

All the Light we cannot see- Key Moments

Key moment	Marie-Laure questions the curse. 	Jutta calls out Werner 	Etienne joins the resistance 	Werner makes a mistake- the child is shot 	Werner Vs Von Rumpel 	The Ending 
Description of key moment	Marie-Laure questions if the Sea of Flames is responsible for her going blind. Her father reassures her this is not the case. The curse of the sea of flames is something that is questioned throughout the book- is it the reason for all of the tragedy in ML's life.	Werner is accepted into the prestigious Nazi Academy. He tries to justify becoming a Nazi to Jutta saying it will allow him to have a great career which she will also benefit from. She sees through this and tells him he is lying to himself- he will be a Nazi.	Etienne has suffered greatly since his involvement in WW1. The death of Madame Manec and ML's bravery spurs him into action and he joins the resistance. He feels alive and energised by his new purpose in life.	Werner directs his Nazi unit to a house looking for a radio. There is no radio and on leaving Neuman shoots a child and her mother by accident. Werner is horrified and haunted by this and realises he is also a cog in the evil Nazi war machine.	Werner chooses to go against Nazism and try to save ML. Von Rumpel has become a symbol of Nazi greed and is prepared to do anything to get what he wants. He thinks Werner is there for the diamond.	The novel ends with a family scene between ML and her grandson Michel. ML listens to him leave to maintain the connection with him until the last moment.
Key quote	There are, he assures her, no such things as curses. There is luck, maybe, bad or good. A slight inclination of each day toward success or failure. But no curses.	"Jutta opens her eyes but doesn't look at him. "Don't tell lies. Lie to yourself, Werner, but don't lie to me."	"When Marie-Laure comes through the front door with the bread, when he's opening the tiny scroll with his fingers, lowering his mouth to the microphone, he feels unshakeable; he feels alive."	"Werner waits for the child to blink. Blink, he thinks, blink blink blink. Already Volkheimer is closing the closet door, though it won't close all the way because the girl's foot is sticking out of it, and Bernd is covering the woman on the bed with a blanket,"	"We want the same thing, you and I, Private. But only one of us can have it. And only I know where it is. Which presents a problem for you. Is it here or here or here or here?"	"He kisses her once on each cheek. "Until next week, Mamie." She listens until his footsteps fade. Until all she can hear are the sighs of cars and the rumble of trains and the sounds of everyone hurrying through the cold."
Connection to Key themes	Family: The bond between ML and Daniel is extremely strong.	Choices: Werner actively choosing to be a Nazi Family: Jutta is Werner's conscience	War: Sometimes there is a justification for fighting in war Family: Etienne & ML are now more connected by their shared risk.	War: innocent victims War: following orders	War: has turned people evil Choices: Werner chooses to listen to his conscience and heart and do the right thing.	Family: connections are what is most important in life.

All the light we cannot see- Themes

Family



- How important are strong family links and relationships to people
- Do you consider Madame Manec, Frau Elena and Etienne to be parents?
- Is family only about blood ties?

- Strong loving family relationships anchor the main characters- Werner & ML
- Werner & Jutta Pfennig. Jutta is Werner's moral compass and conscience. Their parents are dead so they are all each other has.
- Mare-Laure & Daniel LeBlanc. Extremely close. Daniel speaks to ML in her mind even after he is imprisoned. He is a source of strength for her.
- Both ML and Werner think back to their childhoods with Jutta and Daniel during the bleak times of the war.
- Non-blood relationships become family- Madame Manec becomes a mother figure to Marie-Laure. Frau Elena is a mother figure to Werner and Jutta.
- Etienne becomes a father figure to Marie-Laure when Marie-Laure brings him back into to the real world.

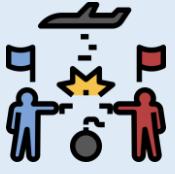
Choices



- To what extent are we in control of our own choices?
- Do we truly have free will to behave morally?
- Do people become so desensitised to evil that their own evil actions end up feeling commonplace and ordinary?
- If you are “ just taking orders”, are you responsible for what you have done?

