

Dear Elie Wiesel,

When I picked up your book, *Night*, I said, "What's the worst that can happen to Elie, he survived." I read maybe the first couple of chapters and was horrified by the content. Then I thought back to what I had said and thought how could I be so naïve when I'm going through something similar.

Now to no extent can I compare my experience to the Holocaust but for almost two years now I have been coping with my mom being terminally ill. Every day I wake up hoping things will improve, being optimistic and positive. It is the hardest thing I have ever had to do, and at this point it seems like the hardest thing I will ever have to do. It was only until I finished the book that I realized how much your book affected me and how much I could relate. I thought back on what you had gone through and the emotions you conveyed. I thought about how some mornings you would wake up not knowing if you were going to live or die. I wake up some mornings wondering if this is really happening to me and why it is. Uncertainty. It seems like we both have that in common. Both of us did nothing wrong, Elie, nothing to deserve this. We lived our lives out normally until the day you were told you would be leaving your home and the day my mother was diagnosed with brain cancer. Then everything changed for us. In a matter of days you were whisked out of your home, taken away from your sisters and mother and put into a labor camp. I was placed into another school where I hardly knew anybody; this was torturous. I had to switch houses and I spent a majority of my time in different hospitals visiting my mother, which was a big bummer because hospitals are just so depressing. I had no time anymore to be a normal teenager, and neither did you.

When you were in the concentration camps you were trapped, and no matter what you did you were at the fate of other people's actions. I thought over this idea. Trapped. Trapped. Trapped. I realized you being trapped in a concentration camp was sort of a metaphor for my predicament. How no matter what I did or how hard I tried to forget my mom's illness I was trapped with it. I could not escape it. The daunting fact that there was nothing I could personally do to make her better because she was at the fate of her medicine. The thought of all this almost brought me to tears. I was upset for a good hour, and then I cleared my head.

I thought about how that if you survived the Holocaust, then I could survive my mother being sick and every emotion that came along with it. You really inspired me, Elie; you made me realize that if I kept composure and remained hopeful that I would pull through just like you did. I thought about how much you had to endure, and how much I go through but here you are today, alive, with an award-winning book so maybe I can aspire to be like you

So now I have decided that I am going to focus on getting through this hard time, just like you did. I am going to forget the negative things and focus on the positive because, no matter how hard I wish for things to go away, my problems aren't going to disappear.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping me understand better how to deal with hard times. I am going to take this newly gained knowledge and use it now and in the future.

*Zoë Emma Borden*