

Night

By Elie Wiesel

Chapters 1-3 Vocabulary

1. beadle

a minor parish official who serves a ceremonial function

*They called him Moishe the **Beadle**, as if his entire life he had never had a surname.*

2. penury

a state of extreme poverty or destitution

*He was poor and lived in utter **penury**.*

3. esteem

the condition of being honored

*The Jewish community of Sighet held him in highest **esteem**; his advice on public and even private matters was frequently sought.*

4. annihilate

kill in large numbers

***Annihilate** an entire people?*

5. diplomacy

negotiation between nations

*And thus my elders concerned themselves with all manner of things—strategy, **diplomacy**, politics, and Zionism—but not with their own fate.*

6. edict

a legally binding command or decision

*First **edict**: Jews were prohibited from leaving their residences for three days, under penalty of death.*

7. rescind

cancel officially

*My father was running right and left, exhausted, consoling friends, checking with the Jewish Council just in case the order had been **rescinded**.*

8. strew

spread by scattering

*Valuable objects, precious rugs, silver candlesticks, Bibles and other ritual objects were **strewn** over the dusty grounds—pitiful relics that seemed never to have had a home.*

9. surreal

characterized by fantastic and incongruous imagery

*His very presence in the procession was enough to make the scene seem **surreal**.*

10. hasten

speed up the progress of; facilitate

*I looked at my house in which I had spent years seeking my God, fasting to **hasten** the coming of the Messiah, imagining what my life would be like later.*

11. horrendous

causing fear or dread or terror

*The twenty-four hours we spent there were **horrendous**.*

12. irrevocable

incapable of being retracted

The doors were nailed, the way back irrevocably cut off.

13. pious

having or showing or expressing reverence for a deity

*Her husband was a **pious** man who spent most of his days and nights in the house of study.*

14. invective

abusive language used to express blame or censure

*Another inmate appeared, unleashing a stream of **invectives**: "Sons of bitches, why have you come here? Tell me, why?"*

15. infernal

characteristic of or resembling Hell

*We were coming closer and closer to the pit, from which an **infernal** heat was rising.*

16. harangue

address forcefully

*He **harangued** us from the center of the barrack: "You are in a concentration camp."*

17. ascertain

learn or discover with confidence

*As if he wished to **ascertain** that the person addressing him was actually a creature of flesh and bone, a human being with a body and a belly.*

18. compulsory

required by rule

*These were the showers, a **compulsory** routine.*

19. veritable

not counterfeit or copied

*The new one was ferocious and his aides were **veritable** monsters.*