***Night* Study Guide**

**(Note: I originally wrote this study guide for the 25th edition, translated by Stella Rodway. However, I have several copies of a translated by Marion Wiesel, which is why you will see two sets of numbers for page citations. There is also some slight change in wording between the two translations)**

**Chapter 1 pgs. 1-20 (3-22) and Chapter 2 pgs. 21-26 (23-28)**

1. Who is Moshe the Beadle and what story does he tell when he returns to Sighet? How have his experiences changed him? Why does no one believe his story?
2. When Wiesel is describing the mood and beliefs of the people in Sighet in 1944, he says that people didn’t believe Hitler would be able to harm them. He says, “Yes, we even doubted that he wanted to exterminate us.” (6 or 8). What clues that they were in danger did the people of Sighet ignore? Why did they ignore these clues? Why didn’t they believe they were in danger?
3. How did the setting begin to change in this chapter?
4. How did people feel about living in the ghetto at first?
5. In several places Weisel describes how the situation in Sighet was growing worse eventually nightmarish. However, Weisel also says, “Little by little life returned to normal” (9 or 11) Later on when he and his family are in the ghetto, he says, “The people’s morale was not too bad; we were beginning to get used to the situation.” (18 or 20) What point do you think Weisel is trying to make? What does this suggest about human nature?
6. See if you can find any places where Weisel suggests he and his family might have been able to avoid the Holocaust. Why does he include this information?
7. See if you can find any places where Weisel emphasizes night falling. How does this affect the mood of the story?
8. Describe what conditions were like in the train cars.
9. Why do the young men tie up Madam Schächter and gag her? Is this treatment cruel or justified?

**Chapter 3 pgs. 27-43 (29-46)**

1. Why does one the prisoners tell Wiesel and his father to lie about their ages?
2. Some of the young men want to revolt when they first enter the camp. Wiesel overhears them saying, “We’ve got to do something. We can’t let ourselves be killed. We can’t go like beasts to the slaughter. We’ve got to revolt.” (29 or31)He also hears them say, “Let the world learn of the existence of Auschwitz. Let everybody hear about it, while they can still escape.” (29 or 31)The older men, however, say, “You must never lose faith, even when the sword hangs over your head.” (29 or 31). How would revolting be losing faith? Why do you think these words would stop the younger men?
3. Even after seeing people, even babies, being burned in the camp, why does Wiesel say to his father, “I did not believe that they could burn people in our age, that humanity would ever allow it…” (30 or 33)
4. Why does Wiesel want to run into the electric wire when they march by? Why doesn’t he?
5. Why does Wiesel repeat the word “never” on page 32 (34)? What effect does this repetition create?
6. When the men are given clothes to put on, Wiesel says, “Within a few seconds we had ceased to be men.” (34 or 37) What does he mean? How have they stopped being men?
7. How are Wiesel’s feelings about God starting to change? Why are they starting to change?
8. How much happens to Wiesel in “*one single night”* as he says? (34 or 37) How does one single night change him so much?
9. Why doesn’t Wiesel do anything when another prisoner who is in charge of them strikes his father violently? How does he feel about his lack of response?
10. When Wiesel and the other prisoners arrive at a new block, a young Pole is put in charge of them and gives them some advice. Why does Wiesel write, “The first human words” after the Pole’s speech? (39 or 41)
11. Why does Wiesel lie to Stein?

**Ch. 4 pgs. 45-62 (47-65)**

1. Why wouldn’t Wiesel give up his shoes to the head of his tent even when he was promised a good unit in exchange? Why does he mentions that later his shoes were taken but “in exchange for nothing this time”? (46 or 48)
2. All the prisoners in the camp are put in work units, and Wiesel’s unit works for a German civilian (a civilian is not part of the military) called the *meister.* Wiesel says, “He paid us about as much attention as dealer might who was just receiving a delivery of old rags” (47 or 50). What does this simile reveal about how the *meister* sees the Jews working for him?
3. At one point, Wiesel says that two boys’ parents were “exterminated at Birkenau.” (48 or 50) Why does he choose to use the word “exterminated” rather than “killed” or “murdered”?
4. How does the French girl show Wiesel kindness and compassion? Why is she willing to take such a risk for someone she didn’t really know? What does this suggest about human nature?
5. How does Wiesel react when the Kapo Idek beats his father? What has life in the concentration camp done to Wiesel?
6. What kind of person does Franek turn out to be?
7. When the camp is being bombed, why aren’t the prisoners afraid? How do they feel?
8. During the bombing, how does Wiesel say the prisoners feel about the man who risks his life for soup? (57 or 59) What does this reveal about what this setting has done to all of them?
9. When the youth (teenager) from Warsaw is hanged, Wiesel says, “I remember that I found the soup excellent that evening…” (60 or 63) Why is this what he remembers? Why does he share this observation? Later when the beautiful boy is hanged, Wiesel says, “That night the soup tasted of corpses.” (62 or 65) Why did the soup taste differently this night when Wiesel had already seen a public execution?
10. Wiesel uses frequent sentence fragments as part of his writing style. See if you can find some places he uses sentence fragments. Why did he write this way? How do these sentence fragments contribute to the tone and mood of the story?

