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ABSTRACT

This paper presents descriptions of the 10 best young adult novels (and teaching suggestions) appropriate for studying the Holocaust in the middle school. Each description begins with a summary and "hook" that can be used with students, and then ends with discussion for the teacher about reading abilities and applications in the classroom. Several descriptions also offer websites that may be used in conjunction with the novel. Novels described are: "Tunes for Bears to Dance to" (Robert Cormier); "Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl" (Anne Frank); "Nightfather" (Carl Friedman); "The Hate Crime" (Phyllis Karas); "Number the Stars" (Lois Lowry); "Daniel's Story" (Carol Matas); "If I Should Die before I Wake" (han nolan); "Upon the Head of a Goat: A Childhood in Hungary 1939-1944" (Aranka Siegal); "Night" (Elie Wiesel); and "Sunflower" (Simon Wiesenthal). (RS)

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INTRODUCTION

My name is Darolyn "Lyn" Jones. I am a middle school Language Arts Teacher. The following is originally a paper I wrote for a graduate course. It examines what I consider to be the ten best young adult novels appropriate for a middle school study of the Holocaust.

Adolescent /Young Adult Literature Titles Holocaust

As teachers, we all have our area or areas of expertise or interest. I have always had an interest in the study of the Holocaust that overlapped into my teaching. I feel that reading about the Holocaust lends itself easily to a menagerie of topics such as humanity, tolerance, discrimination and prejudice, the concept of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders, and ethics and morals.

The following list, descriptions, and teacher suggestions are a compilation of the ten best novels over the study of the Holocaust appropriate for adolescent literature. These ten novels are each different and offer a wide range of Holocaust experiences. Some discuss personal and true accounts of survival and death in hiding, in the ghettos, in the camps, and some discuss modern day families still trying to understand and overcome the pain of their personal history. These ten novels also offer a range of reading levels, catering to more mature readers and to students with reading problems as well.

Each description begins with a summary and hook that can be used with students, and then ends with discussion for the teacher about reading abilities and applications in the classroom. Several descriptions also offer websites that may be used in conjunction with the novel.

1. Cormier, Robert Tunes for Bears to Dance to
2. Frank, Anne Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl
3. Friedman, Carl Nightfather
4. Karas, Phyllis The Hate Crime
5. Lowry, Lois Number the Stars
6. Matas, Carol Daniel's Story
7. nolan, han If I Should Die Before I Wake
8. Siegal, Aranka Upon the Head of a Goat: A Childhood in Hungary 1939-1944
9. Wiesel, Elie Night
10. Wiesenthal, Simon Sunflower

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1. Cormier, Robert. Tunes for Bears to Dance to. 1992. Bantum Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers. 101 pp. Paper. \$3.99. (0-440-21903-5).

Henry, a young German boy, works in a grocery store to support his mother after World War II has devastated most of worn-torn Germany. He and his mother are the sole supporters of their family. Jobs are difficult to come by. Henry's brother, Eddie, was killed in a drive-by accident while playing baseball, his favorite sport. His father doesn't work. He only sits and grieves for Eddie who was not given a tombstone because the family couldn't afford it. Henry works for Mr. Hairston, the owner of the Corner Market in Wickburg, in the hopes he can save a little extra money to place a baseball monument on his brother's grave. But, Mr. Hairston is a prejudice man who finds faults with his daughter, Henry, and his Jewish customers.

Henry befriends Mr. Levine, a Jewish Holocaust survivor of the concentration camp Auschwitz. Mr. Levine has some odd habits that are a result of his suffering in the camp. Mr. Levine spends most of his time at the craft center, a place for senior citizens. Henry goes to the craft center, listens to Mr. Levine talking about his old village, and watches Mr. Levine, a master carpenter, as he carves and builds his old village from wood.

Eventually, word of Mr. Levine's masterful woodwork goes through Wickburg and a ceremony is planned to unveil his work and present it on behalf of all the Holocaust survivors. Mr. Hairston doesn't want the ceremony to happen. He promises Henry the baseball monument he wants for his brother in exchange for destroying Mr. Levine, his friend's, village. What will Henry do? Read and find out.

