

Death Throughout the Night

Summary: The main theme of night is used frequently throughout the novel *Night*. The author emphasizes the different world during *Night*. He explains the world without God or hope.

Night, darkness and death surround the camp, people are dying all around. No one cares, people move on just so they can survive. *Night* is the main theme in the book *Night* by Elie Wiesel. Wiesel uses this as a symbol to represent agony in the camp as well as showing slow, pointless, gruesome death. *Night* also represents a world without God or hope. *Night* is used to create a dramatic effect throughout the novel. *Night* is used to explain the madness of Madame Schächter, the agony shown by Eliezer during his first night at Birkenau, and the danger people experience through the night on the ride to Buchenwald.

Elie Wiesel uses night to describe how Madame Schächter has gone insane. In *Night*, Madame Schächter goes crazy and raves about fire. She points into the night and screams, "Fire! I can see a fire! I can see a fire!" (Wiesel p.22). Madame Schächter slowly loses her faith because her husband is taken from her with the first deportees. Madame Schächter dies in agony without her husband. Darkness is a characteristic of *Night*. The darkness in *Night* represents the amount of light there is in the wagon that allows "hidden" things to happen.

During Eliezer's first night at Birkenau many things happen to him. A S.S. separates Eliezer from his mother and baby sister. Then he yells at Eliezer's group about the camp and what the prisoners are going to do. He also tells them what will happen to them if they do not obey orders. The officer tells them, "You're going to be burned. Frizzled away. Turned into ashes!" (Wiesel p.28). The prisoners suddenly lose their faith. Eliezer sees babies in a lorry being dumped into a burning ditch. He describes this moment as murdering his very God; he

questions how God can be present with innocent lives being taken. Eliezer says that this moment in his life is "seven times cursed and seven times sealed!" (Wiesel p.32).

During the ride in the cattle wagons to Buchenwald the passengers are in grave danger; not from the officers or from the cold weather, but from the other passengers! "On the third night of our journey I woke up suddenly and felt two hands on my throat, trying to strangle me." (Wiesel p.96). Night brings out the worst of people that have nothing but food to turn to because they already lost their faith. Eliezer finds a man walking away from a fight about food. The man is holding something on his chest, a piece of food. He quickly moves the food from his chest to his mouth. A boy near the man sees him and attacks him. The boy is the man's son. The boy murders his father, gets the piece of food and before he eats it he is jumped upon and beat to death. The father and son lie next to each other, dead. This all occurs during the night.

The main theme of night is used frequently throughout the novel *Night*. The author emphasizes the different world during Night. He explains the world without God or hope. He shows the theme of Night in many occasions including: Madame Schächter going crazy during the night, Eliezer's first night at camp, and the ride to Buchenwald in the cattle wagons. Elie Wiesel survived the Nazi Concentration Camps. He faced the ruthlessness of Hitler's SS Army and lived in a world that is filled with nothing but night.