

Meredith Shirley

Mrs Graning

English

25 october 2024

Night Essay

The book *Night* by Elie Wiesel, is a true story about the horrors of the Holocaust. Elie is a teenager when war breaks out in his hometown and for some reason all his people, the Jews, are rounded up and imprisoned. If not for his faith, his belief in God, and his knowledge of the scriptures, he would not have survived.

In 1944 Germany invaded Elie's country. All the Jews were forced to do certain things. They were made to give up possessions, wear a yellow star to identify themselves and they were forced to live behind barbed wire fences. Finally there was talk of deportation. The Germans would be sending the Jews away somewhere. Elie and his family gathered all of their belongings into a single sack and were put on cattle cars and sent to a concentration camp called Auschwitz.

As Elie leaves he sees his father cry for the first time. The Hungarian police are so mean to everyone. The police would hit people to make them stay in line and walk faster. As we reached our next destination, we all threw our bags down. "Oh God, Lord of the Universe, take pity upon us in Thy great mercy..." (page 16.)

Elie and his family are forced into cattle cars where there is barely any room to breathe. If they try to escape they will be shot. The doors to the cattle cars are nailed shut. After several days some sees the camp in the distance. They see a big furnace. The Jews are told that this labor

camp will be good for them. The young will go to work and the older Jews will help in the fields. The Jews begin to feel better about their situation. "We gave thanks to God." (p. 23.) But the Jews realize this is the first of many lies they will be told about Auschwitz.

Elie says, "Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never." (p. 32) This passage tells us that Elie has lost faith in his God. He has survived his first night in a concentration camp and he realizes he will never be the same!

Elie avoids getting his teeth pulled because the Germans want the gold in his crown. During an air raid, a man tries to steal something. They build a gallow to hang him and make an example of him. Elie says, "Where is God now?" And I heard a voice within me answer him: "Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows. . . ." (p 57).

Elie can't believe that God chooses to watch his people die and he has a problem worshipping him as God. "How could I say to Him: Blessed be Thou, Almighty, Master of the Universe, who chose us among all nations to be tortured day and night, to watch as our fathers, our mothers, our brothers end up in the furnaces?" (p. 62) Elie is tormented by seeing innocent babies and thousands of his fellow Jews incinerated in the fires. He still believes in God, but he can't understand his silence. "For the first time, I felt anger rise within me. Why should I sanctify

His name? The Almighty, the eternal and terrible master of the universe, chose to be silent? What was there to thank Him for?"

After months in the camp, the Russians approach and the Germans leave Auschwitz. Elie and the rest of the Jews march to another camp about 50 miles away. The Jews are forced onto another train car. One hundred people enter the car and only twelve come out alive. Many die along the way because of the cruel conditions. Elie's father dies. Finally on April 11, 1945, Ellie is rescued. Although Elie is alive he will never be the same. His entire world and his belief system has changed.

Work cited

Wiesel, Ellie, Night. Emc Paradigm, 1956

