

Student Essay on Critical Lens Essay on "the Cage"

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Essay

"It is better to die on your feet than to live on your knees." This quote by Dolores Ibarruri means that it's better to live courageously and stand up for yourself, rather than being a craven and staying in the shadows. In the novel *The Cage* by Ruth Minsky Sender, Henry, Katia, and Tola demonstrate immense determination, courage, and dignity.

Henry shows courage when he goes out of his way and hides Yulek in his home, so the Nazis wouldn't capture him. He knows that he'll be risking his life if the Nazis caught him, but he does so anyway. He expresses his humanity when he says "He is not leaving my house until it is safe. I locked my door from the outside with a padlock. He will be safe for a while. We'll find a place for him later. I'll speak to my friend Mark. He lives alone too" (78). I was so moved that Henry would accept someone who he only met for one day into his home. We should really learn from his influential actions.

Katia is a Russian nurse who worked in the factories. She showed dignity when she left her home to stay with her husband, who was forced to work for the Nazis. She showed courage when she said, "We did it, Riva! You look so fresh, so clean, so new. We will do this again" (243). Katia risked her life by letting Riva take a warm bath and by sneaking healthy food to Riva, so she can get better.

Tola is Riva's friend who shows determination because she stays strong no matter what situation they're in. She particularly delineates determination when she says "We are nobles, broken in body but still alive. And we are still together" (251). Even though they are going through arduous times, Tola keeps her hopes up and is determined to stay together, and one day they will get out of the camp.

Determination, courage and dignity are portrayed in these exemplary people. They never let their hopes diminish and no matter what the risks were, they would take them in order to help one another. They never gave up struggling through their impediments. We should look up to these three exemplars and learn through their determination, courage, and dignity, how to surmount these obstacles and always have hope and faith.