

Throughout history, men and governments have sought to conquer and control individuals. Sadly, the rights of the individual are often sacrificed during these conquests. To cope with the oppression and cruelty of these rulers, the average person often finds small ways to assert his or her individuality. In Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, seven young Muslim women and their professor fight the government by reading forbidden books and wearing brightly-colored socks. In Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*, a young German girl sneaks words and the weather to a hidden Jew. Both *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and *The Book Thief* demonstrate the desire of the human heart to fight back against tyranny.

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In Azar Nafisi's memoir, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, a professor holds secret book discussions in her home after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The meetings were for females only and were strictly prohibited. Just reading forbidden titles like Nabokov's *Lolita* was enough to get any of the women in attendance arrested. However, these girls, including Sanaz, also used these meetings as an opportunity to show their individuality by wearing hoop earrings and nail polish. They did all of these things at great personal risk. Nafisi explains that women getting caught disobeying the law were "hurled into patrol cars, taken to jail, flogged, fined, forced to wash the toilets, and humiliated" (27). Nonetheless, the women continued to read their books and wear their nail polish. The desire to be an individual outweighed the risk of punishment.

Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* also reveals the desire of the average person to maintain a sense of self in the face of tyranny.