

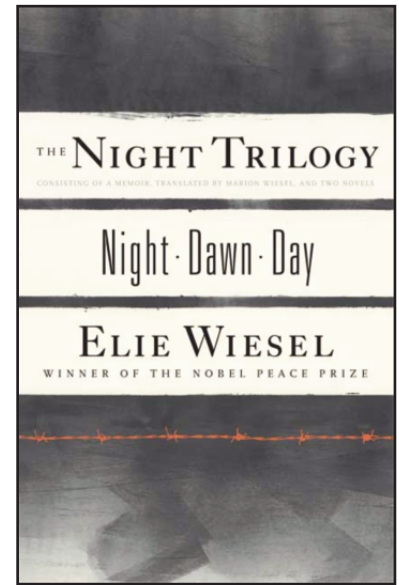


# The Night Trilogy

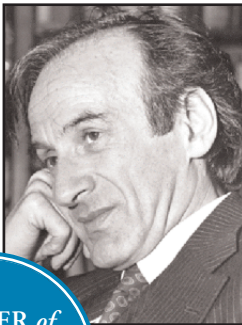
by Elie Wiesel

“To the best of my knowledge no one has left  
behind so moving a record.”

—Alfred Kazin, on *Night*



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WINNER of  
THE NOBEL  
PEACE PRIZE

## TO THE TEACHER

*The Night Trilogy* is a series of three short works that were originally published in separate volumes more than fifty years ago. The first book, *Night*, is Elie Wiesel's masterpiece, a candid, horrific, and deeply saddening autobiographical account of surviving the Holocaust as a young teenager. It is considered a classic of Holocaust literature, and was one of the first texts to be recognized as such.

Set in a series of German concentration camps, *Night* offers much more than a litany of the daily terrors—the unspeakable yet commonplace occurrences, the everyday perversion and rampant inhumanity—of life inside a death camp. However painful this memoir is to read at times, it also keenly and eloquently addresses many of the philosophical as well as personal questions implicit in any serious consideration of what the Holocaust was, what it meant, and what its legacy is and will be.

Elie (or Eliezer) Wiesel's recorded experiences—detailing the death of his family and friends, the death of his innocence as a young man, and the death of his God—reveal the formation of a sensibility that must accommodate the sorrow and wisdom implicit in living through a tragedy. Shocking, brutal, perceptive, and only slightly variant from Wiesel's own personal and familial history, *Night* is a testament of

memories, wounds, and losses. But this memoir is also a testament of the Jewish people. *Night* speaks for Wiesel and his family while also speaking for all Jews who knew about life and death in the camps; like many other eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust, it looks to the individual in order to convey the psychological and emotional injuries of all who carry the burden of survival.

Unlike *Night*, however, the other two works comprising *The Night Trilogy* are meant to be read as fiction. Still, they do address several of the themes introduced in the first book, most prominently the meaning and worth of surviving the annihilation of a race, the effects of the Holocaust upon the modern character of the Jewish people, and the loss or erasure of one's religious faith in the face of mass murder and human extermination. Both *Dawn* and *The Accident*, then, pick up on many of the ideas presented in *Night*. These ideas are in turn restated, reconsidered, elaborated on, or carried to a conclusion. As Wiesel notes in his Introduction to this volume, "These three narratives were created separately. Though the first is a testimony, the other two serve only as commentaries. However, they are all written in the first person. In *Night* it is the 'I' who speaks; in the other two, it is the 'I' who listens and questions."

*Dawn* is a short novel about a young Jewish man who has survived the Holocaust and is now living as a terrorist in British-controlled Palestine. Elisha, the narrator of *Dawn*, finds himself caught between the manifold horrors of the past and the troubling dilemmas of the present when he is ordered to kill a British officer whom his comrades have taken hostage. Elisha wrestles with guilt, ghosts, and ultimately God as he waits hour after hour for the arrival of dawn, the appointed hour for his act of assassination. This novel can—and should—also be read as a meditation on the compromises, justifications, and sacrifices that human beings make when they murder other human beings.

