

“Peel This Away”¹ inspired by Elie Wiesel’s novel, *Night*



SONG BY FREDDIE FELDMAN (MUSIC & LYRICS) & GASKIT (MUSIC)

SONGWRITER’S STATEMENT

“In a time when movies depict a Hollywood-style Holocaust, it was sobering to read this first-person account of a child’s life during the most horrific event of the 20th century. As a grandson of Holocaust survivors, I was moved by Mr. Wiesel’s experience, and wanted to share it with our listeners.”

LYRICS

Life around here is peaceful
Unpleasantness is another world away (at least it used to be)
Woken surrounded by the beasts
The feeding frenzy. It don't justify the blame
So...

Peel this flesh away!
The truncheon's blow has no effect on me
Because in my mind I am already free

Thrown in a place of darkness
Under the lifeless masses, cannot tell who is alive (and who is passed
away)
Climb to the top for a breath, the moaning ceases
None can sanctify the day
So...

Peel this flesh away!
The truncheon's blow has no effect on me
Because in my mind I am already free

Every time I feel the pain, I just say, "It'll all be over soon."
It just laughs back and says, "HA!"
The run begins...in vain...
It's all in vain...
Refuse to let it change the way I choose to see

Reflection leads to the divine
Away from all distraction
As I cling to what is true

Where were you when we needed you?!
Where were you when we defended you?!
We feel the bite, we fear the quiet, in the never-ending night!

SOURCE

Night is Elie Wiesel's personal account of the Holocaust as seen through the eyes of a 15-year-old boy. The book describes Wiesel's first encounter with prejudice and details the persecution of a people and the loss of his family. Wiesel's experiences in the death camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald are detailed; his accounts of starvation and brutality are shattering – a vivid testimony to the consequences of evil. Throughout the book, Wiesel speaks of the struggle to survive, the fight to stay alive while retaining those qualities that make us human. While Wiesel lost his innocence and many of his beliefs, he never lost his sense of compassion nor his inherent sense of right.

MUSIC

This music creeps in and then slams its self down with a force that feels rude and assaulting. There's nothing measured out in portions. This song does not hypnotize its listeners with a steady groove. Gaskit uses drums like a weapon and targets all of our sensibilities. Throughout the song, there are starts and stops and crashes and swells. The drums drive the emotion of this song, and can carry the huge messages of the Night because of this. Even the crunching guitars push the song into a realm that demands our attention. The most striking use of melody in this song is in Gaskit's choice to work with half-steps. Notes don't rise or fall, as much as they slide with an intention to land in not the prettiest of intervals. The voice is defiant in both its tone and phrasing. Gaskit holds on to the most basic elements of hard rock and uses them to drive home Night's dark and timeless message. (Notes by Deborah Pardes)

SUITABILITY

Night is core reading in many middle and high schools. Although reading it is a harrowing experience – not an easy read in any sense – the text is fairly short (around 120 pages).

Lesson Plan “Peel This Away”

ANALYZE & SUMMARIZE • BY JOHN DARTER

LEVEL	This lesson is designed for adult literacy learners performing at a low intermediate to advanced Adult Basic Education level. It may also be adapted for high school students.
PARTICIPANTS	Tutor with a single, pair, or small group of learners. May also be adapted for book clubs.
LENGTH	4 to 6 weeks
MATERIALS	<p>CD player and SIBL Chapter Two CD Individual copies of <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel Individual copies of lyrics to “Peel This Away” by Gaskit Chart or binder paper Pen/pencil Movie: “Schindler’s List”</p>
OBJECTIVES	<p>Learners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use listening and speaking strategies for different purposes, including asking questions as a way to broaden and enrich discussion and comprehension • summarize text in a manner that reflects the main ideas, significant details, and underlying meaning • analyze the implicit and explicit philosophical assumptions and beliefs about a subject
VOCABULARY	<p>Have learners study the vocabulary from the following list. Break the list into sections of three or four words. Learners should be familiar enough with the words to identify them in the text and write a correct sentence. Utilize phonics practice where necessary, and provide examples of each word used in a sentence. Have the learners copy the words and sentences into their notebooks.</p> <p>Auschwitz: one of the most infamous German concentration camps in the 1930s and 40s</p> <p>crematory: a place where the whole of a body is burned.</p> <p>concentration camps: labor and death camps</p>

...VOCABULARY

dysentery:	a disease characterized by severe diarrhea with passage of mucus and blood
foreign:	not native; from another country
Gestapo:	the Nazi German police force known for acts of terror
ghetto:	a quarter of a city in which members of a minority group live because of social, legal, or economic pressure
Holocaust:	the mass slaughter of Europeans civilians especially Jews by the Nazis during World War II
invalid:	one who is sickly or disabled
Kabbala:	Jewish mysticism studied by Jewish scholars
kapo:	overseer in charge of a work detail or some other branch of a concentration camp; kapos were often selected from the prisoners – usually the criminals
maltreatment:	mistreatment, ill-treatment, or abuse
synagogue:	the house of worship and communal center of a Jewish congregation
truncheon:	a short stick; similar to a billy club carried by police

