

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/GRADE 10 ENGLISH/HANDOUT 5/THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

Instructions (Jigsaw Reading):

Your teacher may form groups of four students each and assign one of the chapters from this reading package to each student per group.

Individually, try to summarize each chapter by using the five journalistic Ws. Use the boxes below to take notes as you read and also after you read the assigned chapter.

Where is the scene? (What is the setting? Maybe describe the scene in terms of the five senses.)

When is this happening? (What happens in Chapter 1 to 5? Try to establish the context with your teacher.)

Who are involved? (Who are the characters, and how are they portrayed?)

What is happening? (What drives the action? What decisions are made?)

Why is it happening? (What forces, external and internal, drive each character to act in particular ways?)

Reflection

As discussed in today's Power Point slides, *The Catcher in the Rye* was banned countless times. Having read your assigned chapter and exchanged your chapter summaries with your group mates, discuss which aspects of Salinger's writing may be considered inappropriate for young readers. Discuss the opposing perspective as well. How might the novel be regarded as a meaningful novel for older teenagers to read?

Inappropriate Content (potentially and/or evidently so)	Meaningful Content (e.g., morally, thematic, and/or aesthetically significant)

old Ackley snoring. Right through the goddam shower curtains you could hear him. He had sinus trouble and he couldn't breathe too hot when he was asleep. That guy had just about everything. Sinus trouble, pimples, lousy teeth, halitosis, crumby fingernails. You had to feel a little sorry for the crazy sonuvabitch.

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Some things are hard to remember. I'm thinking now of when Stradlater got back from his date with Jane. I mean I can't remember exactly what I was doing when I heard his goddam stupid footsteps coming down the corridor. I probably was still looking out the window, but I swear I can't remember. I was so damn worried, that's why. When I really worry about something, I don't just fool around. I even have to go to the bathroom when I worry about something. Only, I don't go. I'm too worried to go. I don't want to interrupt my worrying to go. If you knew Stradlater, you'd have been worried, too. I'd double-dated with that bastard a couple of times, and I know what I'm talking about. He was unscrupulous. He really was.

Anyway, the corridor was all linoleum and all, and you could hear his goddam footsteps coming right towards the room. I don't even remember where I was sitting when he came in--at the window, or in my chair or his. I swear I can't remember.

He came in griping about how cold it was out. Then he said, "Where the hell is everybody? It's like a goddam morgue around here." I didn't even bother to answer him. If he was so goddam stupid not to realize it was Saturday night and everybody was out or asleep or home for the week end, I wasn't going to break my neck telling him. He started getting undressed. He didn't say one goddam word about Jane. Not one. Neither did I. I just watched him. All he did was thank me for letting him wear my hound's-tooth. He hung it up on a hanger and put it in the closet.

Then when he was taking off his tie, he asked me if I'd written his goddam composition for him. I told him it was over on his goddam bed. He walked over and read it while he was unbuttoning his shirt. He stood there, reading it, and sort of stroking his bare chest and stomach, with this very stupid expression on his face. He was always stroking his stomach or his chest. He was mad about himself.

All of a sudden, he said, "For Chrissake, Holden. This is about a goddam baseball glove."

"So what?" I said. Cold as hell.

"Wuddaya mean so what? I told ya it had to be about a goddam room or a house or something."

"You said it had to be descriptive. What the hell's the difference if it's about a baseball glove?"

"God damn it." He was sore as hell. He was really furious. "You always do everything backasswards." He looked at me. "No wonder you're flunking the hell out of here," he said. "You don't do one damn thing the way you're supposed to. I mean it. Not one damn thing."

"All right, give it back to me, then," I said. I went over and pulled it right out of his goddam hand. Then I tore it up.

"What the hellja do that for?" he said.

I didn't even answer him. I just threw the pieces in the wastebasket. Then I lay down on my bed, and we both didn't say anything for a long time. He got all undressed, down to his shorts, and I lay on my bed and lit a cigarette. You weren't allowed to smoke in the dorm, but you could do it late at night when everybody was asleep or out and nobody could smell the smoke. Besides, I did it to annoy Stradlater. It drove him crazy when you broke any rules. He never smoked in the dorm. It was only me.

He still didn't say one single solitary word about Jane. So finally I said, "You're back pretty goddam late if she only signed out for nine-thirty. Did you make her be late signing in?"

He was sitting on the edge of his bed, cutting his goddam toenails, when I asked him that. "Coupla minutes," he said. "Who the hell signs out for nine-thirty on a Saturday night?" God, how I hated him.

"Did you go to New York?" I said.

"Ya crazy? How the hell could we go to New York if she only signed out for nine-thirty?"

"That's tough."

He looked up at me. "Listen," he said, "if you're gonna smoke in the room, how 'bout going down to the can and do it? You may be getting the hell out of here, but I have to stick around long enough to graduate."

I ignored him. I really did. I went right on smoking like a madman. All I did was sort of turn over on my side and watched him cut his damn toenails. What a school. You were always watching somebody cut their damn toenails or squeeze their pimples or something.

"Did you give her my regards?" I asked him.

"Yeah."

The hell he did, the bastard.

"What'd she say?" I said. "Did you ask her if she still keeps all her kings in the back row?"

"No, I didn't ask her. What the hell ya think we did all night--play checkers, for Chrissake?"

I didn't even answer him. God, how I hated him.