TEACHER SUGGESTIONS

This is an excellent novel to use in a thematic study of the Holocaust or even World War II, because it shows the aftermath of the war. It illustrates the tragic and suffering effects the war had on the country of Germany and its victims, both the German victims and the Holocaust survivor victims.

This book is short and easy to read. I think it is a good book to recommend to students who are not active readers, because it contains an easy vocabulary, it is short and not an intimidating length, contains a lot of action, and allows students to become involved in Henry's decision.

Finally, this book lends itself to many discussions about prejudice, discrimination, and morals. Henry must understand Mr. Hairston's prejudice attitude, decide to stand indifferent to it or against it, and choose whether his brother's grave marker is worth destroying a man's last hope.

2. Frank, Anne. Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl. 1993. Bantam Books. 283 pp. Paper. \$4.99. (0-553-29698-1).

The Diary of Anne Frank is one of the most widely read and popular books about the Holocaust. It is a true story written by Anne herself as she and her family hid from the Nazis in World War II. Anne was a normal teenage girl whose father ran his own business and whose mother stayed at home. Anne went to school, had friends, was occasionally annoyed by her older sister, and was interested in boys.

But, when the anti-Jewish laws begin in Anne's home country of Holland, Anne's family began to make arrangements to go into hiding. The anti-Jewish laws said that Anne and her family had to wear a yellow star, that they couldn't drive or even have a bicycle, that they had to be inside between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. It also said that Anne and her sister could only go to Jewish schools, not play sports, or visit any of their Christian friends.

Several of Anne's family immigrated to the United States to escape these laws, but not Anne's. When Hitler and the Nazis came to Holland, Anne's family was "called up" to be sent to the concentration camps. They quickly packed up their belongings, expecting this and moved quietly through the night to their "secret annexe." The secret annex, their hiding place, was actually a secret upstairs section of Anne's father's office building. Other Jewish families eventually joined them in hiding. Miep Gies, Mr. Frank's secretary, kept their secret and helped them survive.

Anne called her diary affectionately, "Kitty," as her diary was a true friend to her. Each time Anne writes to Kitty, she shares her feelings of being caught by the Nazis, being jealous of her sister's beauty and patience, being angry with her mother, being in love with Peter, a boy hiding with them, and hoping her dreams for the future will come true when the war is over.

But, the annex is discovered. Read each of Anne's diary entries and learn about the struggles of being a teenager, the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, and if Anne's dreams were ever fulfilled.

TEACHER SUGGESTIONS

This is a classic tale to teach about the Holocaust. Anne Frank's Father, Otto Frank, first published Anne's diary in 1947, and since then, it has been published around the world.

Anne's story illustrates how the Holocaust affected young adults. Anne struggles with being a teenager and having typical teenage angst, yet she is faced with the possibility of death each day. This novel offers another perspective of the Holocaust, showing how Jews in other countries besides Germany were being affected as well. Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl also shows how Christians helped Jews, how not everyone was for Hitler and his plan of destruction.

The plot develops through the diary entries, which makes this a novel that is easy to read. Most students are familiar with or have heard about the story of Anne Frank, so they bring some background to the novel. However, it is a long novel and the vocabulary can be difficult in some places. This is a book for a student who reads regularly.

This book lends itself to discussions about teenage issues, survival at all costs, risking your life to help others, and hopes and dreams in the midst of death. Finally, because of the long-time popularity of this book, there are many available resources such as novel guides complete with activities for teachers. There are several websites that discuss the Frank family and the book. A good website to access for curriculum ideas and activities for students is "Anne Frank Online" at <http://www.annefrank.com>.

3. friedman, carl. Nightfather. 1994. Persea Books, Inc. 136 pp. Paper. \$7.95. (0-89255-210-7).

This is a dark and true tale, told by a boy whose father was a Holocaust survivor. Have your parents ever said to you, "Do you know how lucky you are? When I was young, we had to walk for miles in the snow, or we could never have seconds at mealtime because there wasn't enough, or we never got Christmas gifts, because there was no money." This is what this book is about, a man who with every comment from his children relates a grizzly tale about his experience as a youth in the concentration camps.

