

APPENDICES

SYNOPSIS OF THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

Holden Caulfield is the narrator of The Catcher in the Rye. Currently in psychiatric care, this teenager recalls what happened to him last Christmas, the story which forms the narrative basis for the novel. Holden, a student at Pencey Prep School, is irresponsible and immature. He is expelled for failing four out of his five classes.

When Holden reaches New York, he does not know whom he should call. He considers calling his younger sister, Phoebe, as well as Jane Gallagher and another friend, Sally Hayes. However, he finally decides to stay at the Edmond Hotel. Being able to watch other guests at the hotel from his window, including a transvestite and a couple who spit drinks back at each other, Holden thinks about sex. He calls Faith Cavendish, a stripper and prostitute, but she rejects him. He then goes down to the Lavender Room, a nightclub in the Hotel, where he dances with Bernice Krebs, a blonde woman from Seattle who is on vacation in New York. Holden thinks that the tourists seem pathetic because of their excitement over the various sights of the city.

When he walks back to the hotel, Maurice, the elevator man, offers him a prostitute for the night. When this prostitute arrives, Holden becomes too nervous and refuses her. She demands ten dollars, but Holden only gives her five. Sunny (the prostitute) leaves and soon returns with Maurice to demand the extra five dollars. Holden argues with them, but Maurice threatens him while Sunny steals his money. Maurice punches him in the stomach before he goes. Holden then imagines shooting Maurice in the stomach and even jumping out of the window to commit suicide.

Holden calls Sally Hayes to meet her for dinner near the Grand Central Station. Before meeting Sally, Holden buys a record for Phoebe and feels depressed when he hears children singing the song "If a body catch a body coming through the rye." When Holden sees Sally, he immediately wants to marry her, even though he does not particularly like Sally. During dinner, Holden complains that he is fed up with everything around him and suggests that they run away together to New England, where they can live in a cabin in the woods. She rejects the idea.

Holden returns home to see Phoebe, attempting to avoid his parents. He awakens her, but she soon becomes distressed at Holden's failing out of Pencey. When he complains about the phoniness of Pencey, Phoebe asks him if he actually likes anything. He tells Phoebe that he would like to be "a catcher in the rye," Holden becomes increasingly distraught and delusional, believing that he will die every time he crosses the street and falling unconscious after suffering from diarrhea. Holden ends his story here.

BIOGRAPHY OF J.D. SALINGER

J.D. Salinger was born in New York City on January 1, 1919. After brief periods of enrollment at both NYU and Columbia University, Salinger devoted himself entirely to writing, and by 1940 he had published several short stories. His career as a writer was interrupted by World War II as he was doing service in the U.S. Army. In 1946, after returning from the war, Salinger resumed writing for The New Yorker magazine. Some of his most notable stories include A Perfect Day for Bananafish (1948), and For Esmé With Love and Squalor (1950). In total, Salinger published thirty-five short stories in the Saturday Evening Post, Story, and Colliers between 1940 and 1948, and The New Yorker from 1948 until 1965.

Salinger received major critical and popular recognition with The Catcher in the Rye (1951). Salinger's novel finds great sympathy for its wayward child protagonist who views the adult world as 'phony'. Salinger's only novel drew from characters he had already created in two short stories published in 1945 and 1946: This Sandwich Has No Mayonnaise and I'm Crazy.

Since 1953, Salinger has resided in Cornish, New Hampshire, and claims that he continues to write. Salinger is notoriously vague because of his reclusive nature, which has made him the subject of a great deal of speculation. Salinger refuses to give interviews or to deal with the press.

SYNOPSIS OF THE BELL JAR

The Bell Jar takes place during the early fifties and begins in New York City. The narrator, Esther Greenwood, is an intern at a fashion magazine after winning a scholarship. She soon befriends Doreen, a fellow scholarship winner. Doreen takes Esther out for drinks, where they meet several men, including Lenny Shepherd, a disc jockey. Esther and Doreen go back to Lenny's apartment, where Doreen and Lenny become more intimate and even somewhat violent with each other. Esther leaves the apartment to return to her hotel, where she only wishes to forget the experience that night.

Mrs. Willard, the mother of Buddy Willard, a Yale student whom Esther has been seeing, arranges for Esther to meet with Constantin, an interpreter at the United Nations. While watching Constantin at work, Esther panics about her future, thinking that she knows nothing except how to win scholarships. She decides that she will let Constantin seduce her, but back at his apartment Esther and Constantin merely fall asleep beside each another.

Esther returns home to the suburbs of Boston, where her mother tells her that she is not accepted for the writing course she has applied. Esther finds herself unable to sleep and goes to see her family doctor to get sleeping pills, but her doctor tells her to see a psychiatrist, Dr. Gordon, instead. Dr. Gordon advises shock treatments for Esther, who begins to think more and more often about suicide. One day, Esther attempts suicide by taking a bottle of sleeping pills. Esther is submitted to a mental institution. At this facility, Esther is treated by Dr. Nolan, a female psychiatrist who reminds Esther of her mother.

Esther leaves the asylum just before the new school semester commences. However, she's become a changed person.

BIOGRAPHY OF SYLVIA PLATH

Sylvia Plath was born in Massachusetts on October 27, 1932. Sylvia's father, Otto, was a College Professor and self-described bee expert. He died just days after her 8th birthday. Sylvia was a model child; sensitive, popular with other children, intelligent and well behaved. She published her first poem before she reached the age of nine.

Sylvia was accepted into Smith College on scholarship in 1950. In 1952, she won first prize (\$500) from *Mademoiselle* Magazine for her short story entitled, Sunday at the Mintons. The following June, Sylvia served as guest editor at *Mademoiselle's* New York offices. She recounted this part of her life in her later novel, The Bell Jar.

On August 24, 1952, Sylvia attempted suicide for the first time. She was institutionalized at Maclean Hospital. She continued to write during this time, which later resulted in the publication of her second award-winning short story, Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams.

Sylvia graduated summa cum laude in 1955, and won the Fulbright scholarship to study in Cambridge, England. It was here that Sylvia met her future

husband, Ted Hughes, an English poet. Sylvia married Ted in June of 1956 at the age of twenty-eight. Ted and Sylvia got a divorce in September 1962.

Sylvia packed her bags and moved with her two children to an apartment in London. The difficulty in her life allowed Sylvia to write vigorously. The Bell Jar was published under the pseudonym of Victoria Lucas in January, 1963, though it would never receive critical praise until after Sylvia's death. Depressed over the breakup of her marriage and lack of success, Sylvia felt she could no longer go on. Sylvia Plath died on February 11, 1963 by putting her head in a gas oven.

The Bell Jar was later published in the United States in 1971 using Sylvia's real name. It became wildly popular and earned her a place in literary history. Sylvia Plath was honored posthumously with a Pulitzer Prize in 1981.