***Number the Stars***

***Chapter 4***

***Brief Summary:***

Annemarie and Ellen play with paper dolls in the Johansen's living room. Kirsti stomps in angrily, just ahead of her mother. Kirsti is upset because her new shoes are made of fish scales. Mama tries to tell her they were lucky to find shoes at all, but Kirsti is humiliated to be wearing green, scaly shoes. Ellen asks her if she'd like them better if they were black and shiny, and Kirsti says that she would. So Ellen offers to take them home and ask her dad to paint them black with the ink from his inkpot. Mollified, Kirsti asks to join in their game. Annemarie would rather not include her, but there's no one else for her to play with, and it would be too mean to ignore her in the tiny apartment.

They pretend they're taking their dolls to Tivoli, an amusement park the girls remember from better days. She tells Ellen she remembers the fireworks at Tivoli best of all. Kirsti chimes in that she remembers fireworks, too, but her sister tells her that she's never been to Tivoli, and, therefore, wouldn't remember any fireworks. Kirsti reminds her of the late-night fireworks on her recent birthday, which her mother had told her were in her honor. Despite this, Annemarie knew from reading the papers that the supposed fireworks were actually the result of the Danes destroying their naval fleet to keep the ships out of German hands. The memory is upsetting, and Annemarie announces she's done playing dolls.

Ellen has to go home, anyway, to help her mother prepare for the upcoming Jewish New Year. She invites Annemarie and Kirsti to come over and watch her mother light the candles. In the past, the girls have often witnessed Mrs. Rosen light the Sabbath candles on Friday evenings. Annemarie never understood the words of Mrs. Rosen's prayers, because they were in a different language, but she understood the importance of the ritual and enjoyed watching it. So on Thursday, when she sees the Rosens walking toward the synagogue, she looks forward to sharing the evening celebration with them, although she's jealous that Ellen gets to skip school that day.

After school, Mama announces that the Rosens have had to cancel their celebration, telling the girls that Mr. and Mrs. Rosen have been called away to visit some relatives, and that Ellen will be spending the night. Mama's voice is cheerful, but her face looks worried. That night, she makes a special dinner from the chicken the Rosens had planned to cook at home. Kirsti is the only one at the table who doesn't pick up on the tension and worry; she swings her newly-blackened shoes cheerfully under her chair.

Following dinner, Mama takes Kirsti to bed early, so that Papa can speak to Annemarie and Ellen. Papa tells them he wishes he could spare them this knowledge, but he must tell them that the Nazis have been to the synagogue and have taken the list of all the Jews who attend. The Rosens' names are on that list, and everyone on the list has been singled out for arrest. Annemarie wants to know where the Germans are planning to take them all, but Papa tells her he doesn't know. He only knows they are in danger, and they must help. He tells them Ellen's parents are hiding elsewhere; their apartment is only big enough to hide Ellen. Papa tells them to sleep in the same room that night, and if anyone comes, they should pretend to be sisters. "'Don't be frightened,' he said to them softly. 'Once I had three daughters. Tonight I am proud to have three daughters again"' (p. 38).

***Brief Analysis:***

Annemarie's family is courageously putting themselves at risk to help their friends, the Rosens. In Denmark, there are many stories like this, of neighbors helping neighbors in resistance against the Germans. The Holocaust brought out the heroism in countless people, who risked their lives to protect the Jews from the fatal persecution of the Nazis. However the author has chosen to omit some uncomfortable facts in this children's book, as many nations and people turned their backs on the plight of the Jewish race. More than just refusing to help, the many civilians in several nations actually chose to join in the persecution, and came to share - or had already felt previously - the racial prejudice of the Third Reich.

This overt cruelty came in many forms, from taunting their Jewish neighbors to turning them over to the death camps. The more subtle cruelty perpetrated by other civilians came in the form of mass denial, of which Annemarie's father seems to share, when he tells her that he doesn't know what the Nazis plan to do with the Jews after deporting them. It was often easier to deny the horrors of the Holocaust than to accept them, but this mass denial helped the Nazis commit their crimes under cover of ignorance.

In fairness to the Gentiles, i.e., Non-Jews, many Jewish families also refused to believe the stories leaking back from the concentration camps. Who would wish to accept that such things could happen in this world? Denial is often part of human nature, but this denial was an affront to those courageous Jews who escaped and survived to tell their story. By refusing to believe those who escaped and bore witness, the whole world, for many years, helped condemn millions to death. By painting this denial in such a warm, positive light, the author has done a disservice to the children in her audience, who deserve to know the truth about the world, ugly as it may sometimes be.