"If you didn't go to New York, where'd ya go with her?" I asked him, after a little while. I could hardly keep my voice from shaking all over the place. Boy, was I getting nervous. I just had a feeling something had gone funny.

He was finished cutting his damn toenails. So he got up from the bed, in just his damn shorts and all, and started getting very damn playful. He came over to my bed and started leaning over me and taking these playful as hell socks at my shoulder. "Cut it out," I said. "Where'd you go with her if you didn't go to New York?"

"Nowhere. We just sat in the goddam car." He gave me another one of those playful stupid little socks on the shoulder.

"Cut it out," I said. "Whose car?"

"Ed Banky's."

Ed Banky was the basketball coach at Pencey. Old Stradlater was one of his pets, because he was the center on the team, and Ed Banky always let him borrow his car when he wanted it. It wasn't allowed for students to borrow faculty guys' cars, but all the

athletic bastards stuck together. In every school I've gone to, all the athletic bastards stick together.

Stradlater kept taking these shadow punches down at my shoulder. He had his toothbrush in his hand, and he put it in his mouth. "What'd you do?" I said. "Give her the time in Ed Banky's goddam car?" My voice was shaking something awful.

"What a thing to say. Want me to wash your mouth out with soap?"

"Did you?"

"That's a professional secret, buddy."

This next part I don't remember so hot. All I know is I got up from the bed, like I was going down to the can or something, and then I tried to sock him, with all my might, right smack in the toothbrush, so it would split his goddam throat open. Only, I missed. I didn't connect. All I did was sort of get him on the side of the head or something. It probably hurt him a little bit, but not as much as I wanted. It probably would've hurt him a lot, but I did it with my right hand, and I can't make a good fist with that hand. On account of that injury I told you about.

Anyway, the next thing I knew, I was on the goddam floor and he was sitting on my chest, with his face all red. That is, he had his goddam knees on my chest, and he weighed about a ton. He had hold of my wrists, too, so I couldn't take another sock at him. I'd've killed him.

"What the hell's the matter with you?" he kept saying, and his stupid race kept getting redder and redder.

"Get your lousy knees off my chest," I told him. I was almost bawling. I really was. "Go on, get off a me, ya crumby bastard."

He wouldn't do it, though. He kept holding onto my wrists and I kept calling him a sonuvabitch and all, for around ten hours. I can hardly even remember what all I said to him. I told him he thought he could give the time to anybody he felt like. I told him he didn't even care if a girl kept all her kings in the back row or not, and the reason he didn't care was because he was a goddam stupid moron. He hated it when you called a moron. All morons hate it when you call them a moron.

"Shut up, now, Holden," he said with his big stupid red face. "just shut up, now."

"You don't even know if her first name is Jane or Jean, ya goddam moron!"

"Now, shut up, Holden, God damn it--I'm warning ya," he said--I really had him going. "If you don't shut up, I'm gonna slam ya one."

"Get your dirty stinking moron knees off my chest."

"If I letcha up, will you keep your mouth shut?"

I didn't even answer him.

He said it over again. "Holden. If I letcha up, willya keep your mouth shut?"

"Yes."

He got up off me, and I got up, too. My chest hurt like hell from his dirty knees. "You're a dirty stupid sonuvabitch of a moron," I told him.

That got him really mad. He shook his big stupid finger in my face. "Holden, God damn it, I'm warning you, now. For the last time. If you don't keep your yap shut, I'm gonna--"

"Why should I?" I said--I was practically yelling. "That's just the trouble with all you morons. You never want to discuss anything. That's the way you can always tell a moron. They never want to discuss anything intellig--"

Then he really let one go at me, and the next thing I knew I was on the goddam floor again. I don't remember if he knocked me out or not, but I don't think so. It's pretty hard to knock a guy out, except in the goddam movies. But my nose was bleeding all over the place. When I looked up old Stradlater was standing practically right on top of me. He had his goddam toilet kit under his arm. "Why the hell don'tcha shut up when I tellya to?" he said. He sounded pretty nervous. He probably was scared he'd fractured my skull or something when I hit the floor. It's too bad I didn't. "You asked for it, God damn it," he said. Boy, did he look worried.

I didn't even bother to get up. I just lay there in the floor for a while, and kept calling him a moron sonuvabitch. I was so mad, I was practically bawling.

"Listen. Go wash your face," Stradlater said. "Ya hear me?"

I told him to go wash his own moron face--which was a pretty childish thing to say, but I was mad as hell. I told him to stop off on the way to the can and give Mrs. Schmidt the time. Mrs. Schmidt was the janitor's wife. She was around sixty-five.

I kept sitting there on the floor till I heard old Stradlater close the door and go down the corridor to the can. Then I got up. I couldn't find my goddam hunting hat anywhere. Finally I found it. It was under the bed. I put it on, and turned the old peak around to the back, the way I liked it, and then I went over and took a look at my stupid face in the mirror. You never saw such gore in your life. I had blood all over my mouth and chin and even on my pajamas and bath robe. It partly scared me and it partly fascinated me. All that blood and all sort of made me look tough. I'd only been in about two fights in my life, and I lost both of them. I'm not too tough. I'm a pacifist, if you want to know the truth.

I had a feeling old Ackley'd probably heard all the racket and was awake. So I went through the shower curtains into his room, just to see what the hell he was doing. I hardly ever went over to his room. It always had a funny stink in it, because he was so crumby in his personal habits.

