

Night
Sample Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Starvation. Beatings. Desperation.
- B. Common in camps. Would affect anyone. Situations encountered by Elie
- C. In his memoir *Night*, Elie Wiesel portrays the grim realities of life in a concentration camp during the Holocaust; realities that lead, not surprisingly, to emotional and spiritual changes Elie never imagined possible.

II. At the beginning of the novel, Elie's emotional and spiritual states seem atypical for a boy of 12.

A. Distant from father

- 1. "My father...unsentimental...never display of emotion...at home. He was more concerned with others than with his own family" (Wiesel 2).
- 2. Most fathers close to sons. Lack of connection with family. Probably leads to no emotional bond. Father absorbed in work and social obligations. No time with family. Likely cause of Elie's easy dismissal of what father says.

B. In mentally and emotionally in denial about Hitler/Nazis

- 1. Moshe taken away. Comes back. Nobody will listen. "I did not believe him myself" (Wiesel 5).
- 2. Realities of danger coming closer. Refuse to accept truth.
- 3. Even in ghetto, refuses to believe worst will happen "At dawn, there was nothing left of this melancholy. We felt as though we were on holiday" (Wiesel 18).

C. Spiritually strong

- 1. "I believed profoundly" (Wiesel 1).
- 2. Most children go to R.E. only because parents make them. Elie displays unusual conviction.
- 3. Seeks training on his own, weeps at scripture
- 4. Most kids bored. Don't understand. Elie shows here heartfelt dedication. May not fully understand, but he believes
- 5. Faith does not waver even in ghetto "I sat in the Ezra Malik gardens, studying a treatise on the Talmud" (Wiesel 10).

III. Once Elie's family is deported from the ghetto, however, immediate changes in Elie's emotional state (especially in his connection to his father) and in Elie's faith are evident.

A. Emotions shift from denial to shock and fear

- 1. "I pinched my face...I could not believe it" (Wiesel 30).
- 2. Surprised by what he sees. Denial not possible now. Has to confront reality
- 3. "I don't want to wait here...electric wire" (Wiesel 31)
- 4. So afraid, he'd rather be dead

B. Forges bond with father

- 1. "My father held onto my hand" (Wiesel 27).
- 2. First sign of affection from father. Growth in relationship
- 3. "My hand shifted onto my father's arm" (Wiesel 27).
- 4. Reciprocates dependence. Not something we saw before—clearly a change

C. Father source of strength and motivation

1. "My father's presence ...I was his only support" (Wiesel 82).
2. Made decisions independent of father before. Now they rely on each other to survive

D. Faith begins to waver

1. "For the first time...revolt...What had I to thank Him for?" (Wiesel 31)
2. Anger and fear directed at God. Stark contrast to the boy who "believed profoundly"

E. Faith not completely gone yet, though

1. "Thanked God...created mud...wonderful universe" (Wiesel 35).
2. Despite hardships, still finds God in heart and soul. Not broken yet.

IV. By the time Elie is liberated from Buchenwald, he is shattered emotionally and spiritually.

A. Feeling vacant

1. "I have nothing to say...no longer mattered" (Wiesel 105)
2. Will to live gone. Wants only to eat.

B. More concerned about self-preservation than father

1. Pg 101, abandons father when sirens go off. Finds him later, gives him food, "But it was...against my will" (Wiesel 102).
2. Wants to save self now. Little concern for father. Change from earlier attitude

C. Faith gone

1. Refuses to fast on the New Year. "I saw in the gesture...I felt a great void" (Wiesel 67).
2. Suffering has gotten to him. Blames God. Abandons God. But feels empty without Him.

V. Conclusion

- A. The holocaust was a time of extreme turmoil, leading to extreme emotional and spiritual changes in Elie.
- B. Describe situations.
- C. Fear and hopelessness would cause change in anyone