As is the case with *Dawn*, *The Accident* is a novel that profiles a hero with a disturbingly tragic past—again, our protagonist has survived the Holocaust—caught in the midst of an existential crisis. At the outset, the anonymous narrator of this novel, a successful newspaper journalist, gets hit by a taxi cab while walking in Times Square. Consequently, much of the plot of *The Accident* transpires in the hero's mind—in the thoughts, daydreams, and memories he has while recovering in a hospital bed for several weeks. The hero looks back on his many difficult relationships with friends, family, and current or former lovers. Time and again, these reveries point to a single yet vital concern: Is it really possible for Holocaust survivors to create new lives for themselves without remembering their old ones?

On that score, the hero of *The Accident* engages in several philosophical debates with his doctor, a bright young man who is his opposite in many ways. Their entanglements exemplify the paradoxical, combative, and self-destructive spirit that

runs through this novel. Indeed, such a spirit also typifies the hero's deeply wounded psyche and war-ravaged outlook on life—and as we continue to read, we realize all of the hero's personal relationships are likewise wounded and war-ravaged. Following along on the novel's many flashbacks, the reader is never quite sure whether the hero is trying to find the answers or forget the questions. Such is the burden of memory for those who survived the concentration camps. Yet this burden is ultimately addressed, and the narrative of *The Accident* is resolved in a rather surprising way. By extension, the narrative's most important relationship—a complex, sophisticated, and challenging love affair existing, however tenuously, between the hero and a young woman named Kathleen—is likewise resolved.

#### PREPARING TO READ

Elie Wiesel, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, has written dozens of novels, short stories, essays, plays, and historical studies. He teaches humanities at Boston University, was instrumental in the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and is considered one of the premier humanists of modern times. Wiesel has dedicated his life to speaking out against hatred, bigotry, and genocide, and *Night*, his autobiographical first book, is among the finest works of Holocaust reportage ever published. Although *Dawn* and *The Accident* are less haunting and less familiar to us than Wiesel's landmark testament, they are, of course, every bit as important to *The Night Trilogy*. The following sets of questions are meant to underscore this importance. These questions aim to not only guide your students through each of the three books singly and successfully, but to acquaint them with the trilogy's larger arguments and narrative grace, its historical cohesiveness and emotional heft. *The Night Trilogy* asks its readers what it means to survive the Holocaust—specifically, what the act and aftermath of surviving the Holocaust should and should not mean—and the questions posed below are so done with this in mind.

The first set of questions aims to help students distinguish the characters, follow the plots, and understand the meanings of these three narratives. The second set, intended for classwide discussion, focuses on the broader topics and trends to be found in *The Night Trilogy* and encourages students to compare and contrast the books. Separate works of much insight and import, *Night*, *Dawn*, and *The Accident* can stand alone, but as an accomplished trilogy, they should be considered together.

Lastly, given the gravely serious historical perspectives set forth in *The Night Trilogy*, teachers are strongly encouraged to equip their students with a considerable degree of background information on the Holocaust, as well as on terrorist activities in Palestine. And for those so inclined, a section entitled “Suggestions for Further Study” comes after the two sets of questions.

## NIGHT

1. Describe in detail the characters of Eliezer and Moché the Beadle. What is the nature of their relationship?
2. Consider Eliezer's feelings for his family, especially his father. What about his father's character or place in the Jewish community of Sighet commands Eliezer's respect or admiration?
3. Early in the narrative, Moché tells Eliezer about man's dialogue with God: "Man asks [questions] and God replies. But we don't understand His replies. We cannot understand them" (p. 23). Is this a paradox? How does Eliezer react to this seemingly unfair assertion? Apply Moché's statement to the ongoing crisis of faith that Eliezer faces over the course of *Night*.
4. "One day all foreign Jews were expelled from Sighet," writes Wiesel, quite bluntly. "And Moché the Beadle was a foreigner" (p. 24). Why do you suppose this shocking information is delivered so matter-of-factly? What is the point of Wiesel's abruptness? Also, consider the manner in which Moché is treated by the Jews of Sighet after he has escaped the Gestapo's capture. Are the people happy to see him? Is he even happy to be alive? Explain why Moché has returned to the village. Why don't the Jewish townspeople believe the horrible news he brings back to them?
5. Time and again, the people of Sighet doubt the advance of the German army. Why? When the Germans do arrive, and even once they have moved all the Jews into ghettos, the Jewish townspeople still seem to ignore or suppress their own fear. "Most people thought that we would remain in the ghetto until the end of the war, until the arrival of the Red Army. Afterward everything would be as before" (p. 30). What might be the reasons for the townspeople's widespread denial of the evidence in front of them?
6. There are a few instances where we learn of Eliezer and his family missing out on opportunities to escape from the Germans (p. 27, 32, and 100). How did these missed chances influence your reading of this memoir? And how do these unfortunate events fit into your understanding of the Jewish experience of the Holocaust as a whole?
7. Cassandra was a figure in Greek mythology who received the gift of prophecy with the simultaneous curse that no one would ever believe her. Compare Cassandra to Madame Schächter. Are there other Cassandras in *Night*? Who are they?