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A tiny bit of light came through the shower curtains and all from our room, and I could see him lying in bed. I knew damn well he was wide awake. "Ackley?" I said. "Y'awake?"

"Yeah."

It was pretty dark, and I stepped on somebody's shoe on the floor and danm near fell on my head. Ackley sort of sat up in bed and leaned on his arm. He had a lot of white stuff on his face, for his pimples. He looked sort of spooky in the dark. "What the hellyya doing, anyway?" I said.

"Wuddaya mean what the hell am I doing? I was tryna sleep before you guys started making all that noise. What the hell was the fight about, anyhow?"

"Where's the light?" I couldn't find the light. I was sliding my hand all over the wall.

"Wuddaya want the light for? . . . Right next to your hand."

I finally found the switch and turned It on. Old Ackley put his hand up so the light wouldn't hurt his eyes.

"Jesus!" he said. "What the hell happened to you?" He meant all the blood and all.

"I had a little goddam tiff with Stradlater," I said. Then I sat down on the floor. They never had any chairs in their room. I don't know what the hell they did with their chairs. "Listen," I said, "do you feel like playing a little Canasta?" He was a Canasta fiend.

"You're still bleeding, for Chrissake. You better put something on it."

"It'll stop. Listen. Ya wanna play a little Canasta or don'tcha?"

"Canasta, for Chrissake. Do you know what time it is, by any chance?"

"It isn't late. It's only around eleven, eleven-thirty."

"Only around!" Ackley said. "Listen. I gotta get up and go to Mass in the morning, for Chrissake. You guys start hollering and fighting in the middle of the goddam--What the hell was the fight about, anyhow?"

"It's a long story. I don't wanna bore ya, Ackley. I'm thinking of your welfare," I told him. I never discussed my personal life with him. In the first place, he was even more stupid than Stradlater. Stradlater was a goddam genius next to Ackley. "Hey," I said, "is it okay if I sleep in Ely's bed tonight? He won't be back till tomorrow night, will he?" I knew damn well he wouldn't. Ely went home damn near every week end.

"I don't know when the hell he's coming back," Ackley said.

Boy, did that annoy me. "What the hell do you mean you don't know when he's coming back? He never comes back till Sunday night, does he?"

"No, but for Chrissake, I can't just tell somebody they can sleep in his goddam bed if they want to."

That killed me. I reached up from where I was sitting on the floor and patted him on the goddam shoulder. "You're a prince, Ackley kid," I said. "You know that?"

"No, I mean it--I can't just tell somebody they can sleep in--"

"You're a real prince. You're a gentleman and a scholar, kid," I said. He really was, too. "Do you happen to have any cigarettes, by any chance?--Say 'no' or I'll drop dead."

"No, I don't, as a matter of fact. Listen, what the hell was the fight about?"

I didn't answer him. All I did was, I got up and went over and looked out the window. I felt so lonesome, all of a sudden. I almost wished I was dead.

"What the hell was the fight about, anyhow?" Ackley said, for about the fiftieth time. He certainly was a bore about that.

"About you," I said.

"About me, for Chrissake?"

"Yeah. I was defending your goddam honor. Stradlater said you had a lousy personality. I couldn't let him get away with that stuff."

That got him excited. "He did? No kidding? He did?"

I told him I was only kidding, and then I went over and laid down on Ely's bed. Boy, did I feel rotten. I felt so damn lonesome.

"This room stinks," I said. "I can smell your socks from way over here. Don'tcha ever send them to the laundry?"

"If you don't like it, you know what you can do," Ackley said. What a witty guy. "How 'bout turning off the goddam light?"

I didn't turn it off right away, though. I just kept laying there on Ely's bed, thinking about Jane and all. It just drove me stark staring mad when I thought about her

and Stradlater parked somewhere in that fat-assed Ed Banky's car. Every time I thought about it, I felt like jumping out the window. The thing is, you didn't know Stradlater. I knew him. Most guys at Pencey just talked about having sexual intercourse with girls all the time--like Ackley, for instance--but old Stradlater really did it. I was personally acquainted with at least two girls he gave the time to. That's the truth.

"Tell me the story of your fascinating life, Ackley kid," I said.

"How 'bout turning off the goddam light? I gotta get up for Mass in the morning." I got up and turned it off, if it made him happy. Then I laid down on Ely's bed again.

"What're ya gonna do--sleep in Ely's bed?" Ackley said. He was the perfect host, boy.

"I may. I may not. Don't worry about it."

"I'm not worried about it. Only, I'd hate like hell if Ely came in all of a sudden and found some guy--"

"Relax. I'm not gonna sleep here. I wouldn't abuse your goddam hospitality."

A couple of minutes later, he was snoring like mad. I kept laying there in the dark anyway, though, trying not to think about old Jane and Stradlater in that goddam Ed Banky's car. But it was almost impossible. The trouble was, I knew that guy Stradlater's technique. That made it even worse. We once double-dated, in Ed Banky's car, and Stradlater was in the back, with his date, and I was in the front with mine. What a technique that guy had. What he'd do was, he'd start snowing his date in this very quiet, sincere voice--like as if he wasn't only a very handsome guy but a nice, sincere guy, too. I damn near puked, listening to him. His date kept saying, "No--please. Please, don't. Please." But old Stradlater kept snowing her in this Abraham Lincoln, sincere voice, and finally there'd be this terrific silence in the back of the car. It was really embarrassing. I don't think he gave that girl the time that night--but damn near. Damn near.

