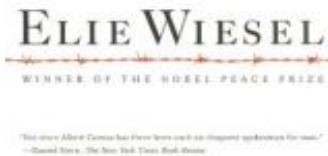


Day

written by Elie Wiesel, translated by Anne Borchardt



About the Book

The publication of *DAY* restores Elie Wiesel's original title to the novel initially published in English as *THE ACCIDENT* and clearly establishes it as the powerful conclusion to the author's classic trilogy of Holocaust literature, which includes his memoir *NIGHT* and novel *DAWN*. "In *NIGHT* it is the 'I' who speaks," writes Wiesel. "In the other two, it is the 'I' who listens and questions."

In its opening paragraphs, a successful journalist and Holocaust survivor steps off a New York City curb and into the path of an oncoming taxi. Consequently, most of Wiesel's masterful portrayal of one man's exploration of the historical tragedy that befell him, his family and his people transpires in the thoughts, daydreams and memories of the novel's narrator. Torn between choosing life or death, *DAY* again and again returns to the guiding questions that inform Wiesel's trilogy: 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 of one's religious faith in the face of mass murder and human extermination.

Discussion Guide

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?

Author Bio

Elie Wiesel was the author of more than 50 books, both fiction and nonfiction. He was a recipient of the United States Congressional Gold Medal, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the French Legion of Honor's Grand-Croix, an honorary knighthood of the British Empire and, in 1986, the Nobel Peace Prize. Wiesel passed away on July 2, 2016 at the age of 87 following a long illness.

Critical Praise

? 1986 Winner of the Nobel Peace Prize "Not since Albert Camus has there been such an eloquent spokesman for man."

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