8. Not long after arriving at Birkenau, Eliezer and his father experience the horrors of the crematory firsthand—and are nearly killed themselves. “Babies!” Wiesel writes, “Yes, I did see this, with my own eyes . . . children thrown into the flames” (p. 50). Look back on Eliezer’s physical, mental, and emotional reactions to this hellish and inexplicable experience. How does the story of *Night* change at this point? How does Wiesel himself change?

9. Consider the inscription that appears above the entrance to Auschwitz. What is it supposed to mean—and what meaning, if any, does this slogan come to have for Eliezer?

10. Reflecting on the three weeks he spent at Auschwitz, Wiesel admits on p. 63: “Some of the men spoke of God: His mysterious ways, the sins of the Jewish people, and the redemption to come. As for me, I had ceased to pray. I concurred with Job!” What happens to the man called Job in the Bible? What is his story? Explain why Eliezer feels connected to him.

11. On p. 83, Eliezer witnesses one of the several public hangings he sees in Buna. “Where is God now?” asks a prisoner next to Wiesel who also sees the hanging. “Where He is?” answers Eliezer, though talking only to himself, “This is where—hanging here from this gallows . . .” What does he mean by this? How could God have been hanged? How have Eliezer’s thoughts and feelings changed since he identified with Job while in Auschwitz (see question 10 above)? Discuss the relationship that Wiesel has with God throughout *Night*.

12. Two of the people Eliezer encounters more than once in the narrative are Akiba Drumer and Juliek. Where and when does Eliezer cross paths with these individuals? Describe their personalities. What are their outstanding traits? Describe the relationships that Eliezer has with each of them. How do their respective deaths affect Eliezer? What does each person mean to him?

13. As the story progresses, we witness instances where the Jews have been reduced to acting—and even treating their fellow prisoners—like rabid animals. During an air raid over Buna (see p. 77), a starved man risks being shot by crawling out to a cauldron of soup that stands in the middle of the camp, only to thrust his face into the boiling liquid once he has arrived there safely. Where else do we see examples of human beings committing such insane acts? What leads people to such horrific behavior? Is it fair to say that such beastliness in the death camps is inevitable? Do Eliezer and his father fall prey to such tragedies?

14. In the concluding pages of *Night*, Eliezer’s father is dying a slow, painful death in Buchenwald. But Eliezer is there to comfort him, or at least try to. Does Eliezer see his father as a burden by this point, or does he feel only pity and sorrow for him?

Compare and contrast the father-son relationship you see at the end of this memoir with the one you saw at the beginning.

15. Look again at the opening pages of *Night*. When it begins, twelve-year-old Eliezer lives in the Transylvanian village of Sighet with his parents and sisters. How does being introduced to such people alter your understanding of the fact that, just over fifty years ago, six million Jews were exterminated in the Holocaust? How is this sickening truth achieved through *Night's* dual purposes of memoir and history? If this is a story of one person's journey as well as a history of one horrendous part of World War II, how do the plot and theme of the book overlap? How does the author blend the personal and universal aspects of *Night*? In what ways does Wiesel relate not only his own nightmarish memory of the Holocaust but also humanity's?

### DAWN

1. Who is telling the story in *Dawn*? What is his profession, what were his original academic goals, and where does he come from? What is the primary task that has been assigned to him? Is this narrator a hero or a villain? Defend your answer.

2. Wiesel followed his first book, the autobiographical *Night*, which concerned surviving the Holocaust, with this short novel, *Dawn*, which concerns the fears, doubts, and remorse of a young Jewish terrorist in 1940s Palestine. Explain the significance of these two titles.

