

Jackson Shirley

8th

10/21/24

The book Night by Elie Wiesel is all about the life of a young boy who goes through the horrors of the Holocaust. And the Holocaust is all about survival. Adolph Hitler wanted to kill all the Jews in Europe. So if you were a Jew, you did everything you could to survive. Elie learns that the Jews are being mistreated and are being sent off on trains and he has been told that they even have to dig their own graves. The Jews are forced to live in certain areas of the city and they also have to wear yellow stars to identify themselves as Jewish. Jews are packed into railroad cars and sent off to Auschwitz, a concentration camp. The Jews see and smell smoke and they soon realize they are smelling the bodies of Jews being burned.

Somewhere at this camp, Elie is separated from his mother and sister and he never sees them again, but at least he is still with his father. Elie and his father lie about their age to stay alive. The guard asks, "How old are you?" Elie says, "eighteen." My voice was shaking (page 30). Elie lies again to make sure of survival. "What's your occupation?" Should I say that I was a student? "Farmer," I heard myself say. (page 30.) Bodies of men, women, and babies are burned at the camp, upsetting Elie and his father very much. Teeth of Jews are pulled just so they can steal the gold out of their cavities. All this has changed Elie and he is only concerned about survival!

In 1944, the Jews begin to celebrate the holidays. Elie really doesn't feel like celebrating and he really doesn't think that the Jews are God's chosen people. Elie's father becomes too weak to work and he knows they will try and kill him. Somehow his father survives! Winter arrives and they must leave the camp because the Russians are coming. Elie has a hurt foot and it is difficult for him to walk. This part of the story is pretty bad. They are starving and friends and family members are killing each other to stay alive. Elie's dad is slowly dying and when he does die, Elie feels relief.

As the Americans approach the camps, the Germans decide to kill all the Jews but air raid sirens go off and soon after the SS guards are attacked and they run away. Elie is alive but soon gets food poisoning and gets very sick. Elie looks in the mirror for the first time since he was arrested and says, "a corpse gazed back at me." It also says "I spent my days in total idleness. With only one desire: to eat. I no longer thought of my father, or my mother. From time to time, I would dream. But only about soup, an extra ration of soup." (Page 113).

There are many places where the prisoners and victims in the concentration camps use the loss of faith, positions of power, and betrayal of family to increase their chance of survival. This is how Elie survives the Holocaust and has to lose his family in the process.