

# Night by elie weisel

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To suffer, as defined in the dictionary, means to undergo or feel pain or great distress. Another way to say it is to sustain injury, disadvantage, or loss. And yet another way to define suffering is to say to endure or be afflicted with something temporary or chronically. If they were to ask Elie Wiesel what his definition of suffering was, he would have a lot to say and what he told them would be more horrible than their wildest dreams. It is hard to relate to something of the magnitude of Elie's suffering, without actually being there, but after reading his book I have a whole new understanding and sympathy for the Holocaust victims.

Elie's story took place while he was a very young boy, approximately 14. His friend (town beggar) Moshe, had been somewhat helping with his studies until all the foreigners were forced to leave the town. Sneaking back in several weeks later Moshe told of the stories that he had witnessed. They were gruesome accounts of what the Nazi's were doing to innocent children. His stories were paid little attention, but soon the townspeople were being forced to leave and migrate towards ghettos. From there it was just waiting till they were moved by train to the concentration camps.

Once off the train, Elie and his father were separated from Elie's mother and sister, little did he know that he would never see them again. Through bribery and friendships along the way he managed to stay close to his aging father. Little respect and even less food was given to the captives while they performed labor intensive tasks in the quarries. During the day work was performed and if anyone was caught doing anything illegal they were murdered in front of anybody to set an example of what would happen if an escape was tried.

Throughout Elie's horrific ordeal, he would always comment on the night. This was fitting being the name of the book, but also because that is the time most of us do our reflection. It is time spent alone and it giving a chance to sort out your thoughts and be one with yourself. Nighttime was probably when reality set in. Elie would often compare himself and the other victims to the trials that Job went through. If you remember, the book of Job did not explain the mystery of suffering but explored the idea of faith in the midst of suffering.

It started out as a discussion between Satan and God on the loyalty of his servants. Satan proposed that if he were to take away all of Job's values in life that he would indeed curse the name of God. God agreed to let Job be tested but his life could not be taken from him. So, Satan did take away every thing including his family, his house, and all of his livestock. Then to top it he afflicted Job with boils and sores all over his body. Job had no idea all of this was being done to him but his friends seemed to think that it was because he had done something wrong and God was punishing him for it.

Elie felt the same way but at the end of Job's story God tries to rectify Job's life to the state from which it came. Elie was not as lucky. Elie's health was deteriorating but his old father felt it worse. They were both malnourished but at Elie's young age he could hold out a little longer. On January 29 were Elie awoke his father was gone. His father lack of health and old age was his downfall. The death of his father made Elie a stronger person with only his own well-being on his mind.

He no longer had to worry if his father was keeping up with the work or that he had enough food. He was living for himself. This new focused energy is what kept Elie from dying himself. Not too long after his father's death the Allies moved in and Elie and the few remaining prisoners were liberated. This was a time of joy for some but also a time of sadness in remembrance of all who had gone before them. Before reading this book I had a somewhat skeptic view of what exactly had taken place during the war.

While reading this book I believed this man's testimony 100%. It was beyond my comprehension how something like this could have and did take place. The only thought that I had at the completion of this book was, what about the other victims (non-jews). I guess because this was only one man's story and Jews were the only people he saw so that is what he wrote about. This book really makes you think about all the freedoms that I (WE) take for granted everyday. I have learned to view the Holocaust in an all new perspective.