3. At the beginning of the novel Elisha reflects on a childhood encounter he had with a beggar while praying in a synagogue. Describe the nature of this encounter. Why does it still haunt Elisha? What are the lessons that the beggar passes on to Elisha, and how do they foreshadow the subsequent events in *Dawn*?

4. In the first chapter, we read that “the ugly word *pogrom* was on everyone's lips” (p. 147). What is a *pogrom*? Look up this word in a dictionary, then reflect on what this word's meaning says about the world in which *Dawn* is set. How is this world similar to or different from the world in which *Night* takes place?

5. Describe the character called Gad. Why does he keep repeating “This is war” throughout the novel? What else are we told about Gad as a soldier, a friend, and a human being?

6. How is Gad able to recruit Elisha for a life of terrorism? Does he employ persuasion, camaraderie, charisma, manipulation, philosophical argument, or other methods? What does the manner by which Gad recruits Elisha tell you about their relationship?

7. Who is Ilana? Describe the speech she gives on the underground radio broadcast (p. 158-60). What is its purpose? Would you describe it as patriotic, explanatory, threatening, or otherwise? Is Ilana telling the truth? Explain what the speech means to Gad, Elisha, and all of the others listening to it.
8. What are we told about the character called the Old Man? What are we not told about him? Describe the link between the powerful and mysterious aspects of his person. What sort of influence does he have over Elisha, Ilana, and Gad?
9. On p. 163, Elisha thinks back to his relationship with someone he calls “the grizzled master,” who was actually a rabbi from Elisha’s childhood. What impact does the grizzled master have on Elisha’s life and thought?
10. Thinking back on a conversation he once had with the grizzled master regarding the sixth commandment, Elisha tells himself, “if in order to change the course of our history we have to become God, we shall become Him” (p. 144). How do you think Elisha’s character and personal outlook have changed since he became a terrorist? What are the reasons for these changes? Given the dread he experiences on being told to murder John Dawson, how comfortable is Elisha with who and what he has become?
11. In the chapter beginning on p. 171, Elisha and his fellow soldiers sip tea and reflect on the precarious nature of their lives as terrorists. Each tells a story about how his or her life was saved in an odd or unexpected way. “Death saved my life,” announces Joab. Gideon adds, “God saved me from death.” Ilana says her life was saved by “a cold in the head.” Gad follows with: “I owe my life to three Englishmen.” Lastly, Elisha confesses, “I owe my life to a laugh.” How do these stories respectively echo the motivations or personalities of the characters? Describe Wiesel’s use of irony and anecdote in this scene.
12. At around midnight, on the eve of his assassination of John Dawson, Elisha receives words of pity from his friend Ilana. Then something remarkable happens: Ilana turns into a woman named Catherine. Who is Catherine? How did Elisha meet her, and what are his memories of her? Why do you suppose Catherine’s appearance was triggered by Ilana’s tears and sentiments?
13. Examine Elisha’s contradictory feelings and ideas as a terrorist. As the appointed hour—dawn—of John Dawson’s assassination draws nearer, Elisha is confronted by a crowded roomful of ghosts from his past: his mother and father, the beggar he met years ago in the synagogue, the grizzled master, a boyhood companion of his named Yerachmiel, and a small boy representing Elisha’s younger self, among others. What are the purposes of these imaginary conversations? Why do you think these spirits are bothering Elisha at this particular time? What do these ghosts have in common, and what makes each of them distinct?



14. As the conclusion of *Dawn* approaches, why is it so difficult for Elisha to admit that John Dawson might be hungry? And why does Elisha finally refer to Dawson as “the hostage” at the precise moment (p. 220) when he shoots him?

15. What do we learn about the man named John Dawson? Compare and contrast Dawson with David ben Moshe, who has also been sentenced to death. Describe Dawson’s background, his character, and his relationships with Elisha and the other Jewish terrorists. Does Elisha ultimately feel that he was justified in murdering him? Why or why don’t you think so?

### THE ACCIDENT

1. Consider the hero of *The Accident*, who is also the novel’s narrator. Who is he? What does the “I” of this novel do for a living? What do we know about his past, his family, and his personal relationships? Compare and contrast him to the protagonists of *Night* and *Dawn*.