**Ch. 5 pgs 63-80 (66-84)**

1. Describe how Wiesel’s feelings about God and religion have changed. Why have his feelings changed? Use evidence to support your answer.
2. Why do they end the Rosh Hashanah service with the Kaddish?
3. What is the “New Year’s Gift” the SS give the prisoners? Why is Wiesel being ironic here?
4. Why do the other prisoners say Wiesel is “lucky to have been brought here so late”? (66 or 70)
5. When it looks like Wiesel’s father has been selected for the crematorium, Wiesel’s father tries to give him a knife and spoon. Wiesel calls it “The inheritance.” (71 or 75) Why does he call a knife and spoon “The inheritance”? What does this reveal about what the concentration camp has done to them and their lives?
6. Describe what happened to Akiba Drumer? Why does Wiesel share this story? What point is he trying to make? Does the story suggest about what life in the camp has done to people? Does the story suggest anything about human nature?
7. On page 74 (78), Wiesel describes what it was like on New Year’s Day and Christmas. He says, “We were allowed a slightly thicker soup.” This sentence is short and stands on its own as a paragraph. As a writer, why do you think Wiesel chose to do this?
8. Why is Wiesel so nervous while he’s in the hospital?
9. While resting in the hospital, one of the other prisoners says to Wiesel, “I’ve got more faith in Hitler than in anyone else.” (77 or 81) Why on earth would a Jewish man have faith in Hitler?
10. When it becomes clear that the Red Army—the Russian Army—is approaching the camp, the SS decide to evacuate the camp rather than allow the prisoners to be freed. Wiesel decides to evacuate with the other prisoners rather than stay in the hospital because he believes the SS will murder patients before they leave. He then adds a paragraph that explains how if he had stayed in the hospital, he and his father would have been freed two days later. Why did Wiesel include this information?
11. Why does the block leader insist on cleaning the floor before they evacuate?
12. Wiesel ends the chapter with a very short sentence: “It snowed relentlessly” (80 or 84) Whey end the chapter this way? What effect does this sentence create?

**Ch. 6 pgs. 81-92 (85-97)**

1. Describe what it is like on the evacuation march. How is Wiesel able to keep going?
2. Wiesel’s father tries to take care of his son and refuses to let Wiesel sleep in the snow, fearing that he’ll never wake up. How do the roles of father and son later reverse?
3. How and why did Rabbi Eliahou’s son forsake him? What does this reveal about human nature?
4. Did Wiesel do the right thing by not telling Rabbi Eliahou that his son had abandoned him? Why or why not?
5. Once Wiesel and the other reach Gleiwitz (another camp), Wiesel discovers that one of the musicians, Juliek, brought his violin! Why would Juliek bring his violin along when his own life was at stake?
6. That night in the camp, Juliek plays Beethoven one last time. What affect did his playing have on Wiesel? Why do you think it had such an effect?
7. In the morning, when Wiesel finds Juliek dead, he notices the violin has also been trampled and refers to it as “a strange, overwhelming little corpse.” (91 or 95) Why refer to a violin as a “corpse”?
8. How do the SS men react when they see the prisoners eating snow off of each other’s backs? What do you think of their reaction?

**Ch. 7 pgs. 93-98 (98-103)**

1. What does Wiesel do when they try to throw his father’s body from the train? What does this reveal about his character and human nature?
2. On page 95, why does Wiesel tell the story about the Parisian (from Paris) woman who threw coins some of the poor native children? What point was he trying to make?
3. How do people react when bread is thrown into the wagon? What does this suggest about human nature? (What does one son do to his own father?)
4. After describing what happened in the wagon with the bread, Wiesel adds a single-sentence paragraph: “I was fifteen years old.” (96 or 102) Why would Wiesel add this information at the end of the section of text?
5. Who is Meir Katz and what happens to him towards the end of the journey? Why does describe what happened to him? What point might he have been trying to make?

**Ch. 8 pgs. 99-106 (104-112) and Ch. 9 pgs. 107-109 (113-115)**

1. Why does the crematory no longer make any impression on Wiesel or the other prisoners?
2. Why are the sick prisoners not given any food?
3. Why won’t the doctor help Wiesel’s father?
4. When Wiesel’s father is dying, the head of the block says to Wiesel, “Here every man has to fight for himself and not think o f anyone else. Even of his father. Here, there are no father, no brothers, no friends. Everyone lives and dies for himself alone. I’ll give you a sound piece of advice—don’t give your ration of bread and soup to your old father. There’s nothing you can do for him. And you’re killing yourself. Instead you ought to have his ration.” (105 or 110) Do you agree with what this man is saying? Is he right?
5. Explain Wiesel’s very complicated feelings about his father’s death. Why doesn’t he cry? Does he not care at all?
6. As Wiesel’s father is dying, he gives up his soup to his father, but he does so only grudgingly. He then thinks to himself, “No better than Rabbi Eliahou’s son had I withstood the test.” (102 or 107) What test is he talking about? Do you agree that he has done no better than Rabbi Eliahou’s son?
7. What are the last days in the camp like for Wiesel?
8. What is the prisoners’ “first act as free men”? (109 or 115) Why isn’t their first act revenge? What does this reveal about what life in the camps has done to them? What does it suggest about human nature?
9. What do you think of how Wiesel chose to end the book?