The narrator, the author and son, shares his constant feelings of guilt and anger he has towards his father. He feels angry because no normal conversations or happy moments happen at his home, but also guilt for feeling this anger towards his father who is angry at the Nazis for killing his family and friends. For long periods of time, the father is away at the hospital, still fighting off illnesses that come on as a result of the tuberculosis he suffered in the camps.

One day, the father doesn't come home. At the end of the book, Carl Friedman, the author and narrator, writes about his father and why he wrote this book. Read this book and hear the father's tales of his horrific experience in the "camp."

TEACHER SUGGESTIONS

This is a difficult book for students to understand, so it is important that they understand some background. Carl Friedman gives no one or thing names or titles. He wrote this book very abstractly, intentionally. He wants students to read it as if it could have been any Jewish family's experience with a survivor from any camp. Often the use of pronouns and single words to identify more abstract concepts confuses students.

This is a dark story that does contain language and disturbing details. It should be offered to more mature readers. Students find the book interesting because of the easy vocabulary, the action, and the story telling tone Friedman offers. The book is divided into chapters with titles. In fact, each chapter reads like a short story, and individual chapters could be taught separately.

Finally, this book is a good resource for offering an alternate perspective of the Holocaust. The survivor writes most Holocaust survivor novels. However, the child of a survivor who illustrates that even though his father survived the Holocaust, he didn't survive the remainder of his life writes this book. His constant pain and anger affected his own life, his families, and eventually helped end his "life." This is an excellent book for students to explore the concept of survival. Just because you live through something as horrible as the Holocaust, do you really live? Are you able to have a life and live with the pain, memories, and guilt?

4. Karas, Phyllis. The Hate Crime. 1995. Avon Books. 183 pp. Paper. \$3.99. (0-380-78214-6)

Zack is a typical American, modern day teenager. He is a high school student who worries about getting into college, plays lacrosse, has friends, has a girlfriend, has a little brother who gets on his nerves, and has parents who worry to much. His father is Essex County's district attorney. His mother runs an animal shelter. Zack and his family are Jewish, but Zack doesn't think about himself being Jewish anymore than his friends think of them as being Catholic or Baptist.

Zack begins to worry though when his father comes home and tells Zack of his latest investigation, a hate crime. Someone has written anti-Semitic graffiti on the door of Temple Israel in Zack and his family's neighboring town of Rockville. Zack begins to remember what he learned in Hebrew school about the meaning of the Swastika and the concentration camps. The perpetrator of the crime is found, Brian Murphy, a friend of Zack's from LaCrosse camp. Brian comes from an upstanding family. Zack's father feels there is more to this case.

Zack quickly learns how much more there is to the case, when he finds out that Brian Murphy's girlfriend is the daughter of the Rabbi whose temple was vandalized, he is attacked by Brian and his friend, and his suddenly secretive girlfriend breaks up with him because she is scared. Read this tale, learn who really committed the hate crime and what secrets Rachel keeps from Zack.

TEACHER SUGGESTIONS

This novel offers an easy and interesting read to any student. The story is full of action, teaches about the Holocaust, and engages students into scrupulous thinking, considering what is right and wrong. Although the novel is lengthy, the vocabulary is not difficult and the novel is broken into twenty chapters that can easily be discussed on their own. This is a novel for any reader.

This story is set in modern times and the teenage characters are all different, so that any reader could find him or herself. As the story unfolds, Zack learns that Rachel's parents are Holocaust survivors. The reader learns their tale. Brian Murphy is a young, upstanding boy who is a good student and active in school, but he still commits the crime. The reader finds out that anyone can commit hate crime. Beth Levine, the daughter of the Rabbi whose temple is vandalized, begs and threatens Zack to speak to his father and get the charges dropped against Brian, because she loves him anyway. The reader learns how complicated people are, and how some choose to take a stand while others do not.

This is an outstanding novel to incorporate a discussion on hate crimes; particularly a parallel can be drawn between the graffiti at the temple with the black church burnings that have unfortunately happened recently. Two excellent websites for additional resources are a PBS documentary called "Not in Our Town," <http://www.igc.org>, and a report from the Leadership Conferences on Civil Rights called "Hate Crimes in America," <http://www.civilrights.org>. Both of these sites offer curriculum activities for teachers and students. Finally, by reading this novel, students can learn about groups who hate and explore why Holocaust victims still live in fear of this hate. Finally, students can contemplate what they would do if faced with the same issues.