While I was laying there trying not to think, I heard old Stradlater come back from the can and go in our room. You could hear him putting away his crumby toilet articles and all, and opening the window. He was a fresh-air fiend. Then, a little while later, he turned off the light. He didn't even look around to see where I was at.

It was even depressing out in the street. You couldn't even hear any cars any more. I got feeling so lonesome and rotten, I even felt like waking Ackley up.

"Hey, Ackley," I said, in sort of a whisper, so Stradlater couldn't hear me through the shower curtain.

Ackley didn't hear me, though.

"Hey, Ackley!"

He still didn't hear me. He slept like a rock.

"Hey, Ackley!"

He heard that, all right.

"What the hell's the matter with you?" he said. "I was asleep, for Chrissake."

"Listen. What's the routine on joining a monastery?" I asked him. I was sort of toying with the idea of joining one. "Do you have to be a Catholic and all?"

"Certainly you have to be a Catholic. You bastard, did you wake me just to ask me a dumb ques--"

"Aah, go back to sleep. I'm not gonna join one anyway. The kind of luck I have, I'd probably join one with all the wrong kind of monks in it. All stupid bastards. Or just bastards."

When I said that, old Ackley sat way the hell up in bed. "Listen," he said, "I don't care what you say about me or anything, but if you start making cracks about my goddam religion, for Chrissake--"

"Relax," I said. "Nobody's making any cracks about your goddam religion." I got up off Ely's bed, and started towards the door. I didn't want to hang around in that stupid atmosphere any more. I stopped on the way, though, and picked up Ackley's hand, and gave him a big, phony handshake. He pulled it away from me. "What's the idea?" he said.

"No idea. I just want to thank you for being such a goddam prince, that's all," I said. I said it in this very sincere voice. "You're aces, Ackley kid," I said. "You know that?"

"Wise guy. Someday somebody's gonna bash your--"

I didn't even bother to listen to him. I shut the damn door and went out in the corridor.

Everybody was asleep or out or home for the week end, and it was very, very quiet and depressing in the corridor. There was this empty box of Kolynos toothpaste outside Leahy and Hoffman's door, and while I walked down towards the stairs, I kept giving it a boot with this sheep-lined slipper I had on. What I thought I'd do, I thought I might go down and see what old Mal Brossard was doing. But all of a sudden, I changed my mind. All of a sudden, I decided what I'd really do, I'd get the hell out of Pencey--right that same night and all. I mean not wait till Wednesday or anything. I just didn't want to hang around any more. It made me too sad and lonesome. So what I decided to do, I decided I'd take a room in a hotel in New York--some very inexpensive hotel and all--and just take it easy till Wednesday. Then, on Wednesday, I'd go home all rested up and feeling swell. I figured my parents probably wouldn't get old Thurmer's letter saying I'd been given the ax till maybe Tuesday or Wednesday. I didn't want to go home or anything till they got it and thoroughly digested it and all. I didn't want to be around when they first got it. My mother gets very hysterical. She's not too bad after she gets something thoroughly digested, though. Besides, I sort of needed a little vacation. My nerves were shot. They really were.

Anyway, that's what I decided I'd do. So I went back to the room and turned on the light, to start packing and all. I already had quite a few things packed. Old Stradlater didn't even wake up. I lit a cigarette and got all dressed and then I packed these two Gladstones I have. It only took me about two minutes. I'm a very rapid packer.

One thing about packing depressed me a little. I had to pack these brand-new ice skates my mother had practically just sent me a couple of days before. That depressed me. I could see my mother going in Spaulding's and asking the salesman a million dopy questions--and here I was getting the ax again. It made me feel pretty sad. She bought me the wrong kind of skates--I wanted racing skates and she bought hockey--but it made me sad anyway. Almost every time somebody gives me a present, it ends up making me sad.

After I got all packed, I sort of counted my dough. I don't remember exactly how much I had, but I was pretty loaded. My grandmother'd just sent me a wad about a week before. I have this grandmother that's quite lavish with her dough. She doesn't have all her marbles any more--she's old as hell--and she keeps sending me money for my

birthday about four times a year. Anyway, even though I was pretty loaded, I figured I could always use a few extra bucks. You never know. So what I did was, I went down the hail and woke up Frederick Woodruff, this guy I'd lent my typewriter to. I asked him how much he'd give me for it. He was a pretty wealthy guy. He said he didn't know. He said he didn't much want to buy it. Finally he bought it, though. It cost about ninety bucks, and all he bought it for was twenty. He was sore because I'd woke him up.

When I was all set to go, when I had my bags and all, I stood for a while next to the stairs and took a last look down the goddam corridor. I was sort of crying. I don't know why. I put my red hunting hat on, and turned the peak around to the back, the way I liked it, and then I yelled at the top of my goddam voice, "Sleep tight, ya morons!" I'll bet I woke up every bastard on the whole floor. Then I got the hell out. Some stupid guy had thrown peanut shells all over the stairs, and I damn near broke my crazy neck.

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It was too late to call up for a cab or anything, so I walked the whole way to the station. It wasn't too far, but it was cold as hell, and the snow made it hard for walking, and my Gladstones kept banging hell out of my legs. I sort of enjoyed the air and all, though. The only trouble was, the cold made my nose hurt, and right under my upper lip, where old Stradlater'd laid one on me. He'd smacked my lip right on my teeth, and it was pretty sore. My ears were nice and warm, though. That hat I bought had earlaps in it, and I put them on--I didn't give a damn how I looked. Nobody was around anyway. Everybody was in the sack.

