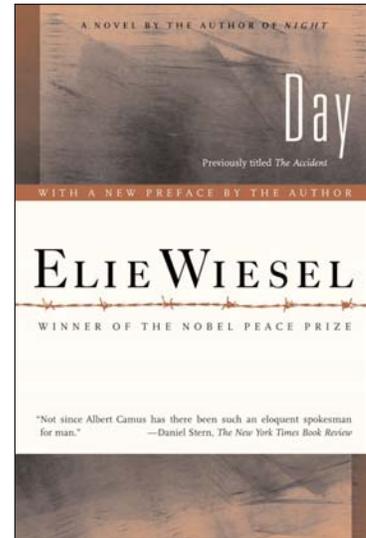




DAY

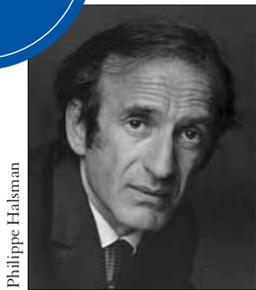
by Elie Wiesel

Translated from the French by Anne Borchartd
With a new preface by the author



128 pages • 0-8090-2309-1
Previously titled *The Accident*

“Not since Albert Camus has there been such
an eloquent spokesman for man.”
—Daniel Stern, *The New York Times Book Review*



Philippe Halsman

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The questions and discussion topics that follow are designed to enhance your reading of Elie Wiesel’s *Day*. We hope they will enrich your experience as you explore this powerful conclusion to his *Night* trilogy.

This new edition of *Day* restores Elie Wiesel’s original title to the novel initially published in English as *The Accident*, clearly reestablishing it as the final chapter in his classic trilogy of Holocaust literature. Preceded by the memoir *Night* and the novel *Dawn*, this third work introduces a narrator who grapples with the experience of being a Holocaust survivor in a world still fraught with tragedy and naïveté. When he is struck by a taxicab in Times Square, he faces weeks of hospitalization. Having narrowly escaped death once again, he begins to reflect on the most significant relationships of his life, including his current love affair with a woman who shares many of his fears. Unfolding in vivid flashbacks, *Day* illuminates the prism of one survivor’s shattered will to live.

1. What does Wiesel's new preface convey about the timelessness of this novel? How do his voice and outlook compare to those of *Day's* narrator?
2. By reading the initial scene, what were you able to discern about the relationship between the narrator and Kathleen? How do they resolve their conflicts? Are they good communicators? Is their relationship unusual or typical?
3. Dr. Russel probes Kathleen, trying to determine the depth of her commitment to the narrator because "Love is worth as much as a prayer. Sometimes more." Is the narrator's life proof of this? Or has love harmed him? What kind of love does Dr. Russel prescribe?
4. What was the narrator's time in Paris like? What do his memories indicate about this chapter of his life? In what way did it serve as a bridge to his life in the United States? Does he describe any locale as being a place where he truly felt at home?
5. What is your interpretation of the stranger Eliezer meets on board a ship bound for South America? Why is it dangerous for them to feel mesmerized by the sea? Why does the Englishman end the conversation by repeatedly saying, "I'm going to hate you"? Why is Eliezer grateful to hear those words?
6. In what way did the narrator's grandmother affect his impressions of God and death? What did she want him to believe? Did she prepare him for such a devastating tragedy as the Holocaust?
7. The narrator tells us that when he first met Kathleen, he instantly felt as if they were kindred souls, so much so that their friends think they had met previously. What is the source of Kathleen's emptiness? Does she understand him as well as he understands her? Could anyone fill the narrator's emptiness?
8. When the narrator meets with his lawyer, he expresses relief that a large corporation, rather than an impoverished cab driver, would have to pay a hefty sum as compensation for the accident. What trait does this signify in the narrator? Why is he not a vengeful person?
9. Why is it so difficult for Dr. Russel to comprehend the narrator's suicidal feelings? What does the existential conversation between doctor and patient represent in terms of everyday life? What contemporary chasms exist between the deeply wounded and their zealous but misguided healers?
10. How did you react when the narrator revealed his name as "Eliezer, the son of Sarah"? Is it appropriate to view him as a version of the same protagonist featured in *Night and Dawn*? If so, what does his past seem to predict about his future?
11. Discuss the role of the two Sarahs in the novel: the narrator's beloved mother, and the young girl whose capacity for love was extinguished by a brutal Nazi officer. What is the effect of reading about these two women in sequential scenes?

12. Will Eliezer be able to live up to his agreement with Kathleen, in which she will accept his help if he will accept hers?

13. What accounts for Eliezer's bond with Gyula? Why was he the only one able to guess the truth, that Eliezer had indeed seen the cab coming? What is Gyula trying to achieve by burning the painting in the novel's final scene?

14. In light of the ending, reread the novel's epigraph from Nikos Kazantzakis. Is its message about the pain of love and loss sustained throughout *Day*? Besides regaining his physical health, does the narrator experience any other degree of recovery?

15. There are several parallels between Elie Wiesel and the protagonist in *Day*: they share the same first name and hometown, and both were involved in a serious car accident in New York during the 1950s. Yet only one of the books in the trilogy, *Night*, is a memoir. What distinguishes the experience of reading a novel? How was Wiesel's Holocaust remembrance enriched by his blending of memoir and fiction across these three books?

FURTHER READING

Herzog by Saul Bellow; *See Under: LOVE* by David Grossman; *Joy Comes in the Morning* by Jonathan Rosen (an FSG reader's guide is available for this title at www.fsgbooks.com); *The Plot Against America* by Philip Roth; *The Bialy Eaters* by Mimi Sheraton; *Enemies, A Love Story* by Isaac Bashevis Singer

Other titles in Elie Wiesel's trilogy:

Night

Dawn

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elie Wiesel, the author of some forty books, is Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University. He and his family live in New York City. He has dedicated his life to speaking out against hatred and bigotry, and he was instrumental in the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Mr. Wiesel was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986.