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Graning

English

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### *Night: Survival*

The Holocaust killed over 6 million Jews over the span of 4 brutal years of war. During the Holocaust, chances of survival were very slim. Jews were mass murdered through many different ways and the world had no idea. This time was very harsh for Jews because many wouldn't survive, and those who do would be scarred for life. There are many examples of survival in the book, including the way Elie survived during his childhood, his survival in Birkenau & Auschwitz, and then his survival during Buna, Gleowitz, and Buchenwald.

Elie's childhood was unlike ones today, where he was forced to find ways to survive. "Born in 1928, Wiesel grew up as a part of a thriving Jewish community in Sighet" (Wiesel v). Growing up, Elie wanted to study the Cabala and learn more about it. But, when the Holocaust started, this changed Elie and his family's whole life. Elie and his town were ordered to be trapped in ghettos until further notice. Life was fine in the ghettos, with livelihood interactions, and plenty of resources. Elie, along with the people of Sighet, easily survived the conditions in the ghettos. Then, the war began and everything was going to change.

Growing up in a concentration camp couldn't be more devastating. When the Holocaust started, Elie and all the Jews were either killed or sent to concentration camps. Elie's sisters and

mother were killed, leaving Elie and his father to survive. His first camp, Birkenau, was the first example of the harsh conditions Elie would experience. "The camp looked as though it had just suffered an epidemic: empty and dead." (Wiesel 43) Men were becoming skinnier by the day, along with new clothes and a tattoo. Then, he went to Auschwitz, where life was harsh and survival couldn't feel further away. They were given rations of bread and soup which was what most people even lived for.

Then, Elie, his father, and all of the other survivors were transported to a new camp, Buna. Life in Buna was much better than ones in the previous camps. They lived there for weeks and it was the same everyday, bread, soup, work, repeat. Then one day, Elie was walking by and discovered Idek, his Kapo, with a girl. "I went up and saw Idek with a young, Polish girl, half naked on a mattress." (Wiesel 50) He received a harsh public beating and even got knocked out. Then, in order to get to Gleowitz, Elie walked 42 miles in the snow during the night. A lot of people died on this trek and this resembled how hard it was to survive. In Gleiwitz, it was short and Elie was soon transferred to his last camp, Buchenwald. Elie's father was diagnosed with dysentery, causing him to be taken to the crematory. Elie was then transferred to the children's block where he would spend his last days in Buchenwald.

Through Elie's time during the Holocaust, he showed rare chances of survival by the way he survived in his childhood, Birkenau & Auschwitz, and the final camps of Buna, Gleowitz, and Buchenwald. Elie's chances of surviving 5 concentration camps, all of them being very harsh, were really slim. He fought to the end and proved to readers that if you set your mind to something, you can achieve it. Overall, the Holocaust was a very disappointing time for many people and a very bad part of our world's history.

Works Cited

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. EMC/Paradigm Publishing, 2003.