2. The events that take place in *The Accident* are effectively set in motion when the hero is hit by taxi cab. But are there other reasons why this novel might be entitled *The Accident*? Explain.

3. Consider the initial description that we are given of Kathleen, the hero’s girlfriend. Are she and the hero in love? What language or events do we encounter at the beginning of the novel that suggest their feelings for each other are somewhat complicated? When the two of them try to select a movie to attend for the evening, the hero explains: “Kathleen was stubborn. Once again, she wanted to test our love” (p. 238). What does he mean?

4. In the second chapter, we read of how Kathleen and the hero first met. On p. 252, the person introducing them remarks, “You look at each other as if you knew each other.” Describe the mutual attraction Kathleen and the hero exhibit toward one another. Is it love at first sight, or is each only curious about what the other is thinking or feeling? Explain their newly discovered chemistry. Why do they seem to be interested in one another?

5. After Kathleen and the hero meet, they go for a walk along the Seine. The hero’s thoughts begin to wander as the two of them look down at the river (p. 254). Eventually, he imagines he is conversing not with Kathleen but with his deceased grandmother. Reconsider this scene in light of the passage in *Dawn* (see question 12 above) where Elisha envisions his former lover Catherine in the place of his friend Ilana. What comparisons and contrasts can you make about how the narrators of *The Accident* and *Dawn* are haunted by their memories?



6. Describe the physical surroundings, the people, and the daily routines that the hero of *The Accident* encounters during his protracted stay in the hospital. How would you characterize the hero's relationships with his nurse and doctor?

7. In a memory sequence—or extended dream—beginning on p. 263, Kathleen says to the hero: “Tell me a little about yourself.” What does he tell her, and why does she proceed to fall in love with him? What do learn from the hero's memory of confiding in an anonymous Englishman while sailing to South America? (See p. 265-9.) And why does the Englishman tell the hero, “I think I'm going to hate you?” Were you surprised to read that the hero had come so close to killing himself during this voyage? Why or why not?

8. At what point in the narrative did you realize that the hero's almost deadly collision with a taxi cab was actually an attempt at suicide? Though the hero does not admit this secret to the reader until the end of the novel (p. 336), he first overtly hints at it on p. 278, while discussing his recovery with his doctor. Dr. Russel inquires of him: “What are you afraid of, then?” The hero asks himself: “Could he actually know? Had I talked in my sleep during the operation?” How did this exchange strike you when you first read it? And, regardless of whether you originally caught it, how does this reference to attempted suicide now influence your idea of both the hero of *The Accident* and the story he is telling?

9. Describe Dr. Paul Russel. As a character, what does he stand for or symbolize? As a person, what does he believe in? Why is he so pleased and proud of his work as a doctor? In the course of his chat with the hero on p. 287-97, Dr. Russel expresses an interest in wanting to know much more about his patient. Although unaware that the hero's stay in the hospital resulted from attempted suicide, the doctor is nevertheless certain that the hero does not “care about living.” Compare and contrast the outlooks on life and death held by these two men.

10. In the course of his recovery in the hospital, the hero is often visited by Kathleen. In a series of bedside conversations, which range from the comforting to the mundane, and extended flashbacks, which collectively recount the path of their love affair, Kathleen and the hero come across as participants in a very difficult relationship. How is the fate of their partnership linked to the plot of *The Accident*? Do you think Kathleen simply pities the hero, or is she trying to rescue him from despair or share in his torment? And how are the hero's feelings for Kathleen connected to his process of recovery?

11. Who are the two women named Sarah in *The Accident*, and what is the hero's relationship with each of them? Explain the detailed memories that the hero revisits regarding both of these women.

**QUESTIONS FOR  
CLASS DISCUSSION**

12. In what ways do the memories of deceased relatives and meditations on forgotten friends appearing throughout *The Accident* mirror the ghosts who visit Elisha in *Dawn*? Both narrators are clearly haunted by their painful past experiences, but are they dealing with their pasts differently? Explain your answer.

13. Look back to “the agreement” that Kathleen asks the hero to agree to on p. 327–8. What is Kathleen asking the hero to consider or confirm? Why does the hero then confess that his thoughts had wandered far off to “the station of a small provincial town” during this talk with Kathleen? And how did your understanding of this conversation—and of the relationship between the two people having it—change when you learned that “the accident” happened on the very next day?