5. Lowry, Lois. Number the Stars. 1989. Bantum Doubleday Dell Books for Young Readers. 137 pp. Paper. \$ 4.99. (04-40-40-32-78).

This is the story of Annemarie Johansen and her family's rebellion against Hitler and his Nazi soldiers. Annemarie is Danish and the story is set in Copenhagen. Although Annemarie and her family are fictitious, they are based upon truths. The Danish people resisted Hitler and his Nazis more than any other people in Europe did.

The Johansen's family resistance centers on helping a Jewish family, the Rosens escape Nazi occupied Denmark. The Rosens have been "called up" to be relocated to the ghettos. Annemarie's family begins by hiding Ellen Rosen, Annemarie's friend and the Rosen's younger daughter. The Rosens know they can not all hide from the Nazis, so they hide Ellen and plan to meet up with the Johansen family later at a secret rendezvous. Annemarie's family nearly gets caught many times hiding Ellen in Annemarie's bed and taking her on a train to Uncle Henrik's house.

Uncle Henrik is a fisherman who lives right on the sea. On their first night there, Uncle Henrik hosts a fake funeral to throw off the Nazi soldiers who are suspicious that Uncle Henrik is hiding and helping Jews to escape across the sea to Sweden. The funeral allows Annemarie's family to get all of the Rosen family across to Sweden, which was safe territory. As the number of Nazi soldiers increased in Copenhagen, everyone in the family must be used to help in the resistance.

In the end, Annemarie must deliver a special drug to her Uncle on his boat. The drug kills the Nazi's dog's sense of smell. The drug must be placed on the boat, so Uncle Henrik can continue to help Jews escape out of Denmark. Read and find out what happens to Annemarie and her family.

TEACHER SUGGESTIONS

A John Newberry award winning novel, this is a wonderful book to have any student read. The vocabulary is simple, and each of the seventeen chapters reads like a short story, complete with all of the elements of plot: rising action, climax, and falling action. The book is an easy and quick read. Many teachers use this book with fifth and sixth grade students, but it is very usable at the middle school, especially for resistant readers or students with reading problems.

This book offers a triumphant perspective of the Holocaust. Many Danes under their leader, King Christian, showed courage and integrity and resisted Hitler by helping hundreds of Jews escape to Sweden. Teaching this book allows teachers to delve into an often-neglected aspect of the Holocaust, the resistance movement.

Because of the popularity of this book, there are many resources available such as novel guides complete with activities for Lois Lowry's novel, Number the Stars. This book allows students to consider such scrupulous issues of being a bystander versus a victim and such questions as, Would I do the same if I were Annemarie? Would I help my fellow man? It also allows the teacher to explore the definition and idea of resistance. Often students think of resistance as only fighting with weapons or refusing to do something. This novel allows them to see the very organized ways people fought back and were not bystanders. A good

website to access for more information about rescuers is called "Resisters, Rescuers, and Bystanders" at <http://www.remember.org>.

6. Matas, Carol. Daniel's Story. 1993. Scholastic. 131 pp. \$3.99. Paper. (0-590-46588-00).

Daniel is a fictitious character, but the author has based his experience in Daniel's Story on true stories of other children who lived and died in the Holocaust. Daniel is a fourteen-year-old Jewish teenager at the beginning of this novel. He has a large family: sister, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. He loves them all. As Hitler moves into his home city of Frankfurt, Germany during World War II, he watches his life and his family one by one destroyed by Hitler and the Nazi soldiers.

At first, he can not attend school, then his father's hardware business is destroyed during the night of broken glass, Kristalnacht, and next he watches Jews be spit upon in the streets. Finally his favorite uncle, the one who taught him his favorite hobby, photography, is sent to prison and returned to his family as ashes in a cardboard box. The next part of Daniel's life is even more horrific. His grandmother, unwilling to face being killed by the Nazis, kills herself as many Jews did during the Holocaust.

