

## NOTES FROM: *Night*, by Elie Wiesel

**SUMMARY:** *Night* is a *powerfully* transformative book, similar to - but definitely *not* a substitute for - books like *Man's Search for Meaning*, by Viktor Frankl.

They were both Jews, both captured and sent to the death camps by the Nazis during World War II, both survivors who emerged to warn the rest of the world about what happened there. Wiesel was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Viktor Frankl was not, but both books are *unbelievably* worth reading. "Powerful" really isn't even a powerful enough word. There *are* no words.

Wiesel was a teenager when he and his family were abducted from their home by the Nazis in 1944 and sent to Auschwitz concentration camp, before being transferred to Buchenwald. *Night* is the book that came out of those terrible experiences, most horrific of which being the deaths of his entire family during his time in the camps.

The entire *book* is one endless, chilling warning, a *demand* that this must never be allowed to happen again, and *certainly* never forgotten. I first read *Night* when I was 26 and *I've* never forgotten it, that's for sure.

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"Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed....Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never."

"He explained to me with great insistence that every question possessed a power that did not lie in the answer."

"I didn't know that this was the moment in time and the place where I was leaving my mother and Tzipora forever."

"Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever."

"My eyes had opened, and I was alone, terribly alone in a world without God and without man."

"I had forgotten that people slept in sheets."

"They had orders to shoot anyone who could not sustain the pace. Their fingers on the trigger, they did not deprive themselves of the pleasure."

"At every step, somebody fell down and ceased to suffer."

"I did not deny God's existence, but I doubted his absolute justice."

"For a ration of bread I was able to exchange cots to be next to my father."

"One day when I was able to get up, I decided to look at myself in the mirror on the opposite wall. I had not seen myself since the ghetto. From the depths of the mirror, a corpse was contemplating me. The look in his eyes as he gazed at me has never left me."

"We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe."

"When their voices are stifled, we shall lend them ours."

"Our lives no longer belong to us alone; they belong to all those who need us desperately."

"Human rights are being violated on every continent. More people are oppressed than free. How can one not be sensitive to their plight? Human suffering anywhere concerns men and women everywhere."

"Those who kept silent yesterday will remain silent tomorrow."