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss with the learner/s what they already know about the Holocaust and World War II. On a piece of chart or binder paper, write “What I (We) Already Know About the Holocaust.” In note fashion, write down what they say below the title. Save this paper for the end of the lesson in order to contrast it with what the student has learned after the lesson is completed. The title of the final review paper should be “What I (We) Have Learned About the Holocaust.” Additional visual aids and information can be found at: www.ushmm.org and www.pbs.org/elliwiesel. You may also want to incorporate these web sites into other parts of your lesson.
2. Give prompts to elicit more information from the learner (e.g. Have you heard of a concentration camp? Do you know who Adolf Hitler was?)
3. Review the list that has been generated by reading it back to the learner/s. It’s a good idea to follow along with your finger or a pointer as you read, so the learners can track while you read.
4. Play the song “Peel This Away,” on Songs Inspired By Literature Chapter Two CD. At the same time, have the learners look at the cover of the book *Night* by Elie Wiesel.

...ACTIVITIES
NIGHT CHAPTERS
1 AND 2

5. Ask learners to free write about the feelings the song and book cover elicit within them. Let them know that they can choose to share the piece or not. Also remind them that when free writing, it is not necessary to worry about spelling, grammar, or punctuation.
 6. Tell the learners about Elie Wiesel and Night. You can read “About The Author” at the back of the book or from the above website.
1. Write up the following questions and review them with learners before reading the first chapter and second chapters. The summarized answers in brackets are for your use only.
 - Why did people in Wiesel's village refuse to believe the warnings of Moshe the Beadle when he told them what happened to Jews who had been expelled from their villages in other countries? (They thought he was a madman. What he told them was incomprehensible, too bizarre to be believed.)
 - Why did the people in Wiesel's village doubt Hitler's plans to exterminate the Jewish population? (They did not think it was possible to wipe out a whole people, scattered as they were throughout so many countries.) How did the German soldiers win the confidence of the people of Sighet? (At first they treated the Jews politely. They lived in their homes and acted quite civilly. The people wanted to believe they were in no danger. Little by little, the soldiers took away their freedom – the leaders of the Jewish community were arrested; the Jewish people were put under house arrest; all their valuables were confiscated; the Jews were forced to wear a yellow star; the Jewish people were forced into ghettos; the ghettos were emptied and the people deported to concentration camps.)
 2. Read Chapters 1 and 2 aloud. Involve your learners in choosing one of the following reading strategies:
 - Echo Reading: You read out a sentence or a paragraph and the learners reads the same sentence or paragraph directly afterwards.
 - Partner Reading: You and the learner/s take turns reading paragraphs or pages.
 3. After reading the selection, listen to “Peel This Away” once more. Provide the learner with the lyrics to the song so they can follow the text while listening.

...ACTIVITIES

4. Have the learners describe the song and answer these questions.
 - Why did the band choose this type of sound and rhythm for the song?
 - How do the lyrics relate to the cover of the book and the reading selection?
 - What messages do you think the authors of the book and song are trying to convey?
5. Reread the lyrics. Answer any questions that the learners may have about vocabulary or content. Help the learners summarize orally what has happened so far in the story by answering the previewed questions.
6. Help learners transform these answers into a written summary of the first two chapters. It should be about two paragraphs in length.

POST-READING

1. Because of the intensity of the content explored in these lessons, you may want to address any questions or concerns at the end of each lesson. Allow a minimum of 10 minutes for this debriefing.
2. Have the learner check out or rent “Schindler’s List,” so they can view the movie at home. It should provide a visual context and background to the story, and could be incorporated into the weekly lesson if you think it is appropriate.

EXTENSION

1. Wiesel was born in Sighet in Transylvania. Locate the region of Transylvania on a pre-World War II map of Europe.
2. Ask learners: If you could talk to one of the survivors of the Holocaust, what would you want to ask? Write to your state or local Holocaust Center (see Resources) and arrange for a survivor to speak with your group. With fellow learners, determine which questions you would like the survivor to answer.
3. Create a cover for Night based on your own interpretations and reactions, and working in any medium or multi-media. Share your cover with other learners or your tutor and explain what motivated you to create as you did.

ASSESSMENT

1. Were the learners actively engaged in the various discussions? Did they feel comfortable and confident in asking clarifying questions? If not, how can you adjust instruction to draw the learners into a discussion?
2. Review the written summary of the first two chapters to see if the learners were able to convey the main idea with the use of supporting details.