I was quite lucky when I got to the station, because I only had to wait about ten minutes for a train. While I waited, I got some snow in my hand and washed my face with it. I still had quite a bit of blood on.

Usually I like riding on trains, especially at night, with the lights on and the windows so black, and one of those guys coming up the aisle selling coffee and sandwiches and magazines. I usually buy a ham sandwich and about four magazines. If I'm on a train at night, I can usually even read one of those dumb stories in a magazine without puking. You know. One of those stories with a lot of phony, lean-jawed guys named David in it, and a lot of phony girls named Linda or Marcia that are always lighting all the goddam Davids' pipes for them. I can even read one of those lousy stories on a train at night, usually. But this time, it was different. I just didn't feel like it. I just sort of sat and not did anything. All I did was take off my hunting hat and put it in my pocket.

All of a sudden, this lady got on at Trenton and sat down next to me. Practically the whole car was empty, because it was pretty late and all, but she sat down next to me, instead of an empty seat, because she had this big bag with her and I was sitting in the front seat. She stuck the bag right out in the middle of the aisle, where the conductor and everybody could trip over it. She had these orchids on, like she'd just been to a big party or something. She was around forty or forty-five, I guess, but she was very good looking. Women kill me. They really do. I don't mean I'm oversexed or anything like that--although I am quite sexy. I just like them, I mean. They're always leaving their goddam bags out in the middle of the aisle.

Anyway, we were sitting there, and all of a sudden she said to me, "Excuse me, but isn't that a Pencey Prep sticker?" She was looking up at my suitcases, up on the rack.

"Yes, it is," I said. She was right. I did have a goddam Pencey sticker on one of my Gladstones. Very corny, I'll admit.

"Oh, do you go to Pencey?" she said. She had a nice voice. A nice telephone voice, mostly. She should've carried a goddam telephone around with her.

"Yes, I do," I said.

"Oh, how lovely! Perhaps you know my son, then, Ernest Morrow? He goes to Pencey."

"Yes, I do. He's in my class."

Her son was doubtless the biggest bastard that ever went to Pencey, in the whole crumby history of the school. He was always going down the corridor, after he'd had a shower, snapping his soggy old wet towel at people's asses. That's exactly the kind of a guy he was.

"Oh, how nice!" the lady said. But not corny. She was just nice and all. "I must tell Ernest we met," she said. "May I ask your name, dear?"

"Rudolf Schmidt," I told her. I didn't feel like giving her my whole life history. Rudolf Schmidt was the name of the janitor of our dorm.

"Do you like Pencey?" she asked me.

"Pencey? It's not too bad. It's not paradise or anything, but it's as good as most schools. Some of the faculty are pretty conscientious."

"Ernest just adores it."

"I know he does," I said. Then I started shooting the old crap around a little bit. "He adapts himself very well to things. He really does. I mean he really knows how to adapt himself."

"Do you think so?" she asked me. She sounded interested as hell.

"Ernest? Sure," I said. Then I watched her take off her gloves. Boy, was she lousy with rocks.

"I just broke a nail, getting out of a cab," she said. She looked up at me and sort of smiled. She had a terrifically nice smile. She really did. Most people have hardly any smile at all, or a lousy one. "Ernest's father and I sometimes worry about him," she said. "We sometimes feel he's not a terribly good mixer."

"How do you mean?"

"Well. He's a very sensitive boy. He's really never been a terribly good mixer with other boys. Perhaps he takes things a little more seriously than he should at his age."

Sensitive. That killed me. That guy Morrow was about as sensitive as a goddam toilet seat.

I gave her a good look. She didn't look like any dope to me. She looked like she might have a pretty damn good idea what a bastard she was the mother of. But you can't always tell--with somebody's mother, I mean. Mothers are all slightly insane. The thing is, though, I liked old Morrow's mother. She was all right. "Would you care for a cigarette?" I asked her.

She looked all around. "I don't believe this is a smoker, Rudolf," she said. Rudolf. That killed me.

"That's all right. We can smoke till they start screaming at us," I said. She took a cigarette off me, and I gave her a light.

She looked nice, smoking. She inhaled and all, but she didn't wolf the smoke down, the way most women around her age do. She had a lot of charm. She had quite a lot of sex appeal, too, if you really want to know.

She was looking at me sort of funny. I may be wrong but I believe your nose is bleeding, dear, she said, all of a sudden.

I nodded and took out my handkerchief. "I got hit with a snowball," I said. "One of those very icy ones." I probably would've told her what really happened, but it would've taken too long. I liked her, though. I was beginning to feel sort of sorry I'd told her my name was Rudolf Schmidt. "Old Ernie," I said. "He's one of the most popular boys at Pencey. Did you know that?"

"No, I didn't."

I nodded. "It really took everybody quite a long time to get to know him. He's a funny guy. A strange guy, in lots of ways--know what I mean? Like when I first met him. When I first met him, I thought he was kind of a snobbish person. That's what I thought. But he isn't. He's just got this very original personality that takes you a little while to get to know him."

Old Mrs. Morrow didn't say anything, but boy, you should've seen her. I had her glued to her seat. You take somebody's mother, all they want to hear about is what a hot-shot their son is.