14. Who is Gyula? Describe the bond he and the hero share. Why is the hero so immediately and completely taken with Gyula? Explain what the hero means when (see p. 330) he says: “He alone had guessed. Gyula was my friend.” Explain why, and how, their friendship is the most playful as well as the most serious relationship in the novel.

15. How does Gyula make the hero not only realize but appreciate “why the earth is still revolving and why man is still looking forward to tomorrow” (p. 337)? How is Gyula able to convince the hero to reject the alternative of suicide? Finally, why does Gyula set fire to the portrait he has painted of the hero?

1. At once unthinkable and unforgettable, the autobiographical *Night* offers an eye-witness account of the utmost importance, but it is essentially one young man’s story. What had you read, heard, or otherwise learned about the Holocaust before reading *Night*? How did Wiesel’s remembrance agree with or differ from what you already knew about the history of this event?

2. Elie Wiesel has written about the difficulties he faced in finding the right words for the painful story he wanted to tell—and had to tell—in *Night* (*The New York Times*; June 19, 2000). “I knew I had to testify about my past but I did not know how to go about it,” he wrote, adding that his religious mentors, his favorite authors, and the Talmudic sages of his youth were of surprisingly little help. “I felt incapable and perhaps unworthy of fulfilling my task as survivor and messenger. I had things to say but not the words to say them . . . Words seemed weak and pale . . . And yet it was necessary to continue.” Wiesel did continue, and although *Night* was originally rejected by every major publishing house in France and the United States, eventually it was published to universal acclaim. As a story, albeit a true story, how fitting did you find the words, imagery, and overall plotting of *Night*? Does the author succeed in his self-described goals as a “survivor and messenger” who must “testify” to his readers? In what ways did this novel-like autobiography

set the tone for the two novels you read immediately afterward?

3. About halfway through the narrative of *Dawn*, Elisha sympathizes with his comrade Gad, whose good friend David ben Moshe has been sentenced to death by the English. Elisha continues, thinking to himself: “[Gad] was losing a friend, and it hurt. But when you lose a friend every day it doesn’t hurt so much. And I’d lost plenty in my time; sometimes I thought of myself as a living graveyard.” What does this tell us about the differences between Gad and Elisha? Discuss how Elisha, though a living human being, could also be a graveyard—especially in light of the memories and the duties he must confront in *Dawn*.

4. On p. 187, referring to the many spirits who have visited him, Elisha says to himself, “An act so absolute as that of killing involves not only the killer but, as well, those who have formed him. In murdering a man I was making them murderers.” Yet he goes through with the act; he assassinates John Dawson. What happened to Elisha’s ghosts when he pulled the trigger, and why? Were you surprised by the manner in which *Dawn* ended? Why or why not?

5. Are we ever told the name of the protagonist of *The Accident*? Look back to p. 303, where we learn, via flashback, the name of the hero’s mother: Sarah. We also, in fact, discover that the hero of this novel is named Eliezer. *The Accident* is a fictional work, but the hero’s first name is the same as the narrator’s in *Night*. And looking back to p. 295, we find that the protagonists of *The Accident* and *Night* also share the same hometown: Sighet. Moreover, like the hero of *The Accident*, Wiesel himself suffered a serious car accident in New York in the mid-1950s, which led to a wheelchair-bound year of recovery. Discuss the meaning of these coincidences. Does *The Accident* seem truer than most other works of fiction—or more real, urgent, or intense—given these revelations?

6. Turn to p. 227 and reread the quotation that begins *The Accident*, taken from *Zorba the Greek*, the celebrated novel by Nikos Kazantzakis. Which of the deceased characters in *The Accident* come to “drink the blood” from the hero/narrator’s heart? Comment on how this epigraph relates to the main themes of the novel.