***Critical Study:***

Ellen and Annemarie play Gone With the Wind with paper dolls cut from magazines. Annemarie is Scarlett and Ellen is Melanie. Ellen is good at using an accent and a sophisticated tone. She likes acting and had parts in school plays. Mrs. Johansen and Kirsti come home from shoe shopping. Kirsti has been crying, upset that the store only had shoes made of fish skin because there is no leather. Kirsti hates the green color and the scales. Ellen offers to make them black with ink, which quiets Kirsti. Annemarie lets Kirsti join their game. They pretend they are going to Tivoli gardens in Copenhagen. Kirsti says she remembers the fireworks in Tivoli gardens on her birthday, even though they have been closed since she was very little.

Annemarie remembers that only a month ago, on her sister's birthday, the Danes destroyed their own navel fleet to keep the Germans from using it. To calm Kirsti, Mrs. Johansen told her that the explosions were fireworks for her birthday. Thinking about this, Annemarie does not want to play anymore. Ellen leaves to help her mother prepare for the Jewish New Year. She invites Annemarie and Kirsti to come watch her mother light the candles on Thursday night. On Thursday, Annemarie and Kirsti see Ellen going to synagogue. In the afternoon Mrs. Rosen comes by and talks quickly with Mrs. Johansen. Mrs. Johansen tells the girls that Ellen will be coming to stay with them for a few days while the Rosens visit some relatives. Kirsti will sleep in her parents' bed and Mrs. Johansen promises to tell her a special story. Kirsti ask for a story about a king. They have a big chicken dinner that Mrs. Rosen had made for New Years. Everyone is quiet except for a giggling Kirsti.

***Critical Analysis:***

Ellen and Annemarie are playing paper dolls when [Mrs. Johansen](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Number-the-Stars/character-analysis/#Mrs._Johansen) and Kirsti come home. Kirsti is very upset because her new shoes are made of fish skin. To comfort Kirsti, Ellen offers to take them home and blacken them with her father's ink if he allows it. As they speak, the subject of fireworks arises. Kirsti has never seen them, but she thinks she has because there were bombs on her birthday and their mother said the explosions were fireworks. In truth, those explosions were the Danes destroying their own navy so the ships and weapons aboard them could not be used by the Nazis.

On Thursday, it is Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. The Rosens leave for the synagogue. That afternoon, though, Mrs. Rosen appears and after a hushed conversation with Mrs. Johansen, Mrs. Johansen tells Annemarie and Kirsti that Ellen will be staying with them for a few days.

Ellen has dinner with them, and after Kirsti goes to bed, [Mr. Johansen](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Number-the-Stars/character-analysis/#Mr._Johansen) tells Annemarie that "the Nazis have taken the synagogue lists of all the Jews. Where they live, what their names are." He tells her they "plan to take them away. And we have been told they may come tonight." The Rosens have left, and Ellen will stay with them for a few days. "If anyone comes, even soldiers, you will be sisters." He sends the girls to bed and tells them, "Tonight I am proud to have three daughters again."

Rosh Hashanah is celebrated as the first and second days of the Jewish New Year. Like Shabbat, or the day of the Sabbath, Jews attend the synagogue and have a celebratory meal, during which kiddush (a prayer over wine or grape juice) is said. Traditionally, Jews on this special day eat foods with symbolic value. The Nazis would have known the significance of the date they'd chosen for gathering the Jews to transport them. They would also realize that the sunset of the next day was Shabbat. Most Jews would attend the synagogue for Rosh Hashanah and for Shabbat. However, the news of the Nazis' plans was shared with the rabbi. This aspect of the novel is historically accurate. While the Rosens were not an actual family, the events they are experiencing in the novel—the Nazis' plan to gather and transport them on this high holiday and the rabbi's knowledge and sharing of this information with the community—is factually correct.

That the Johansens hide Ellen is also drawn from history. Many Danish citizens acted to save Danish Jews. This is, in part, an aspect of their growing resistance against the Nazi occupation.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) and [Ellen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/ellen-rosen) sit on the floor of the Johansen apartment, playing with paper dolls. They act out parts of Gone With the Wind, a story they love but see as more sophisticated than the “king-and-queen tales” [Kirsti](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/kirsti-johansen) loves. Ellen is a talented actress, always featured in school productions, and dreams of making acting into a career one day. [Mama](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/mrs-johansen-mama) and Kirsti come in from shopping, and Kirsti is in a bad mood. Mama has bought the little girl “fish shoes”—because there is no leather to spare in Copenhagen, people have begun wearing shoes made from fish skins. Ellen and Annemarie look at the shoes, which are odd but not necessarily ugly. Kirsti is irate, though, and Ellen kindly offers to paint the greenish shoes black so that they are pretty and shiny.