Daniel and his family are forced out of their homes and forced to live and work in the subhuman condition of the ghetto, Lodz. In Lodz, Daniel meets Rosa. They become fast friends and resist the Nazis by listening to the radio about the progress of the war; reading banned books, and helping to get documents about the terrible conditions of the ghetto out to other countries that might help. Then, Daniel and the rest of his family are transported to Auschwitz, the death camp. In the camp, amid the death of his mother, starvation, and freezing cold, Daniel refuses to die. He continues to be a part of an elaborate resistance movement in Auschwitz by taking photos of the crematoriums and at night, secretly taking apart the structures.

Read the story of Daniel and learn about how Daniel survived, how many of his family survived, and how brave Daniel and his fellow Jews were during the face of one of the worst tragedies in World History.

TEACHER SUGGESTIONS

Carol Matas wrote Daniel's Story in conjunction with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Feeling there was a lack of books that were complete and historically accurate for middle level students, Matas along with USHMM wrote this book as a complete history of the Holocaust humanizing it through the eyes of a fourteen year old boy, Daniel. This book takes the reader through all levels

of Jewish persecution, the ghettos, the camps, the resistance movement, liberation, and what Jews did after Liberation

This novel offers a true, but less grizzly look at the Holocaust, leaving out language and detailed gory descriptions. The vocabulary is easy, and the book is divided into sixteen chapters that can individually be examined and discussed. Daniel's Story comes complete with a glossary and maps so the reader can fully understand the terms and movement of the characters. The book allows discussion and activities over all aspects of the Holocaust. Also, the reader is so invited into the story that they are allowed to ask what they would do in his situation.

Daniel's Story is not only a novel, but also a permanent display that takes an entire section of the first floor of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. As you enter and walk through the interactive display, you follow Daniel's life from beginning to end. As you walk through his home, his room in the ghetto, and his barrack in the camp, you hear his voice telling his story. The USHMM offers many activities for the novel through their teacher resource information. Information about resources for the novel and display can be accessed at the USHMM's website, <http://www.ushmm.org/index.html>.

7. Nolan, Han. If I Should Die Before I Wake. 1994. Harcourt Brace. 293 pp. \$6.00. Paper. (0-15-238041-8).

This is the story of Hilary and Chana. Hilary is a teenage girl who along with her boyfriend, Brad, belongs to a Neo-Nazi group. Hilary hates Jews. She likes being a Neo-Nazi because she feels like she is part of a family. Her real family only consists of her mother, because her father died. Her mother lived in a bathrobe for five years, mourning her husband's death and forgetting Hilary. That is why she hates Jews. Her father was crushed to death when his office building collapsed. His boss, a Jew, knew the old building needed repairs, and according to Hilary was too cheap to fix it.

Along with Brad, Hilary shouts, "Heil Hitler," helps Brad terrorize Jews at her school, and spray paints swastikas all over tombstones in the Jewish cemetery. But, one night, Brad is drunk. Hilary flies off of his motorcycle while they are speedily leaving a cemetery they have just finished vandalizing. Because Hilary was found unconscious and nearly dead in a Jewish neighborhood, she is taken to a Jewish hospital. There is an old woman in her room, a Jewish Holocaust survivor, Chana.

What happens next is not what you think. Chana doesn't speak to Hilary, and Hilary doesn't speak to Chana. But, as Hilary fades in and out of conscious, she begins dreaming. Her dreams are Chana's memories, of Chana's family before the war, of Chana's experience in the Lodz ghetto, and of Chana's experience in

the concentration camp, Auschwitz –Birkenau. She becomes Chana and lives what Chana lived. Read If I Should Die Before I Wake and see if Hilary ever recovers, if she still hates Jews, if she reconciles with her mother, and if she ever gets the chance to speak to Chana and understand the dreams.

TEACHER SUGGESTIONS

This novel is almost surreal. The story weaves in and out of Hilary and Chana's lives, nearly fifty years apart, listing many names and places. There are twenty-five chapters, titled either Hilary, Chana, or Hilary/Chana to denote whose life story is being told. However, the use of pronouns and discussion of two sixteen-old girls often confuses the reader as to what names and places belong to which girl. This is a complex adolescent novel, meant for the more mature reader.

