

*All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr

1. What does the title *All the Light We Cannot See* mean in the context of the story?
2. Why do you think the author chose to write the story in a nonlinear style and start with the bombing of Saint-Malo at the beginning?
3. Let's talk about the significance of the Sea of Flames jewel. Do you believe it did hold those "powers?" Or do you think it was supposed to represent something more about human nature? Did you believe that Marie-Laure and her father had the real jewel the entire time?
4. On page 133, when Werner is about to leave to join the Hitler Youth, his sister Jutta is horrified and says: "Is it right...to do something only because everyone else is doing it?" And that's when doubt slips into Werner's mind. How did this sentence impact Werner and his decision making later in the book?
5. Why was Marie-Laure's father arrested in Paris? What were they trying to accuse him of? What do you think happened to him in the end?
6. When Werner goes back home with Frederick, Werner still believes he'll be able to be an engineer one day and Fredrick will also study birds. But on page 223, Frederick says to Werner, "Your problem, Werner is that you still believe you own your life." How did this relate to Werner?
7. After Marie-Laure's father's been missing, Madame Manec takes Marie-Laure out to the ocean. How did this help bring a little joy back to her life? How does the ocean play a larger role later?
8. On page 270 when Madame Manec tries to get Marie-Laure's great-Uncle Etienne to transmit codes, she says to him: "Don't you want to be alive before you die?" What did she mean by that and how did it impact Etienne after she passed?
9. Etienne and Marie-Laure officially join the resistance when he uses the secret radio transmitter to transmit codes. Why do you think Etienne finally joined?
10. Prior to France, Werner experiences the unimaginable in war. What did you think of those sections? When he gets to France, he's in charge of finding Etienne's radio broadcast but when he does, he realizes this is the person behind the French broadcast of his youth and he says he doesn't hear anything. Why do you think he made that choice? What changed in him?

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11. Major von Rumpel believes the jewel will heal his cancer and will stop at nothing to get it. Do you think he made for a good antagonist to Marie-Laure's protagonist?
12. When Werner is first at the Hitler Youth camp, he meets Volkheimer who is a big, hulk-like figure but has a fondness for music. At the bombing of Saint-Malo, Marie-Laure, out of desperation begins to play a record of Etienne's music as loudly as possible in the hope that von Rumpel (who is in her house) will find her. Both Werner and Volkheimer are listening to the music. Why do you think the music drove Volkheimer to find them? How did the recording fill both Werner and Volkheimer with hope?
13. Why do you think Werner was so determined to rescue Marie-Laure? How did he reclaim his humanity by doing so?
14. Before Werner and Marie-Laure part so she can go somewhere safe, he tells her she's brave. On page 469, she says, "When I lost my sight, Werner, people said I was brave. But it is not bravery; I have no choice. I wake up and live my life. Don't you do the same?" He responds, "Not in years. But today. Today maybe I did." Discuss this moving exchange.
15. Discuss part eleven and the ending of the book. What did you think about what happened to each character? What are some of the key themes that stood out to you?
16. Have you seen the Netflix adaptation? How does it compare to the book?