

4. What scenes from Night do you remember most vividly? Have they made you look at the world or your family differently?

Night was filled with many unforgettable scenes, but the following stood out to me:

“The snow began to form a thick layer over our blankets. They brought us bread – the usual ration. We threw ourselves upon it. Someone had the idea of appeasing his thirst by eating the snow. Soon the others were imitating him. As we were not allowed to bend down, everyone took out his spoon and ate the accumulated snow off his neighbor's back. A mouthful of bread and a spoonful of snow. The SS who were watching laughed at this spectacle.”

This scene highlighted what was, in some ways, one of the most disturbing aspects of the Holocaust: the enjoyment. The Jewish prisoners were starving, freezing and dying. It would have been terrible enough if the SS had not cared, or had ignored. It was appalling enough that they be so cruel, but to enjoy so much suffering, to laugh as starving people desperately tried to survive... I found such perverse pleasure disturbing beyond words. This made me consider people; myself, my family, my friends, the world. It would be nice, although naïve, to believe that everyone is good at the core. Or at least the people I know. I would like to think that under no set of circumstances could those I love commit or enjoy acts of violence of any kind. Reading this type of scene, however, has forced me question this belief. Somewhere in the world, a country decided to kill an entire race of people. Brutally and barbarically, and the soldiers enjoyed it. Had this sort of thing not happened, not still been happening today, I may have believed it to be impossible. The SS must have had friends and families too. Did these people who cared about them believe they were capable of doing the things they did? Did they care? The Holocaust was considered to be justified by those who caused it. Their idea of justice is far from my own, but just as I firmly believe that what they did was horribly wrong, they believed it was purging the world, the right thing to do. We take comfort from living in a 1st world country, a developed civilization. But Germany was developed as well. If the barbarism of the Holocaust could happen there, who is to say that it could not happen in our supposedly developed nation? I wonder whether if we; me and those I love, could we have done these things as well, had we been raised differently? This is a very disconcerting and frightening thought. I know that both evil and good exist in everyone, but I have begun the

think that the line of distinction between the two is thinner than we like to believe. I have begun to wonder: what does it take for the evil to surface in those we consider to be good? I am not sure I want to know.

5. In his 1986 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, Wiesel says:

“One person of integrity can make a difference, a difference of life and death. As long as one dissident is in prison, our freedom will not be true. As long as one child is hungry, our life will be filled with anguish and shame. What all these victims need above all is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them, that when their voices are stifled we shall lend them ours, that while their freedom depends on ours, the quality of our freedom depends on theirs” (p. 120).

How has Elie Wiesel fulfilled this purpose with this book? How does this statement make you feel about your place in the world?

In creating the book *Night*, Elie Wiesel has effectively lent his voice to those who have been silenced. He said “What all these victims need above all is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them, that when their voices are stifled we shall lend them ours”. *Night* has done this; it tells the world of the events of the Holocaust, or some of them. Elie Wiesel has shared and continues to share his experiences with the world for those who no longer can. He wanted to make everyone aware of the wrongs in the world, and to prevent the world from forgetting the wrongs that have been. His book does this. Anyone who reads *Night* will never be able to forget it. For those who recognize that the world is still imperfect, *Night* can also be a source of inspiration to positively change the world.

This is quite a powerful statement. It makes me feel both inspired and ashamed. I know that there are still people sick, dying, suffering and hungry, but yet I do little to help. I am horrified and disgusted by the pain and anguish described in *Night*, yet stand by as others in the world continue to suffer. By chance I was born into a free and democratic society where violence often seems far away. It now seems quite selfish of me to not help the world at every opportunity. I have been lucky; I have not needed the world to come to my aid, how can I not at least try to help those who have not shared in my fortune? Elie Wiesel’s words are also inspiring; they give me a desire to help others, even a need to help others. They give a sense of responsibility to help as well, and a sense that we can help, each and every person can make a difference. I hope that I will in some way change the world someday. What kind of person would I be if I did not try? This statement also makes the world much more real to me. As it mentions some of the problems of the world, my own problems goals and dreams all seem incredibly small and unimportant. The world is so much bigger than my own problems, and it is important that I remember that, that everyone remembers that. My place in the world must involve helping others; my purpose must include making a positive impact. Otherwise, I will simply fade away, having never made a difference to anyone.