Then I really started chucking the old crap around. "Did he tell you about the elections?" I asked her. "The class elections?"

She shook her head. I had her in a trance, like. I really did.

"Well, a bunch of us wanted old Ernie to be president of the class. I mean he was the unanimous choice. I mean he was the only boy that could really handle the job," I said--boy, was I chucking it. "But this other boy--Harry Fencer--was elected. And the reason he was elected, the simple and obvious reason, was because Ernie wouldn't let us nominate him. Because he's so darn shy and modest and all. He refused. . . Boy, he's really shy. You oughta make him try to get over that." I looked at her. "Didn't he tell you about it?"

"No, he didn't."

I nodded. "That's Ernie. He wouldn't. That's the one fault with him--he's too shy and modest. You really oughta get him to try to relax occasionally."

Right that minute, the conductor came around for old Mrs. Morrow's ticket, and it gave me a chance to quit shooting it. I'm glad I shot it for a while, though. You take a guy like Morrow that's always snapping their towel at people's asses--really trying to hurt somebody with it--they don't just stay a rat while they're a kid. They stay a rat their whole life. But I'll bet, after all the crap I shot, Mrs. Morrow'll keep thinking of him now as this very shy, modest guy that wouldn't let us nominate him for president. She might. You can't tell. Mothers aren't too sharp about that stuff.

"Would you care for a cocktail?" I asked her. I was feeling in the mood for one myself. "We can go in the club car. All right?"

"Dear, are you allowed to order drinks?" she asked me. Not snotty, though. She was too charming and all to be snotty.

"Well, no, not exactly, but I can usually get them on account of my heighth," I said. "And I have quite a bit of gray hair." I turned sideways and showed her my gray

hair. It fascinated hell out of her. "C'mon, join me, why don't you?" I said. I'd've enjoyed having her.

"I really don't think I'd better. Thank you so much, though, dear," she said. "Anyway, the club car's most likely closed. It's quite late, you know." She was right. I'd forgotten all about what time it was.

Then she looked at me and asked me what I was afraid she was going to ask me. "Ernest wrote that he'd be home on Wednesday, that Christmas vacation would start on Wednesday," she said. "I hope you weren't called home suddenly because of illness in the family." She really looked worried about it. She wasn't just being nosy, you could tell.

"No, everybody's fine at home," I said. "It's me. I have to have this operation."

"Oh! I'm so sorry," she said. She really was, too. I was right away sorry I'd said it, but it was too late.

"It isn't very serious. I have this tiny little tumor on the brain."

"Oh, no!" She put her hand up to her mouth and all. "Oh, I'll be all right and everything! It's right near the outside. And it's a very tiny one. They can take it out in about two minutes."

Then I started reading this timetable I had in my pocket. Just to stop lying. Once I get started, I can go on for hours if I feel like it. No kidding. Hours.

We didn't talk too much after that. She started reading this Vogue she had with her, and I looked out the window for a while. She got off at Newark. She wished me a lot of luck with the operation and all. She kept calling me Rudolf. Then she invited me to visit Ernie during the summer, at Gloucester, Massachusetts. She said their house was right on the beach, and they had a tennis court and all, but I just thanked her and told her I was going to South America with my grandmother. Which was really a hot one, because my grandmother hardly ever even goes out of the house, except maybe to go to a goddam matinee or something. But I wouldn't visit that sonuvabitch Morrow for all the dough in the world, even if I was desperate.

The first thing I did when I got off at Penn Station, I went into this phone booth. I felt like giving somebody a buzz. I left my bags right outside the booth so that I could watch them, but as soon as I was inside, I couldn't think of anybody to call up. My brother D.B. was in Hollywood. My kid sister Phoebe goes to bed around nine o'clock--so I couldn't call her up. She wouldn't've cared if I'd woke her up, but the trouble was, she wouldn't've been the one that answered the phone. My parents would be the ones. So that was out. Then I thought of giving Jane Gallagher's mother a buzz, and find out when Jane's vacation started, but I didn't feel like it. Besides, it was pretty late to call up. Then I thought of calling this girl I used to go around with quite frequently, Sally Hayes, because I knew her Christmas vacation had started already--she'd written me this long, phony letter, inviting me over to help her trim the Christmas tree Christmas Eve and all--but I was afraid her mother'd answer the phone. Her mother knew my mother, and I could picture her breaking a goddam leg to get to the phone and tell my mother I was in New York. Besides, I wasn't crazy about talking to old Mrs. Hayes on the phone. She once told Sally I was wild. She said I was wild and that I had no direction in life. Then I thought of

calling up this guy that went to the Whooton School when I was there, Carl Luce, but I didn't like him much. So I ended up not calling anybody. I came out of the booth, after about twenty minutes or so, and got my bags and walked over to that tunnel where the cabs are and got a cab.

I'm so damn absent-minded, I gave the driver my regular address, just out of habit and all--I mean I completely forgot I was going to shack up in a hotel for a couple of days and not go home till vacation started. I didn't think of it till we were halfway through the park. Then I said, "Hey, do you mind turning around when you get a chance? I gave you the wrong address. I want to go back downtown."

The driver was sort of a wise guy. "I can't turn around here, Mac. This here's a one-way. I'll have to go all the way to Ninetieth Street now."

