

## Elie Wiesel In The Past & The Future Elie

Imagine the feeling of being forced out of your home, witness people around you die brutally, and be tortured repeatedly. Elie Wiesel faced all of these gruesome obstacles, and yet, managed to survive through each of them. At the age of fourteen, Elie and his family were arrested by Hungarian police. They were forced to leave their homes, and enter concentration camps (Wiesel 22). Elie witnessed something terrifying when he came to Auschwitz, children being thrown into flames (Wiesel 32). A young teenager that has never encountered death before was now surrounded by it. The difference from the past to the present Elie is extraordinarily huge.

First of all, Elie used to live a happy life with his family in Sighet (Wiesel 4). He wanted to study the Kabbalah (Jewish Scripture), and asked his father to find him "a master who could guide" him in his studies (Wiesel 4). Then, one day, he was forced to leave his home and move to one concentration camp after another. He wasn't the same carefree person that he used to be; he was now a somber person, with barely any expectations of the future, awaiting death. Even when the Holocaust was over, it would never change the fact that some of his family members were now dead. The worst part of all was that he had never got the chance to say something so simple, yet so meaningful to his family members that passed away—"goodbye."

Another thing that changed about Elie was how he started to become selfish. At the beginning of *Night*, Elie clung to his father because he didn't want to be separated from him and be alone (Wiesel 30). As the book draws to an end, Elie wanted to get rid of the burden that dragged him down—"his own father. Elie stated, "If only I didn't find him! If only I were relieved of this responsibility, I could use all my strength to fight for my own survival, to take care only of myself..." (106). In the beginning, Elie didn't have any intentions of leaving his father behind. Whereas at the end, Elie wished the burden that had been slowing him down would just disappear. When Elie was finally freed from his burden, his thoughts were, "Free at last!..." (Wiesel 112).

Lastly, the will to fight for survival was dimming inside of Elie. At first, his will to survive through the Holocaust was strong; yet, as time passed, the motivation he once had was starting to slip away from him. The desire to survive was only a thin string that was on the verge of snapping into two. In the middle of the book, *Night*, Elie witnessed Idek with a young Polish girl and was punished by getting lashed at (Wiesel 57-58). Idek told Elie to never tell anyone what he had witness, and Elie nodded his head endlessly as if his head had "decided to say yes for all eternity." (Wiesel 58). Fear of all the bad things that would happen to him if he acted out of place made him scared. Being somewhere at the wrong time, or saying something that offended the Nazi's was life threatening.

Hence, this is what leads to Elie's development. Elie once had parents and sisters to return home to, but the Holocaust took away his parents and a sister from him. Tragedies, such as people being killed in front of him, were happening frequently, and yet he couldn't do anything to prevent them. The Holocaust started to change him in so

many ways; it was hard to recognize who he really was anymore. Elie would never abandon his father, nevertheless he desired so dearly to leave him behind (Wiesel 106). The kind and gentle Elie was now a boy that would abandon his father just to keep himself alive. From the boy that didn't realize what freedom really meant, Elie was a character portrayed from a view where everything that he once had was beginning to tarnish away within his life.