***Number the Stars***

***Chapter 12***

***Summary:***

### ***Where Was Mama?***

* Mrs. Johansen and the Rosens prepare to leave. She gives them instructions: they have to be super-silent and sneaky, and they can't draw any attention to themselves.
* Annemarie (or the narrator, it's hard to tell) observes how still and silent the entire evening is. That just seems to make things more important.
* Ellen and Annemarie have an emotional goodbye. Finally, the others leave and Annemarie is left behind.
* Deep breath.
* Annemarie waits, calculating what the others are doing and when her mother will return. She decides to wait up until her mom gets back—after all, it shouldn't take very long. Annemarie feels like her father who's also away from the action and just has to be patient.
* Annemarie accidentally dozes off, and when she wakes up she gets worried—it's past the time her mother should be back, but Mama didn't come to get her.
* She searches the farmhouse, and when she doesn't find her mother, she starts to get panicky (duh). Finally she realizes that her mom is outside—and that something is definitely wrong.

***Brief Summary:***

Mr. Rosen slips on the loose step outside the kitchen door, and Mama warns them to feel each step carefully with their feet to avoid tripping over roots or stones in the darkness. Annemarie can see how important her mother's role is because only Mama knows the area well enough to lead people through it in the darkness. The Rosens say goodbye to Annemarie; Ellen promises to come back one day.

After Mama leaves, Annemarie waits in the now-empty living room. She calculates it will take a half hour for Mama to lead the Rosens to the harbor where Uncle Henrik keeps his boat. Coming back alone, she might move quicker. It's 2:30 a.m. now, and Annemarie expects her mother should be back no later than 3:30. She thinks of her Papa, waiting alone in Copenhagen. She thinks it must be scarier to be waiting and wondering, as he and she are doing, than to be actively involved in the danger. "Less danger, perhaps, but more fear" (p. 98). She nods off and wakens in the pre-dawn light; a quick glance at the clock reveals that it's after four. She checks the house, but her mother has not returned. Annemarie flies to the window and looks out. On the ground at the head of the path lies a dark shape. The shape moves, and she realizes it must be her mother lying on the ground.

***Brief Analysis:***

Annemarie has discovered a truth that any military wife could have told her: it is indeed more frightening to be the one waiting at home, helpless to help a loved one in a dangerous situation. She and her father can do nothing more than worry and wait. Psychologists agree that helplessness increases the sense of trauma for people caught in war-time or similar situations. Human beings need to feel that they have at least a modicum of control over their lives in order to maintain peace of mind. This is actually one of the psychological weapons the Nazis used on the people in their concentration camps. Because the selections they made of who would die at any given moment were so arbitrary, the populace of the camps felt utterly helpless to affect their own futures. This is just one of many aspects that separated the Nazi's cruelty from more typical human cruelty.

Even in the worst environments, there are usually some rules people can follow to maximize their safety. In gang-torn neighborhoods, for example, residents know to avoid wearing colors that represent rival gangs. Organized crime gangs also have rules that can help ensure survival. While these rules are often flaunted by Mafiosos, and frequently not enforced with consistency, nonetheless, the fact that the rules exist goes a long way towards preserving life and peace of mind. Such rules don't ensure people's safety, but they do give people a sense that they have some influence over their destinies. However, the Nazis had no such rules, no internal code of ethics. The randomness of their violence was a principal psychological factor they used to keep their prisoners in a state of despair, so they would be less likely to fight to survive.

***Critical Study:***

Mrs. Johansen leaves the house for the boat. With her go the Rosens. On the way out, Mr. Rosen trips, but rights himself before falling. Mrs. Johansen says it is very dark here and on the path they are going to take. The Rosens hug Annemarie goodbye. Ellen and Annemarie hug for a long time. Ellen promises that she will be back. Annemarie sits alone in the living room, crying. In her mind she walks the path with them. It is two-thirty in the morning. By Annemarie's calculations, her mother should be back one hour later. She thinks of her father. He is alone in Copenhagen. Surely he is awake, too, waiting to hear that they are all safe. Annemarie decides that it is harder to be the ones waiting, even if it is not as dangerous. She drifts off to sleep.

The light of early morning wakes Annemarie. She remembers slowly where she is. It is already four in the morning. Mrs. Johansen should be back already. Annemarie goes to look for her mother, thinking that she must have come in and not wanted to wake Annemarie. But Mrs. Johansen is not in the bedroom. She goes to the window hoping to see her mother. Instead Annemarie notices a moving shape on the ground. It is Mrs. Johansen.***Critical Analysis:***

[Mrs. Johansen](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Number-the-Stars/character-analysis/#Mrs._Johansen) prepares to lead the Rosens to the ship. They each tell Annemarie goodbye, and then they are gone. Outside, Mr. Rosen tripped on a step that was loose outside the kitchen door. Annemarie waits up for her mother, but eventually she falls asleep. When she wakes, it's not quite dawn. She looks through the house for her mother, but she is not there. Then she looks out the window, and she sees a shape on the path: "It was her mother, lying on the earth."