7. At the conclusion of *The Accident*, the hero/narrator vows: “Kathleen will be happy . . . I’ll learn to lie well and she’ll be happy. It’s absurd: lies can give birth to true happiness. Happiness will, as long as it lasts, seem real. The living like lies, the way they like to acquire friendships” (p. 339). How satisfying did you find this ending, especially as a resolution of the novel’s central relationship? How realistic and how honest did it seem to you? Discuss the hero and Kathleen’s prospects of a happily-ever-after future together. What is the “lie” that the hero intends to tell Kathleen for the rest of their days as a couple, and why has he chosen to continue telling it? How did the end of *The Accident* strike you as an ending for *The Night Trilogy* as a whole?

8. Given its haunting, clearly rendered, and universal themes of suffering and survival in the face of absolute evil, *Night* is a book that is likely to be echoed or suggested in other works you read in the future. In other words, it is a classic. Thematically, and even though they are more fictional than their autobiographical antecedent, did you read *Dawn* and/or *The Accident* as sequels or epilogues to the story of *Night*? If so, in what ways? Wiesel has written, “In *Night* it is the ‘I’ who speaks; in the other two [books], it is the ‘I’ who listens and questions.” What does the author mean by this?

9. The narratives of *Night*, *Dawn*, and *The Accident* all conclude with a scene in which the narrator suddenly sees or recognizes himself—in a mirror, a window, and a painted portrait, respectively. Comment on how, and why, each of these three endings affected you. What are the similarities and differences between these acts of self-acknowledgement?

10. Given its horrific and incomprehensible nature, the Holocaust is sometimes described as an “unimaginable” moment of history, and yet—apart from scores of nonfiction accounts like autobiographies and documentary films—it is an event that has been imagined or reimagined in many novels, stories, movies, and so forth. Is this contradictory? Why or why not? Does the genre of historical fiction ultimately help or harm the nightmarish actuality of the Holocaust?

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

A great number and wide variety of supplemental sources are available for those eager to expand on their knowledge of the origins, history, and aftermath of the Holocaust. The ever-present need to record our history so as not to forget it, as well as the all-important necessity of documenting the Holocaust so as never to let it be repeated, have in recent decades combined forces and flourished in the creation of a genre known as Holocaust literature. And trends in historical, literary, and cultural scholarship—in part taking their cue from the phenomenon of Holocaust literature, and from the event itself—have subsequently established an academic discipline called Holocaust studies. Either Holocaust literature or Holocaust studies—both of them vast fields of personal, critical, and scholarly endeavor—could be easily explored via the Internet, or else at a local library, as could such key secondary topics as Judaica and World War II history. Students who aim to know about the ideas and events that either triggered or figure prominently in *The Night Trilogy* should be encouraged to pursue such avenues.

Also, the following books are recommended as excellent points of departure for students wishing to give more thought to this crucial subject: Elie Wiesel's two volumes of memoirs *All Rivers Run to the Sea* and *And the Sea Is Never Full*; *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank; *The Holocaust* and *The Boys* by Martin Gilbert; *The Destruction of the European Jews* by Raul Hilberg; *All But My Life*\* by Gerda Weissmann Klein; *The Hours After* by Gerda Weissmann Klein and Kurt Klein; *Survival in Auschwitz* and *The Drowned and the Saved* by Primo Levi; *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* by William L. Shirer; *On Burning Ground* by Michael Skakun; *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, volumes 1 and 2 by Art Spiegelman; and *The Pianist* by Wladyslaw Szpilman. As mentioned before, Elie Wiesel has written dozens of other works, among them novels, memoirs, short stories, essays, plays, and historical studies. Students especially interested in *The Night Trilogy* may also wish to seek out this author's other volumes.

Moreover, many motion pictures—both fiction and nonfiction—have been made about the Holocaust. A short list of such films that have received considerable critical acclaim would include the following: *Night and Fog* (directed by Alain Resnais), *Schindler's List* (directed by Steven Spielberg), *Shoah* (directed by Claude Lanzmann), *Sophie's Choice* (directed by Alan J. Pakula), *Life Is Beautiful* (directed by Roberto Benigni), and *The Sorrow and the Pity* (directed by Marcel Ophuls). Screening any of these important films for a class that has read *The Night Trilogy* will surely foster an enlightening range of comparisons and contrasts amid students.

\* A Hill and Wang Teacher's Guide is also available for this title.

## 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. Professor Wiesel was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986.

Scott Pitcock, who wrote this teacher's guide, is an editor and writer based in Tulsa, Oklahoma.







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