I didn't want to start an argument. "Okay," I said. Then I thought of something, all of a sudden. "Hey, listen," I said. "You know those ducks in that lagoon right near Central Park South? That little lake? By any chance, do you happen to know where they go, the ducks, when it gets all frozen over? Do you happen to know, by any chance?" I realized it was only one chance in a million.

He turned around and looked at me like I was a madman. "What're ya tryna do, bud?" he said. "Kid me?"

"No--I was just interested, that's all."

He didn't say anything more, so I didn't either. Until we came out of the park at Ninetieth Street. Then he said, "All right, buddy. Where to?"

"Well, the thing is, I don't want to stay at any hotels on the East Side where I might run into some acquaintances of mine. I'm traveling incognito," I said. I hate saying corny things like "traveling incognito." But when I'm with somebody that's corny, I always act corny too. "Do you happen to know whose band's at the Taft or the New Yorker, by any chance?"

"No idear, Mac."

"Well--take me to the Edmont then," I said. "Would you care to stop on the way and join me for a cocktail? On me. I'm loaded."

"Can't do it, Mac. Sorry." He certainly was good company. Terrific personality.

We got to the Edmont Hotel, and I checked in. I'd put on my red hunting cap when I was in the cab, just for the hell of it, but I took it off before I checked in. I didn't want to look like a screwball or something. Which is really ironic. I didn't know then that the goddam hotel was full of perverts and morons. Screwballs all over the place.

They gave me this very crummy room, with nothing to look out of the window at except the other side of the hotel. I didn't care much. I was too depressed to care whether I had a good view or not. The bellboy that showed me to the room was this very old guy around sixty-five. He was even more depressing than the room was. He was one of those bald guys that comb all their hair over from the side to cover up the baldness. I'd rather be bald than do that. Anyway, what a gorgeous job for a guy around sixty-five years old. Carrying people's suitcases and waiting around for a tip. I suppose he wasn't too intelligent or anything, but it was terrible anyway.

After he left, I looked out the window for a while, with my coat on and all. I didn't have anything else to do. You'd be surprised what was going on on the other side of the hotel. They didn't even bother to pull their shades down. I saw one guy, a gray-haired, very distinguished-looking guy with only his shorts on, do something you wouldn't

believe me if I told you. First he put his suitcase on the bed. Then he took out all these women's clothes, and put them on. Real women's clothes--silk stockings, high-heeled shoes, brassiere, and one of those corsets with the straps hanging down and all. Then he put on this very tight black evening dress. I swear to God. Then he started walking up and down the room, taking these very small steps, the way a woman does, and smoking a cigarette and looking at himself in the mirror. He was all alone, too. Unless somebody was in the bathroom--I couldn't see that much. Then, in the window almost right over his, I saw a man and a woman squirting water out of their mouths at each other. It probably was highballs, not water, but I couldn't see what they had in their glasses. Anyway, first he'd take a swallow and squirt it all over her, then she did it to him--they took turns, for God's sake. You should've seen them. They were in hysterics the whole time, like it was the funniest thing that ever happened. I'm not kidding, the hotel was lousy with perverts. I was probably the only normal bastard in the whole place--and that isn't saying much. I damn near sent a telegram to old Stradlater telling him to take the first train to New York. He'd have been the king of the hotel.

The trouble was, that kind of junk is sort of fascinating to watch, even if you don't want it to be. For instance, that girl that was getting water squirted all over her face, she was pretty good-looking. I mean that's my big trouble. In my mind, I'm probably the biggest sex maniac you ever saw. Sometimes I can think of very crumby stuff I wouldn't mind doing if the opportunity came up. I can even see how it might be quite a lot of fun, in a crumby way, and if you were both sort of drunk and all, to get a girl and squirt water or something all over each other's face. The thing is, though, I don't like the idea. It stinks, if you analyze it. I think if you don't really like a girl, you shouldn't horse around with her at all, and if you do like her, then you're supposed to like her face, and if you like her face, you ought to be careful about doing crumby stuff to it, like squirting water all over it. It's really too bad that so much crumby stuff is a lot of fun sometimes. Girls aren't too much help, either, when you start trying not to get too crumby, when you start trying not to spoil anything really good. I knew this one girl, a couple of years ago, that was even crumbier than I was. Boy, was she crumby! We had a lot of fun, though, for a while, in a crumby way. Sex is something I really don't understand too hot. You never know where the hell you are. I keep making up these sex rules for myself, and then I break them right away. Last year I made a rule that I was going to quit horsing around with girls that, deep down, gave me a pain in the ass. I broke it, though, the same week I made it--the same night, as a matter of fact. I spent the whole night necking with a terrible phony named Anne Louise Sherman. Sex is something I just don't understand. I swear to God I don't.

I started toying with the idea, while I kept standing there, of giving old Jane a buzz--I mean calling her long distance at B.M., where she went, instead of calling up her mother to find out when she was coming home. You weren't supposed to call students up late at night, but I had it all figured out. I was going to tell whoever answered the phone that I was her uncle. I was going to say her aunt had just got killed in a car accident and I had to speak to her immediately. It would've worked, too. The only reason I didn't do it was because I wasn't in the mood. If you're not in the mood, you can't do that stuff right.

