he's about to discover the bricks, Peter distracts him. Additionally, Helga tells the others that she believes they are being watched, and it is Michael who is able to help the others unload and keep watch for the rest of the mission.

When the children swear on Peter's ancestral sword, it is clear that the children will keep their vow of silence to one another. This plays out as each of them are confronted, at one time or another, by a German soldier demanding an answer, or to talk to them. None of the children will speak, and all are loyal to each other and the promise they made to each other.

The author seems to be suggesting that friendship can overcome much hardship in life; that in the face of great adversity it is the bond and friendships with others that allow ordinary individuals to rise above their circumstances to accomplish remarkable feats.

Courage

All of the children act courageously, as well as the adults. The children all agree to do as they've been asked to do and for the span of 6 weeks they haul bricks of gold 12 miles down the mountain. Many of the children were only 10 years old and still they did not fail to reach their drop point, nor were they late in making their stops.

They always followed the rules and did not deviate. Their courage to continue to do this grueling work for such a long time stands testament to their courage and their dedication. At one point, Peter is grumbling because he is very sore and tired and doesn't want to make the trip down the mountain because he now was finding it tedious, and yet, he still goes.

When the German soldier confronts Peter, he sticks to his vow to remain silent and even when the soldier screams at him and insults his country, Peter stands firm. Peter, more than most of the children, understood what the Germans were capable of, and for him to continue to act as an example to the rest of the children shows how brave he truly was.



Solidarity

If the town of Riswyk were not able to come together to focus on this one task, then the mission would have failed. This is true for a few reasons. First, each family who had a child of age would have to consent to allow that child to make the trip. The family members were, each day, risking their child's life in order to secure their country's freedom in the future.

Secondly, when the soldiers came into the town, it was the town's agreement to remain quiet, to silently shun the soldiers, that forced the soldiers to decide to stay out of the town all together where they were obviously not wanted.

Later, the town showed solidarity as they agreed to work with Dr. Akers in the pretense that their young children had a rampant case of the German Measles. Again, these same townsfolk agreed to use their young mothers with children to slip the remaining bricks of gold to the clearing.

The children also showed their willingness to come together and work as a team. There were more than 38 children who participated in the gold brigade, and as such, all of them worked from the beginning to the end, helping each other when they were tired.

Styles

Point of View

The point of view of this story is third person, omniscient. The primary focus is on a young boy named Peter Lundstrom. The reader learns about the war and how it has reached Norway, and why the country felt compelled to clandestinely send their money out of the country using their children as couriers. The reader is privvy to mostly Peter's interior thoughts, but Helga, Mrs. Lundstrom, and Victor are also given some attention.

Language and Meaning

The language and meaning in this book is not such that a reluctant reader would engage or enjoy it. While the story is enjoyable and suspenseful, it is written in the language that would have been used in the early fifties and sixties, utilizing phrases, words, and inferences that would have been expected in the fifties but are completely out of place in the modern world. Likewise, the children who are given the ages of 10-13 do not act as children of that age would act in today's society, as they act in a less mature way.

Structure

The novel is structured in linear fashion with 30 chapters. No chapter is longer than 5-8 pages long and the vocabulary usage is higher level. There are black and white pictures included throughout.



Quotes

There was a feeling of restlessness that no one could explain away.
-- Narrator (chapter 1)

Importance: This sets the tone for the impending war. Everyone was waiting to see if the war would reach as far as Norway.

Do you know where the British and the French have laid their mines?
-- Peter (chapter 7)

Importance: Uncle Victor tells Peter of the danger surrounding the boats. Victor's job will be to find out where the mines are before they sail to America.

I still think that we ought to make a pact that we won't tell one word about what we're doing, about taking gold to the Snake.
-- Peter (chapter 8)

Importance: All of the children swear on Peter's ancestral sword that they will not talk, even under threat of torture.

It is not right that we spoil your sledding. When I was a boy, I liked nothing better than sledding.
-- German soldier (chapter 10)

Importance: This is the soldier that has his troops step aside so that the children can sled past them. This also indicates that not all of the German soldiers were like the Commandant.

Peter often saw the blue-eyed private who looked, that first day, as if he, too, would like to be sledding.
-- Narrator (chapter 13)

Importance: This introduces and furthers the presence of the blue-eyed soldier, who ends up being Jan, the soldier that rescues Peter from the jail.

The children couldn't go down to the Snake with their bricks of gold if the rain melted the snow and spoiled their sled track.
-- Peter (chapter 14)

Importance: This indicates how dependent the entire operation is on the weather holding and the snow remaining on the mountain.

Dumb, stupid cattle, you Norwegians.
-- Commandant (chapter 15)



Importance: This shows the attitude of the Commandant toward the Norwegians. He says this right after he intercepts Peter and asks him if he wants to be his servant boy and live in the barracks.

A new disease found its way into Riswyk.
-- Narrator (chapter 17)

Importance: This quote is stated when the entire town agrees to pretend that there is an epidemic of German Measles.

Peter forgot to be afraid. He was only angry--angry and sorry.
-- Narrator (chapter 19)

Importance: Peter has just found out that there is a spy and that their activities are going to have to change somewhat.

This business of hanging around isn't exactly safe.
-- Victor (chapter 21)

Importance: Victor tells Mrs. Lundstrom and Peter that in one more week they will sail, regardless of how much they have loaded as it just isn't safe to wait any longer.

Lovisa only turned her big blue eyes up at him. Not so much as a nod did she give him.
-- Narrator (chapter 27)

Importance: This indicates that the children are still honoring their agreement to not speak to the Germans, at all.

She asked to have you promise that you will always remember you come of liberty-loving people who think freedom is a greater heritage than gold.
-- Victor (chapter 30)

Importance: These were the last words that were relayed to Peter as they set sail for America with Norway's gold.