***Analysis Part 1:***

This passage shows how close Annemarie, Ellen, and even Kirsti really are with one another. They love each other and do favors for one another constantly, trying to lessen the pain and indignity of the world around them.

***Summary Part 2:***

Her mood lifted, [Kirsti](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/kirsti-johansen) excitedly joins the game of paper dolls, and the game’s imaginary story transitions from America to Copenhagen’s own Tivoli gardens, where the girls take their dolls for a “party.” As [Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) and [Ellen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/ellen-rosen) reminisce about the fireworks they saw in Tivoli Gardens as children, Kirsti jumps in to say that she remembers seeing fireworks there, too—but Annemarie and Ellen know that the source of the lights in the sky and loud noises Kirsti claims to remember was really an incident many months ago in which [King Christian](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/king-christian) ordered the bombing of the entire Danish naval fleet to keep the ships from being captured by the Nazis.

***Analysis Part 2:***

This passage shows that Kirsti is naïve as to the gravity of what’s happening all around her. Her family is attempting to shelter her from the truth and help her maintain her innocence, but Annemarie knows a day will come when Kirsti can no longer be protected from the truth.

***Summary Part 3:***

Now feeling sad, [Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) says she doesn’t want to play anymore. [Ellen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/ellen-rosen) says it’s okay—she has to go home anyway and help her mother with preparations for the upcoming Jewish New Year on Thursday. Ellen invites Annemarie and [Kirsti](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/kirsti-johansen) over to celebrate and light candles for the New Year—the girls often spend Friday nights at the Rosens’ lighting Sabbath candles and enjoying a meal. Kirsti accepts the invitation, and looks forward to wearing her “new black shoes” to the party.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Ellen and her family often extend their hospitality to the Johansens, who happily celebrate religious and non-religious special occasions alike in the company of their friends and neighbors.

***Summary Part 4:***

Thursday afternoon, though, [Mrs. Rosen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters) knocks at the door and speaks hushed and hurriedly with [Mama](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/mrs-johansen-mama). Mama comes back into the apartment and tells [Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) and [Kirsti](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/kirsti-johansen) that [Ellen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/ellen-rosen) is going to come stay with them for a few days. Annemarie points out that it’s the Jewish New Year, but Mama says only that the Rosens’ plans have changed—Mrs. and [Mr. Rosen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters) have been called away to visit relatives, and Ellen is coming to stay.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Though Mama is trying her best to shield Annemarie and Kirsti from the truth, Annemarie knows that something frightening is happening to her friends and neighbors.

***Summary Part 5:***

That night, as [Ellen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/ellen-rosen) joins the Johansens at their table for dinner, the meal is a quiet and anxious one. Ellen looks frightened, and even though Annemarie’s [Mama](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/mrs-johansen-mama) and [Papa](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters) try to lighten the mood, [Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen) can tell that they, too, are worried. After dinner, Mama and Papa send [Kirsti](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/kirsti-johansen) to bed, and sit Annemarie and Ellen down so that Annemarie can learn the truth. Annemarie’s parents tell her that this morning, at the synagogue, the rabbi revealed that the Nazis have managed to get lists of the names and addresses of all the Jews in Copenhagen. The Nazis are planning to arrest all of the Jews tonight and “relocate” them.

***Analysis Part 6:***

After once again sheltering Kirsti from the painful truth of what’s happening in Copenhagen, Mama and Papa at last tell Annemarie what’s really happening. Annemarie understands that something major has shifted—and that she and her family have at last been called upon to make a sacrifice to help ensure the survival of their friends and neighbors.

***Summary Part 7:***

[Annemarie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/annemarie-johansen)’s parents tell her that [Ellen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters/ellen-rosen)’s parents have gone to hide with other friends, because to hide three people would be impossible—but to hide just Ellen is doable, as they plan to pass Ellen off as one of their own children. Ellen cries, terrified for her parents and herself. Annemarie’s parents try to prepare both Annemarie and Ellen for the possibility that soldiers will come to the apartment looking for Ellen later on this evening—they tell the girls that it will be a “long night,” but that they should have no problem pretending to be sisters, as they are already such good friends. Annemarie’s [Papa](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/number-the-stars/characters) kisses both girls goodnight, and as he sends them off to bed, he tells them that tonight he is proud to have “three daughters” once more.

***Analysis Part 7:***

Ellen, who dreams of being an actress, is about to inhabit a new kind of “performance.” Annemarie’s Papa knows that the girls are close enough that they are already sisters in a way—and even though he and Mama are still reeling from the loss of Lise, he makes it clear that he is happy and even “proud” to have another “daughter” in his home.