

Name: _____

English 12



Study Guide

Night by Elie Wiesel

Answer the following questions **in complete sentences**. Higher credit will be given to those who use quotes and page numbers to support their answers.

Questions pp.3-17

1. Characterize Elie Wiesel in the beginning of the book. Consider all four types of character traits: emotional, intellectual, moral, and physical. How was he unique for a twelve-year-old?
2. Who was Moishe the Beadle? How is he characterized when we first meet him? What effect did he have on Elie?
3. How did Moishe the Beadle change? What is the cause of this change?
4. How did the Germans appear to Elie when they first arrived? What is the significance of this?
5. What three steps did Wiesel describe on “the race toward death” (pp. 10-11)?
6. On p.12, Wiesel writes: “Night fell.” The word “Night” is also the title of his memoir. What significance or symbolism does night have? Why might Wiesel have titled his autobiography this way?
7. Wiesel’s writing has been praised for its “sparse” style. What do you suppose the critics mean by this? How is Wiesel’s writing sparse? Give an example. Why is this style particularly appropriate for his memoir?

Questions pp.18-28

1. There are numerous references to “night” and “darkness” in the following chapters. Find **at least four**. Write down the lines and page numbers. Why does Wiesel use this imagery over and over again?
2. What change came over Elie’s father? Why is Elie so surprised by this?
3. Who offered to give the Wiesel family safe refuge? Why do you suppose they refused this offer?
4. Describe the conditions of the cattle cars used for deportation.
5. What happened to Madame Schächter on the train? Why does Wiesel include this story in his memoir?
6. How is Madame Schächter like Moishe the Beadle?

Questions pp.29-46

1. Why did the prisoner tell Elie and his father to lie about their ages? What happened to the weak men? The skilled men? The strong men?
2. Why didn’t the men revolt against the Nazis according to Wiesel?
3. What in particular “consumes [Elie’s] faith forever”? Why?
4. Wiesel writes of his imprisonment, “Within a few seconds, we had ceased to be men.” What does he mean by this? How was their manhood robbed?
5. What did the inscription over the door to Auschwitz state? How is it ironic?

6. Why did Elie lie to Stein about his wife and daughters' condition? Was he right to lie? Would you have lied in that situation?
7. How did the Jews rationalize their experience at the concentration camp as an act of God? How do you feel about Elie's reaction compared to Akiba Drumer's?

Questions pp.47-65

1. Consider the eye imagery Wiesel uses throughout the book. How does Wiesel describe the various characters' eyes?
2. Describe Elie's visit to the "dentist." What happened to his tooth at first? Eventually?
3. Why did the French girl (pp.52-53) have such an effect on Elie?
4. What was Elie's reaction to his father's beating (p. 54)? How do you explain this?
5. Wiesel and the other prisoners witnessed several hangings. What was their reaction to them? Why does Wiesel say, "I remember that on that evening, the soup tasted better than ever" on p. 63 and "That night, the soup tasted of corpses" on p.65?
6. Explain the effect of the hanged child's silence at his execution. How is this more powerful than the cries of the adults?

Questions pp.66-84

1. Describe Elie Wiesel's reaction to Rosh Hashanah. What does he mean by his statement, "But now, I no longer pleaded for anything. I was no longer able to lament" (p.68)?

2. What is the irony of the traditional celebration of Yom Kippur? How did Elie symbolically rebel against God?
3. Describe the building tension of the selection process. How did the men try to avoid being sent to the crematory?
4. Explain the symbolism of Elie's "inheritance" from his father. (p. 75)
5. How does Wiesel show Akiba Drumer's change from a hopeful, religious man to a man utterly lacking in faith?
6. On p.77, Wiesel writes: "We were handed winter clothing: striped shirts that were a bit heavier. The veterans grabbed the opportunity for further sniggering." Why did the veterans mock the newer prisoners? What does this say about human nature?
7. How was Hitler a kind of prophet according to the "faceless neighbor" in the hospital (p.80)?
8. How did Eliezer and his father miss their chance to be freed?

Questions pp.85-97

1. What motivated Elie to persevere when he felt like dying on the 42+ mile march through the snow?
2. What does Wiesel mean by "We were the masters of nature, the masters of the world" (p.87)?
3. Continuing with his use of eye imagery, how did Wiesel describe Rabbi Eliahu's eyes? How do his eyes characterize him?

4. What did Elie pray for after encountering Rabbi Eliahu and his lost son?
5. Why did Juliek care about his violin, even in the face of death? What does the violin come to symbolize?
6. What does Wiesel mean by the line, “I tried to rid myself of my invisible assassin” (p.94)?

Questions pp.98-115

1. Who was Meir Katz?
2. What happened to Elie’s father?
3. What happened to Elie after his father’s death?
4. What was Elie’s first act as a free man?
5. What is the significance of Elie examining his reflection in the mirror?
6. Explain the significance of the line, “The look in his eyes as he gazed at me has never left me.”