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Mrs. Graning

English

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Night Essay

Night is a memoir for the ages 13 and up. This book shows the tragic losses and experiences that the Jewish people and others endured throughout the Holocaust through the eyes of Elie Wiesel. This book depicts actual events that happened to the Jews. They and others had to have survival-like instincts to survive. Their humanity was stripped away from them and they had to have a survival-like mind set during that time. In this book, Elie struggles to survive the unbelievable abuse of the concentration camps, the death rides of the transport trains and the forty three mile trek he was forced to run.

One of the ways Elie shows his survival instinct is by enduring the really harsh working camps. Elie went through five different concentration camps during that period of time. They were the camps Auschwitz, Buna, Birkenau, Gleiwitz, and Buchenwald. These camps started by stripping everything from them including clothes, jewelry and every physical belonging they had brought with them. Then workers said to Elie and the prisoners "Strip! Fast! Los!".(Wiesel 33) They stripped and in their place they were given dirty clothes in return. These camps also separated families like Elie's. After just a few weeks in the camps they were losing their religious faith as well. All they cared about was their share of food. Some wanted more and

wanted to fight Elie or hurt his father for just a little bit more bread and soup. That's what the Germans did to them. They did away with their way of life and changed them from those camps forever. All of the people in the camp were on survival mode and did not care about anything else.

Elie illustrates a different, harsh treatment he lived through; the open aired caged train car he went on to travel to Gleiwitz. He and others were forced into the carts. There were 100 people per cart. Elie and his father made it on the same car. With the open roof and walls Elie and others gathered together to try to keep warm with the thick snow and ice cold wind. Many died during this terrible environment and at each stop were thrown off, their corpses not even buried just thrown out like trash. With their survival-like instinct many turned against each other. When they stopped in towns German workers would throw bread in the cages and all the men would fight for it. Some turned against their family. A son even turned against his father. When the father got some bread, the son killed him for it. The father said "Meir. Meir, my boy! Don't you recognize me? I'm your father...you're hurting me...you're killing your father! I've got some bread...for you too...for you too..."(Wiesel 89). After that, the Father collapsed. When the son grabbed the bread he was beaten to death by the others and he and his father died right next to each other.

One of the worst torture like things that Elie Wiesel went through was a forty three mile run to Buchenwald. The Jews were running to the camp because of the Russian line getting closer to Germany so they had to move camps. The run was cold and it was snowing. If you stopped you were killed. All he thought was "Don't think. Don't stop. Run."(Wiesel 77) Many stopped and were trampled or shot. This run was a sprint and when they stopped everybody was exhausted. They stopped at an abandoned factory that was broken down. Still snowing,

everybody wanted to go to sleep. But if you slept you could die of pneumonia. Many died from this just wanting the suffering to be over with. Elie and his father took turns watching each other sleep so they would survive the cold environment. When the morning came they ran the rest of the way to Bunchenwald.

Night is an amazing book to learn about the Holocaust and what happened to the Jewish people and prisoners. It presented real life events that the Jewish people experienced. Elie is a great author and really lets you actually see what happened through his eyes. This book was a great eye opening experience on the survival of these people. In conclusion, Elie shows his amazing survival in this book by the extreme concentration camps, the killer train he rode, and the long treacherous run he ran.

Work Cited

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. EMC Corporation, 2003.