

# Hope in night (by elie wiesel)



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Hope in Night In extremely difficult times, people are often shown to act cruelly towards one another. A prime example of this is life in the concentration camps during World War II, which was characterized by inhumane behavior on all sides. On the other hand, there are people who recognize that upholding their humanity and hope in dark times is the key to survival. In *Night*, by Elie Wiesel, the author claims that in order for humanity to survive hard times, people need to rely on each other by making and accepting sacrifices and by giving and receiving reassurance, a concept which Wiesel supports by demonstrating that some people's self-determination and good will towards others prevails in perilous situations. Out of friendship, people are sometimes willing to work against the system and to make sacrifices for others who are in need.

Before Wiesel's family is transported to Auschwitz, an inspector of the Hungarian police promises to warn his family if there is imminent danger. Only in retrospect does Wiesel (represented by Eliezer) realize that this Hungarian policeman did in fact make an attempt to warn the Wiesels by knocking at their sealed window. Eliezer reflects on the event by stating, "It was only after the war that I found out who had knocked that night. It was an inspector of the Hungarian police, a friend of my father's.

"He had told us, 'Don't worry. I'll warn you if there is danger.' But by the time we succeeded in opening the window, it was too late"(14).

Although the Hungarian policeman's attempt to warn the Jewish family is fruitless, he acts in a courageous and self-determined manner, upholding his

humanity. He ignores orders at considerable risk to himself and bravely follows his impulse to help friends in need. If he had been caught attempting to warn the Wiesel family, he would have faced trial because he acted against the orders of his superiors and the interests of his country. This Hungarian policeman's altruistic act demonstrates his willingness to make a sacrifice in order to save a family that, by his national definition, is on the enemy's side. The policeman's friendship motivates him to strive for the survival of others and give them hope in the darkest of times.

In the concentration camp, Eliezer receives unexpected reassurance and support from a Jewish girl from France. Eliezer is severely beaten by a Polish guard called Idek. To Eliezer's surprise, a French girl tries to console him. He states, "I felt a cool hand wiping the blood from my forehead. It was the French girl.

She was smiling her mournful smile as she slipped me a crust of bread. I knew that she wanted to talk to me but she was paralyzed with fear"(53). In this touching scene, the French girl unselfishly comforts Eliezer. She tends to his head injury even though she is afraid that she could get punished for doing so. The French girl even offers bread to Eliezer, which is perplexing in view of the fact that food is in very short supply. In addition, she offers psychological support by smiling and expressing solidarity.

The girl acts in spite of her fear and shows considerable courage. Her motivation is not immediately obvious: Why does she show such kindness towards someone who is not related to her The only plausible explanation is that the French girl still feels the bond between human beings. The Jewish

girl from France makes a personal sacrifice in order to reassure a fellowman in need.

She acts out of her own humane convictions and upholds hope in a grave and dangerous situation. Although life during war time brings about inhumane behavior, some people find the courage to act against their own self-interest and take the part of their adversaries. In Night, Elie Wiesel describes several instances of humane acts and self-determined courage aimed at helping people in need in spite of personal risk of punishment. The Hungarian policeman and the French girl act unselfishly to help others in the face of danger.

They reaffirm the hope that people can rely on each other during hard times.