After a while I sat down in a chair and smoked a couple of cigarettes. I was feeling pretty horny. I have to admit it. Then, all of a sudden, I got this idea. I took out my wallet and started looking for this address a guy I met at a party last summer, that

went to Princeton, gave me. Finally I found it. It was all a funny color from my wallet, but you could still read it. It was the address of this girl that wasn't exactly a whore or anything but that didn't mind doing it once in a while, this Princeton guy told me. He brought her to a dance at Princeton once, and they nearly kicked him out for bringing her. She used to be a burlesque stripper or something. Anyway, I went over to the phone and gave her a buzz. Her name was Faith Cavendish, and she lived at the Stanford Arms Hotel on Sixty-fifth and Broadway. A dump, no doubt.

For a while, I didn't think she was home or something. Nobody kept answering. Then, finally, somebody picked up the phone.

"Hello?" I said. I made my voice quite deep so that she wouldn't suspect my age or anything. I have a pretty deep voice anyway.

"Hello," this woman's voice said. None too friendly, either.

"Is this Miss Faith Cavendish?"

"Who's this?" she said. "Who's calling me up at this crazy goddam hour?"

That sort of scared me a little bit. "Well, I know it's quite late," I said, in this very mature voice and all. "I hope you'll forgive me, but I was very anxious to get in touch with you." I said it suave as hell. I really did.

"Who is this?" she said.

"Well, you don't know me, but I'm a friend of Eddie Birdsell's. He suggested that if I were in town sometime, we ought to get together for a cocktail or two."

"Who? You're a friend of who?" Boy, she was a real tigress over the phone. She was damn near yelling at me.

"Edmund Birdsell. Eddie Birdsell," I said. I couldn't remember if his name was Edmund or Edward. I only met him once, at a goddam stupid party.

"I don't know anybody by that name, Jack. And if you think I enjoy bein' woke up in the middle--"

"Eddie Birdsell? From Princeton?" I said.

You could tell she was running the name over in her mind and all.

"Birdsell, Birdsell. . . from Princeton.. . Princeton College?"

"That's right," I said.

"You from Princeton College?"

"Well, approximately."

"Oh. . . How is Eddie?" she said. "This is certainly a peculiar time to call a person up, though. Jesus Christ."

"He's fine. He asked to be remembered to you."

"Well, thank you. Remember me to him," she said. "He's a grand person. What's he doing now?" She was getting friendly as hell, all of a sudden.

"Oh, you know. Same old stuff," I said. How the hell did I know what he was doing? I hardly knew the guy. I didn't even know if he was still at Princeton. "Look," I said. "Would you be interested in meeting me for a cocktail somewhere?"

"By any chance do you have any idea what time it is?" she said. "What's your name, anyhow, may I ask?" She was getting an English accent, all of a sudden. "You sound a little on the young side."

I laughed. "Thank you for the compliment," I said-- suave as hell. "Holden Caulfield's my name." I should've given her a phony name, but I didn't think of it.

"Well, look, Mr. Cawffle. I'm not in the habit of making engagements in the middle of the night. I'm a working gal."

"Tomorrow's Sunday," I told her.

"Well, anyway. I gotta get my beauty sleep. You know how it is."

"I thought we might have just one cocktail together. It isn't too late."

"Well. You're very sweet," she said. "Where ya callin' from? Where ya at now, anyways?"

"Me? I'm in a phone booth."

"Oh," she said. Then there was this very long pause. "Well, I'd like awfully to get together with you sometime, Mr. Cawffle. You sound very attractive. You sound like a very attractive person. But it is late."

"I could come up to your place."

"Well, ordinary, I'd say grand. I mean I'd love to have you drop up for a cocktail, but my roommate happens to be ill. She's been laying here all night without a wink of sleep. She just this minute closed her eyes and all. I mean."

"Oh. That's too bad."

"Where ya stopping at? Perhaps we could get together for cocktails tomorrow."

"I can't make it tomorrow," I said. "Tonight's the only time I can make it." What a dope I was. I shouldn't've said that.

"Oh. Well, I'm awfully sorry."

"I'll say hello to Eddie for you."

"Willya do that? I hope you enjoy your stay in New York. It's a grand place."

"I know it is. Thanks. Good night," I said. Then I hung up.

Boy, I really fouled that up. I should've at least made it for cocktails or something.

10

It was still pretty early. I'm not sure what time it was, but it wasn't too late. The one thing I hate to do is go to bed when I'm not even tired. So I opened my suitcases and took out a clean shirt, and then I went in the bathroom and washed and changed my shirt. What I thought I'd do, I thought I'd go downstairs and see what the hell was going on in the Lavender Room. They had this night club, the Lavender Room, in the hotel.

While I was changing my shirt, I damn near gave my kid sister Phoebe a buzz, though. I certainly felt like talking to her on the phone. Somebody with sense and all. But I couldn't take a chance on giving her a buzz, because she was only a little kid and she wouldn't have been up, let alone anywhere near the phone. I thought of maybe hanging up if my parents answered, but that wouldn't've worked, either. They'd know it was me. My mother always knows it's me. She's psychic. But I certainly wouldn't have minded shooting the crap with old Phoebe for a while.

You should see her. You never saw a little kid so pretty and smart in your whole life. She's really smart. I mean she's had all A's ever since she started school. As a matter of fact, I'm the only dumb one in the family. My brother D.B.'s a writer and all, and my brother Allie, the one that died, that I told you about, was a wizard. I'm the only really dumb one. But you ought to see old Phoebe. She has this sort of red hair, a little bit like Allie's was, that's very short in the summertime. In the summertime, she sticks it behind