

The strongest man upon the earth is he who stands most alone critical lens essay

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According to Henrik Ibsen, “ The strongest man upon the earth is he who stands most alone. ” In other words, what this quote means is that the strongest man is the most independent; individuals who do not need to rely on others to survive. Individuals who stand alone are the ones who realize the strength within themselves and become powerful characters. This quote is valid because individuals who like to take actions on their own and at their own pace become the most successful.

Two works of literature that support the validity of this statement are *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J. D. Salinger and *The Color of Water*, by James McBride. *The Color of Water*, is a memoir, set in a variety of settings; from Suffolk, Virginia, to Wilmington, Delaware. It recounts the past lives of protagonists James and Ruth, and recalls the 1920s all throughout the 1990s. One of the protagonists, Ruth McBride, is characterized as an admirable and extraordinary woman and shows signs of independence throughout her lifetime.

She managed to overcome the painful memories of her adolescent years; ranging from her father’s indecent behavior and mistreatment, to having an abortion at such a young age. She followed her heart and left behind her family and friends in search of a new life; away from the life that was so cruel to her. She showed signs of independence even “ when the going got tough. ” For example, after her first husband had passed away, she did not crumble under the pressure that she was facing.

Instead, she married again and raised her children to be successful and educated, even during such harsh conditions. Also, Ruth was not afraid of

public opinion when she had married an African- American man. This marriage caused her family to condemn her and shows that those who do not rely on others become stronger and more powerful individuals. The *Catcher in the Rye*, is set in New York City during the 1940s. The protagonist, Holden Caulfield, is characterized as an individual who has been independent for a great part of his life.

From an early age, his parents have been too “ occupied” to spend time with Holden and they did not show much interest in their children. For example, he was shipped to school and when he would get expelled; his parents paid no mind and sent him to another school. He lived away from his family for a great part of his life and because of being independent at such an early age; he later on endeared a mental breakdown and ended up in an asylum.

However, being independent made Holden realize that he has a problem and that if he would not have gone to the asylum and seeked help from professions, then he would not have been able to become a stronger and more successful individual. Ultimately, *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J. D. Salinger, and *The Color of Water*, by James McBride, both support the validity of the quote, “ The strongest man upon the earth is he who stands most alone, said by author Henrik Ibsen. As life goes on, individuals will learn and realize that isolating yourself will not get you anywhere in life; it will only hurt you.

You can be in control of your own destiny and you will gain perspective on your life. Both protagonists, Holden Caulfield and Ruth McBride, teach us that to ensure a prominent future, you need to overcome obstacles in all

situations. This will better you as a person and will offer you a sense of what happens in the real world. Being independent allows you to see the world from a different perspective and no matter what life throws at you; you can get up from the ground, start again, and begin leading your life to a successful future.