This is an excellent novel to teach the many perspectives of the Holocaust. Chana's life of being a Jew in Poland, a Jew in Lodz, a Jew trying to escape, a Jew in Auschwitz-Birkenau are all well-described and historically accurate. Bringing the story full circle is the story of Hilary, a Neo-Nazi. The book examines the attraction of the group, philosophies, ceremonies, and gruesome practices of the Neo-Nazi movement. Finally, it examines the idea of walking in another person's shoes, reforming one's ways, and forgiveness.

The topics that can be explored with this novel are endless. The obvious issues that can be explored are prejudice, discrimination, the Holocaust, but more specific issues such as gang mentalities and hate crimes can be discussed and examined as well.

8. Siegal, Aranka. Upon the Head of a Goat: A Childhood in Hungary 1939-1944. 1994. Puffin Books. 214 pp. \$4.99. Paper. (0-14-036966-X).

This is the true story of Aranka Siegal's life as a Hungarian Jew during the midst of World War II and the Holocaust. In the story, Siegal has changed her name and the names of her family members. She is Piri in her story. Piri has a large family whom she loves very much. She has many friends in her hometown of Beregszaz; some are Czechoslovakian, some Russian, and some Christian. Piri thinks of them all the same; she doesn't know that she is different just because she is Jewish.

Piri spends every summer with her grandmother, Babi, on her farm in Komjaty. But, one summer, her whole life is turned upside down. She sees more and more of Hitler's soldiers coming through the countryside. When, she is supposed to return home, she can not, because the borders have been closed. Piri can not go home to her family and friends for a whole year. She is able to stay in contact with her family through letters. Piri quickly finds out that she is safer at Babi's

house, because there are know laws in Beregszaz saying Jews can not be out after a certain time, no Jews can cross the borders, and any Jew who owns a business must close it. Piri's father and brother-in-law are sent to fight with the Hungarian army.

Piri is finally able to return home, but her return home is a sad one. As the laws against Jews increase, they begin to starve as food supplies are depleted as a result of the war. Her sister and husband unsuccessfully try to escape, her mother is nearly arrested, and she no longer sees her friends because she is not allowed to attend public school anymore.

Then, German soldiers come without any warning and deport Piri and her family to the ghetto of Beregszaz. In the ghetto, Piri and her sister become part of the resistance movement, and Piri falls in love. Just when they think they will be able to return home, the trains for the camps come. Read Upon the Head of a Goat and hear the tales of Aranka Siegal's family struggles and triumphs.

TEACHER SUGGESTIONS

A Newberry Honor Book, Upon the Head of a Goat is a true story that humanizes the story of the Holocaust. Aranka Siegal tells her story like a real storyteller, including many details, names, and places that the reader can identify with. The reader is easily caught up with Piri's close relationships with her family. What makes this book particularly interesting is that it ends as Piri and her family are boarding a train for Auschwitz.

The vocabulary in the novel is not difficult; however, the novel is lengthy and requires attention to the names and places. Piri refers to names of her immediate and extended family and her friends in both Komjaty and Beregszaz often. It helps students if as they read, they keep a list of the character's names and their relationship with Piri. Also, at the top of each page are the words: Komjaty, Beregszaz, and The Ghetto. These titles help students understand what family and friends Piri is discussing. This is a book for an average or advanced reader. Students who have difficulty with comprehension may have problems with the many details.

This is an excellent novel to teach to show the role of the Hungarian Jew in the Holocaust, the persecution of Jews, the youth resistance movement, and life in the ghettos. Also, students may want to speculate if or how Piri's family will survive when they arrive in Auschwitz. There is a sequel to the book that tells the rest of the story, Grace in the Wilderness: After the Liberation 1945-1948.

9. Wiesel, Elie. Night. 1982. Bantam Books. 109 pp. \$4.99. Paper. (0-553-27253-5).

This is the true story of Elie Wiesel's survival experience in the Holocaust. He is twelve when he begins his tale. In the beginning, Elie is like many other boys; he is considering his future and thinking about what he would like to do someday. He decides he would like to study religion. He finds a master to guide him, Moshe the Beadle, but Moshe is a foreign Jew in the country of Hungary. He is expelled. Later, he returns to warn Elie and the other residents of Sighet of the death and destruction that lie ahead for all Jews. He tells of the deportations and pogroms, but no one believes him.