Annemarie is brave enough to be home, waiting alone in the dark with Kirsti. It is not as frightening as what her best friend, Ellen, faces, or what her mother, her uncle, or [Peter Neilsen](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Number-the-Stars/character-analysis/#Peter_Neilsen) face. Here, though, as earlier in the novel, Annemarie faces the challenges she is given. In fact, many characters in the book do so. All around her Annemarie sees examples of courage and strength. Even injured, [Mrs. Johansen](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Number-the-Stars/character-analysis/#Mrs._Johansen) comes home. She has gone into the woods, completed her mission, and returned to her family. In doing so, she demonstrates the strength that stands as an example to Annemarie.

***Significance:***

At two-thirty in the morning, Mama leaves to escort the Rosens to the harbor. Each of the Rosens hugs Annemarie goodbye, and Ellen fiercely promises that she will come back one day. Now, Annemarie is all alone in Uncle Henrik’s house. She waits anxiously for Mama to return, calculating how long it will take her to walk the winding path to the harbor. Although she is anxious, Annemarie eventually falls asleep.

When she wakes up, it is after four in the morning and the sun is starting to rise. Annemarie looks all around the house but Mama still has not returned. She looks outside and sees Mama lying on the ground at the entryway to the path.

This chapter further illustrates how Annemarie’s dangerous circumstances have transformed her into a more mature person almost overnight. When she first faced the German soldiers in Chapter 1, Annemarie was primarily concerned about her own safety. Although she loved Ellen and Kirsti, in the moment she was mainly concerned about how to respond to the German soldiers’ questions. In Chapter 12, though, she completely forgets about her own safety in order to protect Mama.

The fact that Annemarie can sense that Mama is in danger also shows her growing awareness of the situation around her. Young children often believe that their parents are invincible, but Annemarie’s courageous decision to save her mother shows that she has grown out of this belief. The moment between Annemarie and her mother is also marks a development for both characters. Until this point, Mama has been trying to protect Annemarie, but after Mama hurts herself, she needs to rely on Annemarie to help her to safety.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Mama](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/mrs-johansen-mama) prepares to set out in the dark with [Ellen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/ellen-rosen) and [Mrs. Rosen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters) down the path to the docks. They cannot use any candles or other kinds of light, and Mama leads the way as she knows the paths well. As the Rosens follow Mama out into the yard, Ellen pauses. She hugs [Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) and promises to come back some day. The girls have a hard time letting one another go, and after Ellen departs, Annemarie begins to cry.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Annemarie knows that Ellen and her family have no choice but to flee Copenhagen—but the separation from the girl who has been her best friend and sister for years is painful.

***Summary Part 2:***

Alone in the empty living room, [Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) visualizes the path her mother and the Rosens are taking and “walk[s it] with them in her mind.” She knows that the journey takes about half an hour, and feels that on her way back, [Mama](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/mrs-johansen-mama) will be able to complete it in even less time than that. Annemarie looks at the clock and sees that it is two-thirty in the morning. She believes her mother will be home in about an hour, and decides to sit up in a chair and wait for her to get back. As she thinks of her [Papa](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters), all alone back in Copenhagen, she wonders if his fear is worse even though he is in “less danger.”

***Analysis Part 2:***

In this passage, Annemarie thinks about bravery and fear. She wonders if her father’s inability to know what, exactly, is transpiring at the countryside, is increasing the fear he feels all alone back in Copenhagen. As bravery and ignorance are major thematic parts of this section of the novel, it makes sense that Annemarie is wondering if even the adults in her life have trouble being brave whenever they know too much—or too little.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) wakes up at the first light of dawn, not having even realized she’d fallen asleep. Annemarie looks around, surprised by the light, and wonders where her mother could be. She runs upstairs to see if her mother has already returned and gone straight to bed, but [Mama](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/mrs-johansen-mama)’s room is empty. She then checks [Kirsti](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/kirsti-johansen)’s room, but her sister is fast asleep alone in her bed. Annemarie goes to the window and looks out at the meadow—she sees a “dark shape” out at the edge of the woods, and as it moves slowly, Annemarie realizes that the shape is Mama.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Something has gone wrong, and Mama has not returned in the time frame Annemarie believed she would. When Annemarie spots Mama’s form on the lawn, she fears the worst, and worries that there has been some kind of complication in the group’s plans.