

Anders Milliken

Mrs. Graning

English

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Night: Struggle of Survival

In the book *Night*, Elie Wiesel writes a narrative of his experiences through the Holocaust and how survival can lead to both physical and emotional problems that can cause someone to lose sight of being human. He tells the struggles of surviving and losing faith in those that endured the Holocaust. Starvation, abuse, and emotional loss of faith are among the factors that affect the Jews struggle to survive.

Starvation is one physical struggle that becomes a challenge for survival. Starvation was depicted on the train packed with the Jews as many had not eaten in days (Wiesel 89). When the Germans citizens threw little crumbs of bread, the struggle for survival became real (Wiesel 89). The Jews began acting like animals for food (Wiesel 89). Elie explains the struggle of survival when, “Dozens of starving men fought each other to the death for a few crumbs,” (Wiesel 88). They were throwing themselves on to one another and clawing each other for very little amounts of food (Wiesel 89). It is very hard to imagine what happened to them through these times of struggle for food. Another example for the struggle of starvation is when Elie’s father’s food was not given to him because of how sick he was (Wiesel 96). They didn’t want to waste any food on

someone who would die soon (Wiesel 96). These physical struggles of starvation show how survival was a challenge throughout the book *Night*.

Physical abuse is another struggle that becomes a challenge for survival. The soldiers forced the Jews to run and run fast; they had to run all night (Wiesel 77). When they were told to rest, everyone had collapsed and they had run 42 miles (Wiesel 79). Elie stated, “Our limbs numb with cold despite the running, our throats parched, famished, breathless, on we went,” (Wiesel 78). Everyone was dying of the cold after they had laid down in the snow (Wiesel 79). People were falling and walking on each other (Wiesel 84). The people at the bottom of the groups were getting squashed and suffocated (Wiesel 85). The prisoners were losing humanity to survive. The risk of not allowing the abuse was fear of death. The physical abuse was portrayed throughout *Night* in the concentration camps and challenged the Jews survival.

The emotional loss of faith was another struggle of survival that was faced in *Night*. At the beginning of the book, Elie tells that before he came to the camp, he was starting class to become very faithful (Wiesel 2). He wanted to become as close to God as he could, but when he saw how the camp was and what was happening in it, he began to question his faith. The Jews were losing faith in God as they weren’t sure if they would survive the challenges they were given (Wiesel 61). They were all losing their faith in God because of the horrific effects they had experienced and witnessed from beatings to murder. They were wondering if God was even present (Wiesel 61). Elie states, “What are you, my God,” I thought angrily, “compared to this afflicted crowd, proclaiming to you, their faith, their anger, their revolt?” (Wiesel 61). The Jews stopped praying to God because of how they were being treated and he wasn’t stopping the

horrific events. The emotional struggle of holding on to the Jew's faith throughout the book was a test of survival.

Night portrays survival as a theme throughout the book through the factors of physical starvation, abuse, and emotional loss of faith. The struggle of survival teaches us how horrific the Holocaust was and the impact that it made on those that survived and those that learned about it. The Holocaust impacted those that survived for years and generations after the war ended. It impacted Elie so much that he said he would never think or talk about it until 10 years later. This shows the terrible impact it made on his life. The actions that the Jews had gone through I could never process through my mind. The book *Night* shows terrible events of survival in the world that can occur and is important for us to read and learn about to make sure this kind of act never happens again.

Works Cited

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. EMC/ParadigmPublishing, 2003.