Moshe was right. The Germans came for them, all of the Jews. Elie tells of the laws against Jews, the deportation to the ghetto in his own town of Sighet, the train ride to Auschwitz and Buchenwald, and the deaths that occur in the flames of the death camps. Instead of embracing religion, Elie stops believing in God. He can't imagine a God who would allow all of the horrific scenes that happen almost every second in the death camps.

Night contains graphic and detailed descriptions of Elie's experiences. This is a dark tale, where one boy who quickly becomes a man mourns the death of his family, explores his purpose for living, and questions the existence of God.

TEACHER SUGGESTIONS

Elie Wiesel is one of the founders of the United States Holocaust Museum and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986 for his continued pursuit of educating the world about the Holocaust. Night was first published in 1960. It is a popular and widely read book about the Holocaust experience.

Although the novel is short and seemingly straightforward in its message, Night contains language, many references to the Jewish religion, complex vocabulary, gory details about individuals' deaths, and anti-religious statements. This is a book for a mature reader. Students and parents should be told about the novel's contents before reading.

Because of the longevity and continued popularity of Night, there are many available resources for the novel available from many book companies. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum offers the largest variety of materials that can be used in conjunction with the novel. By contacting the museum's education resource center via the museum at <http://www.ushmm.org/index.html>, Materials can be e-mailed or sent through the mail directly to the teacher.

10. Wiesenthal, Simon. Sunflower. 1988. Schocken House. 216 pp. \$12.00.
Paper. (0-8052-0-578-0)

This is the true story of Simon Wiesenthal's life changing experience while in the ghetto of his hometown of Lemberg, Poland. While marching to work as they did every day in the ghetto, Simon passes the graves of the SS soldiers. Each grave has a tombstone, is well cared for, and has a beautiful sunflower on top. Simon hates the SS. He hates that instead of being able to go to school and be with his family, he is hated, forced to work, and beaten.

One day, he and the other Jews are forced to clean up bloodstained bandages and rubbish at the hospital set up in Lemberg for the SS. As he wades through blood shed at the expense of eradicating Jews, a nurse asks Simon to come into the hospital with him. She says she has a different job for him. She places him in a room with a man who is completely covered in once white, now yellow stained bandages. Simon can't even see his eyes.

The man is a dying SS soldier. Simon's "job" is to listen to the confession of a dying SS soldier. The man tells Simon about his family, how he was proud to fight for his Fuhrer, Hitler, and represent his country, and the Jews he murdered for Hitler. But, now he feels he can not die in peace unless a Jew, representing all Jews, forgives him for his deeds.

As a captive Jew, Simon can not resist this man, but read and find out if he forgives him, and how Simon Wiesenthal's life was forever changed as a result of this experience. The actual story is only 99 pages long, what follows is a symposium discussing Simon's experience.

TEACHER SUGGESTIONS

This is a true and rich story where Simon Wiesenthal shares with the world his continued question of whether he should have forgiven the young SS soldier. When asked to forgive, Simon says nothing and leaves the room. He is offered many viewpoints. The next day, the man is dead and the nurse gives Simon this man's personal effects. He spends the rest of the novel asking friends what he should have done.

After surviving Auschwitz many years later, Simon's journey leads him to the man's mother where he is prepared to tell her what her son did for Hitler, but he can't. This very human story draws any reader in. This isn't a Holocaust story that tells the typical tales of death and survival, but focuses on the more human problem of man versus man.

The vocabulary in this book is not difficult. This is a novel appropriate for any reader. Because the novel, Sunflower, is only 99 pages long, it does not present itself as a difficult read. The rest of the book is an academic symposium analyzing and offering viewpoints to Simon's dilemma. This reading may not be for all readers, but it is an excellent resource for the teacher and more advanced readers.

Finally, this novel allows students to dive into Simon's last posed question in the novel, "What would I have done?" By first offering students a background study of the Holocaust, then allowing them to read this novel, they can pose discussion for what Simon did as being right or wrong. This novel allows students to examine the numbers and names such as "Jew" or "SS" as real people who didn't all live or die according to a stereotype or fact sheet found in an encyclopedia. An excellent resource for this novel is the Simon Wiesenthal Center at <http://www.audionet.com/events/swc/>. There is an actual "Sunflower Symposium" that readers can respond to.

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