

Sample Annotated Passage

Night by Elie Wiesel
Passage from pg 20 - 21

Toolkit # _____

We settled in. (What a word!) I went looking for wood, my sisters lit a fire. Despite her fatigue, my mother began to prepare a meal.

We cannot give up, we cannot give up, she kept repeating.

People's morale was not so bad: we were beginning to get used to the situation. There were those who even voiced optimism. The Germans were running out of time to expel us, they argued... Tragically for those who had already been deported, it would be too late. As for us, chances were that we would be allowed to go on with our miserable little lives until the end of the war.

The ghetto was not guarded. One could enter and leave as one pleased. Maria, our former maid, came to see us. Sobbing, she begged us to come with her to her village where she had prepared a safe shelter.

My father wouldn't hear of it. He told me and my big sisters, "If you wish, go there. I shall stay here with your mother and the little one..."

Naturally, we refused to be separated.

Repetition: mother is repeating this to convince herself

Opposites: contrasts calmness of Elie's father with Maria

Hopeful language:
"morale was not so bad" and "voiced optimism"

Connotations:
"Sobbing" and "beg" think of terror, loss, death, tragedy, great

Sentence Length:
"The ghetto was not guarded"
Short sentence with no description is stated matter of factly - emphasizes ability to leave and that they had a choice and could escape. This is even demonstrated by the fact that their former maid is able to enter into the ghetto to warn them.

Short Sentence:
"My father wouldn't hear of it."
Refuses to listen much less actually consider leaving.

Punctuation:
Comma after "If you wish- (father's response) is not authoritative, father gives children choice, but does not insist or even encourage that they leave. Has chance to ensure safety of children and doesn't take it.
Comma after "Naturally" - Naturally tells us that the children would never have chosen to leave their parents which means that by saying, "if you wish," their father did NOT really give them a choice at all.

Connotations:
"Naturally" – think of instinct, obvious events in nature like changing of seasons, inevitable, makes sense despair

Ellipsis ...
Trails off but really expressing his disappointment and the emotional effects of the family being divided if his children were to leave possibly to create guilt.

- Context:** Elie and his family, along with the rest of the Jews who were living in the larger Ghetto, are forced to relocate to a smaller one where they will then be transported to some unknown place.
- Box names & references to people – who are they?**
- Definitions**
 - Deported – the forced removal of people from a place
 - Ghetto – a small area of a city to which the Jewish people were restricted and from which they were forbidden to leave
- Summary:** Elie is remembering the night the Jews arrive in the smaller ghetto, and describes how everyone continues to feel hopeful despite the fact that Maria, a former maid who worked for Elie's family, begs his father to go to a safe house.
- Explain THREE Stylistic Devices** – see above
- Connotations** - see above
- Tone** – bitter, ironic, angry, sad
- Topics** – paternal relationships, delusion, inaction, false hope, survival, regret
- Theme** - In desperate situations, people often attempt to deceive themselves, but the price of this deception can cost us not only our own lives, but those of our children who are likely to suffer the same terrible fate.

Based on Night by Elie Wiesel (Passage from pg 20 – 21)

Elie Wiesel uses **repetition**, **contrasting language**, **sentence length** and even **punctuation** to show that many of the characters seem to be in denial about what is happening and how costly this blindness can be. After being ordered to march then run to a smaller ghetto where the Jews will be transported to some unknown location, Wiesel describes the reaction of his parents and others. He remembers how as she is preparing a meal, his mother keeps saying, “We cannot give up, we cannot give up” (20). People often repeat something over and over to convince themselves of something they don’t really believe. In this case, Wiesel’s mother **repeats** this phrase because she is attempting to block the reality of the situation out of her mind and convince herself everything will be fine. Wiesel also describes the reaction of others who “even voiced optimism” and notes how “morale was not so bad” (20). All of these responses though are in **sharp contrast** with a visitor who “sobs” and “begs” for Wiesel’s family to leave with her. “Optimism” brings to mind hope for the future but “sobbing” is associated with despair about what is to come. And clearly there is reason for despair as Wiesel points out that “for those who had already been deported, it would be too late” (20). Yet, Wiesel’s father is insistent they stay. The **short sentences** in this scene emphasize the Jews have a choice. Wiesel writes, “The ghetto was not guarded” (20). The sentence is written simply and is brief to make the point that it would have been easy to leave. It is followed by statements like, “My father wouldn’t hear of it” (20). Short statements like this often sound authoritative and that is the case here. The shortness of this sentence emphasizes how his father refuses to talk about or even listen to the possibility that it might be better for the family to leave. Similar to Elie’s mother, he is doing what he can to block out the reality of the situation.

Wiesel’s use of **punctuation** though is what helps the reader to understand the cost of this blindness. Wiesel explains how his father tells him and his sisters, “If you wish, go there. I shall stay here with your mother and the little one ...” to which Wiesel responds, “Naturally, we refused to be separated” (20). The comma after “if you wish” sets this phrase off. He does not tell his children to go. He does not insist. While this may sound like Elie’s father is giving his son and daughters a choice, he really is not. This is demonstrated when Elie says, “Naturally,” again set off by a comma to emphasize this word. The word “naturally” brings to mind instinct, similar to how animals follow their natural instincts to survive. This connotation tells us that the children would never have chosen to leave their parents. By not demanding that Elie and his sisters leave, Wiesel’s father is putting them in grave danger. Wiesel uses these devices to emphasize the message that in desperate situations, people often attempt to deceive themselves, but the price of this deception can cost not only our own lives, but those of our children who are likely to suffer the same terrible fate.