

Sunflower: jews and simon wiesenthal essay sample



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The Sunflower is a book that tells the story of holocaust survivor and his encounter with a dying Nazi, and the impact it causes. Unlike most books concerning the Holocaust, the book shows both sides of the story. The book begins in a concentration camp where Simon Wiesenthal is led to a dying soldier who asks for forgiveness. Many reoccurring themes are present. These include the inhumanity of others, faith in God (or lack thereof), and the bond between family. Throughout the book, Wiesenthal questions everything. He questions himself, he questions others, and ultimately his questions are answered by others. There were questions about everything. Why was this happening to the Jews? What was happening outside of the camp? How was everybody else faring? Were the butterflies communicating between fallen soldiers? How was he to respond this murderer's request for respite?

Was he supposed to break the heart of an innocent woman because of her son's choices? Wiesenthal's questions build this story. While he was dying, the soldier did not receive forgiveness, and some may say he didn't deserve it. Others may disagree. Upon his death bed, the young man wanted to repent his sins to a Jew. Perhaps his lack of sincerity was a key reason he found himself denied. It was quite a coincidence that the Jew happened to be Wiesenthal. Similar to how the memories haunted the soldier, the soldier haunts Wiesenthal. After sharing the tale of the soldier with other prisoners, he realizes that others understood his dilemma. Who was at fault here? When offered the possessions of the deceased soldier, he refused them. He did however, remember the address of the soldier's mother. When he met her, the woman was overcome with grief, having lost both her husband and

only child. Wiesenthal thought how to handle his situation, and he decided to once again, stay silent. He even expressed sympathy for the woman.

Wiesenthal again questioned everything. What was the right thing to do?