

November 19, 2025

Dear Mr. Wiesel,

When I finished the final page of your memoir, *Night*, I sat in silence. We read it in class, so while everyone else was talking and laughing at the book's end, I sat in my seat in silence. In school, we usually read and analyze different books to memorize for tests. However, reading your book felt... different. It felt less like school and more like a personal journey and experience. I am writing this letter to thank you for sharing your story. It really has changed the way I see the world and my own life.

Before my Intro to Advanced English Class began your sobering book, the Holocaust felt more like a chapter in my history textbook. All of it was just a really big number to me, and a few black and white photos that felt really far away from my life. It is hard to really understand what a number like six million means. It is just way too big. Your book changed that for me. You invited me into your life and described the terrible things you saw and felt. You helped me realize that every single person in the count of six million was a real human being. And every one of those human beings had families, dreams, and fears... just like I do.

The part of your writing that affected me the most was the relationship between you and your father. It was really hard and difficult about how you had to consider trying to help him, but at the same time, you wanted to focus on survival. It made me ask myself a really difficult question: "What would I have done in this situation?" I wanted to think that I would be the hero in this situation, but your honesty showed me that fear can make people think really dark thoughts. I have learned that treating people like common animals tries to break the bonds between friends and family.

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I think that the biggest lesson that I learned from you is the danger of silence. Silence is violence. You wrote about how the entire world stayed silent while all of this torture and pain was occurring. This made me compare this book to my life. I see injustice sometimes, like when someone is getting picked on at school or is treated poorly. Usually, I turn my head the other way and do not think about it anymore. Your words changed that inside me and even made me feel guilty about how I had just let that happen instead of doing something about it. You taught me that when we do nothing, we are actually helping the bully, and not the victim of the bullying.

Because of how your book left me, I feel like I have a new responsibility. Forgetting the dead in a traumatic event like this is like killing them a second time. I understand now that remembering and supporting others is a powerful way to fight against hate. This story will not sit on my shelf, collecting dust, ever again. By reading your story, I have become a witness. Thank you for finding the strength to relive your pain so that this generation can learn from it.

Sincerely,

Paxton Miller

9th Grade