- Great Uncle Etienne Le Blanc choice to join the resistance, despite the fact he knows people will die.
- Madame Manec and Marie-Laures decision to join the French Resistance.
- Werner chooses to go along with the Nazi regime and participates in killing hundreds of people. His sister does not. Did Werner have to do what he did?
- Did Werner redeem himself at the end by making the choice to go against the Nazi regime and save Marie-Laure?
- Jutta chooses not to go along with the Nazi Regime.
- Ordinary people making decisions in extraordinary situations
- People forced and pushed to make moral choices

War



- Is there ever a just cause for war?
- Are there any innocent Nazis?
- Does any side ever win a war?
- Do people ever truly recover from the trauma of war?

- The novel is set during World War 2, with the action moving between Germany and France.
- The Nazi army, the French resistance and the effects of war on civilians
- The Nazi regime trained and prepared the children to be cruel and ruthless- the attack on Frederick at The National Institute.
- The ‘necessity’ of some inhumane actions in times of war- Etienne, Madame Manec and ML participating in the French Resistance.
- The indiscriminate nature of war- the innocent are killed along with the guilty- the girl in the red cape.
- The guilt of war- to what extent is each person responsible for their actions in war if they were just following orders or just trying to survive?

All the Light we cannot see- Symbols

The Radio



- The radio symbolizes the power of a machine to do good or evil, depending on the hands that operate it.
- Radio transmissions have the power to form invisible links between people and ideas- Henri's broadcasts. It connects Werner with the French Professor and then with Marie-Laure.
- Jutta- the radio symbolizes a teller of truth beyond the borders of Germany.
- Etienne's broadcasts of his dead brother's science lessons for children, the radio becomes a link to a voice from the past. These broadcasts memorialize Henri and keep his ideas alive.
- Radio represents all of the invisible stories of people that, as Marie-Laure imagines, might still "fly about, faded but audible if you listen closely enough."
- The radio provides opportunities to spread lies in the form of Nazi propaganda-
- Radio can destroy connections- Werner hunts for resistance fighters via their transmissions, the understanding that he is using his beloved technology for a harmful purpose gnaws at his soul. He is especially haunted by the senseless murder of a mother and child in Vienna as a result of his work

Whelks



- Whelks represent endurance and strength for ML, as they remain fixed onto rocks and withstand the beaks of birds who try to attack them.
- ML takes "the Whelk" as a code-name for herself while aiding the resistance movement.
- They also represent a bond between Marie-Laure and her uncle. The bond once established grown strong and unbreakable.
- They represent a link to her childhood- with Dr. Geffard at the Natural History Museum where she developed a love for Shells
- Surrounded by the disordered world of war, she passes the time trapped indoors exploring and ordering the shells in Etienne's study. The mollusks, like familiar friends, help her to endure "the slow rain of hours."
- Whelks remind Etienne of better times when he and his brother Henri played on the beach as boys.

The Sea of Flames



- The Sea of Flames a symbol of human greed, harmless once removed from human society.
- The Sea of flames drives on the story- Von Rumpel's pursuit of the diamond forces ML and Werner to meet.
- The stone represents superstition and forces in the world that cannot be explained. It generates a sense of dark magic and possibility. Its curse challenges the logical belief that all things begin with human beings; they alone shape and give meaning to their lives.
- The Sea of Flames tempts Daniel, Marie-Laure, and von Rumpel to believe in the fantastic and mystical. Its legend incites their hopes and fears.

Darkness & Light



- Marie-Laure and Werner teach us that humanity is the light that the human race cannot see
- As Marie-Laure goes blind, her world darkens, but she "sees" much that remains invisible to other characters. She sees the glow of kindness and goodness in people like Etienne and Werner. Her father "radiates a thousand colors." She senses the sick darkness within von Rumpel. In her mind the world of war is grey, but her great-uncle Etienne's radio transmissions fill it with light and colour. As conditions in Saint-Malo worsen, Marie-Laure's fears are washed away out on the beach "by wind and colour and light."
- For Etienne, light forms the foundation of his post-WWI fears. He and his brother Henri were hunted by enemy lights, and eventually one found Henri.
- Werner is a mixture of darkness and light. Physically he is light with his snow-white hair, blue eyes, and pale skin. Marie-Laure recalls a light of goodness emanating from his soul. Yet his life is filled with darkness. His father dies in the darkness of the mines, and darkness is the future that awaits him in Zollverein. Werner descends morally into darkness when he attends the Nazi training school. He nearly loses his life during the night bombing of Saint-Malo, trapped in a dark cellar. It is night when he wanders out onto a beach and is killed by a landmine.