

Night

Elie Wiesel

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Elie Wiesel's *Night* is the true story of his time in concentration camps. The book starts with the small town of Sighet, Romania, skeptical that the Gestapo would ever make it to their town. They then end up rounded up by the Gestapo and sent to Germany, where they were split up, put to work, and tortured. As Wiesel goes from camp to camp, he describes the different tortures people would endure at the hands of the officers. He showed how they were starved, beaten, and put to work in dangerous conditions until they no longer could, when they would be killed. He described how there was a camp doctor who people were afraid to visit because they would be put to death. As the novel winds down, he no longer describes fear and sadness, for the people of the camp no longer had emotion to give. They were all tired, hungry, and treated worse and worse, to the point where they would become completely apathetic to their own situation. This lack of emotion towards the end shows how the conditions of the camp had drained every little bit of hope out of them, and in the end, they just lived their days one at a time.

The contents of the novel are not the kind of stuff that we would learn about in school. The novel begins with a community, nonchalantly carrying on with life. As the novel gets darker and darker, the people get more and more tired, and Wiesel transitions from describing the emotion on people's faces, to observations of events, showing how hope dwindles. The way Wiesel incorporates the theme of dehumanization makes the story that much more heart wrenching.

As terrible as it was to learn more about the atrocities of the Holocaust, *Night* is a brilliantly written novel that can be very hard to put down. The messages of the novel will be impossible to forget since they were presented in such a dark manner. There were some parts of the novel that made it seem almost mythical, as it is almost impossible to believe human beings can do this to one another. I had to keep reminding myself that this happened in real life, that there are people, who lived through these nightmarish conditions for months.

This is the kind of book that should be passed down for years and years, just to make sure that a history as atrocious as this is never repeated. It should be the kind of book that has a very long waitlist at the library. High schoolers would be the ideal audience for this book, especially those with an affinity for world history or nonfiction. Younger children should be made aware of the holocaust but not through this book, for it is definitely not for the light hearted.

Recommended Titles:

- Persepolis – Marjane Satrapi
- The Book Thief – Markus Zusak
- The Diary of Anne Frank – Anne Frank
- Dawn – Elie Wiesel
- Fever 1793 – Laurie Halse Anderson