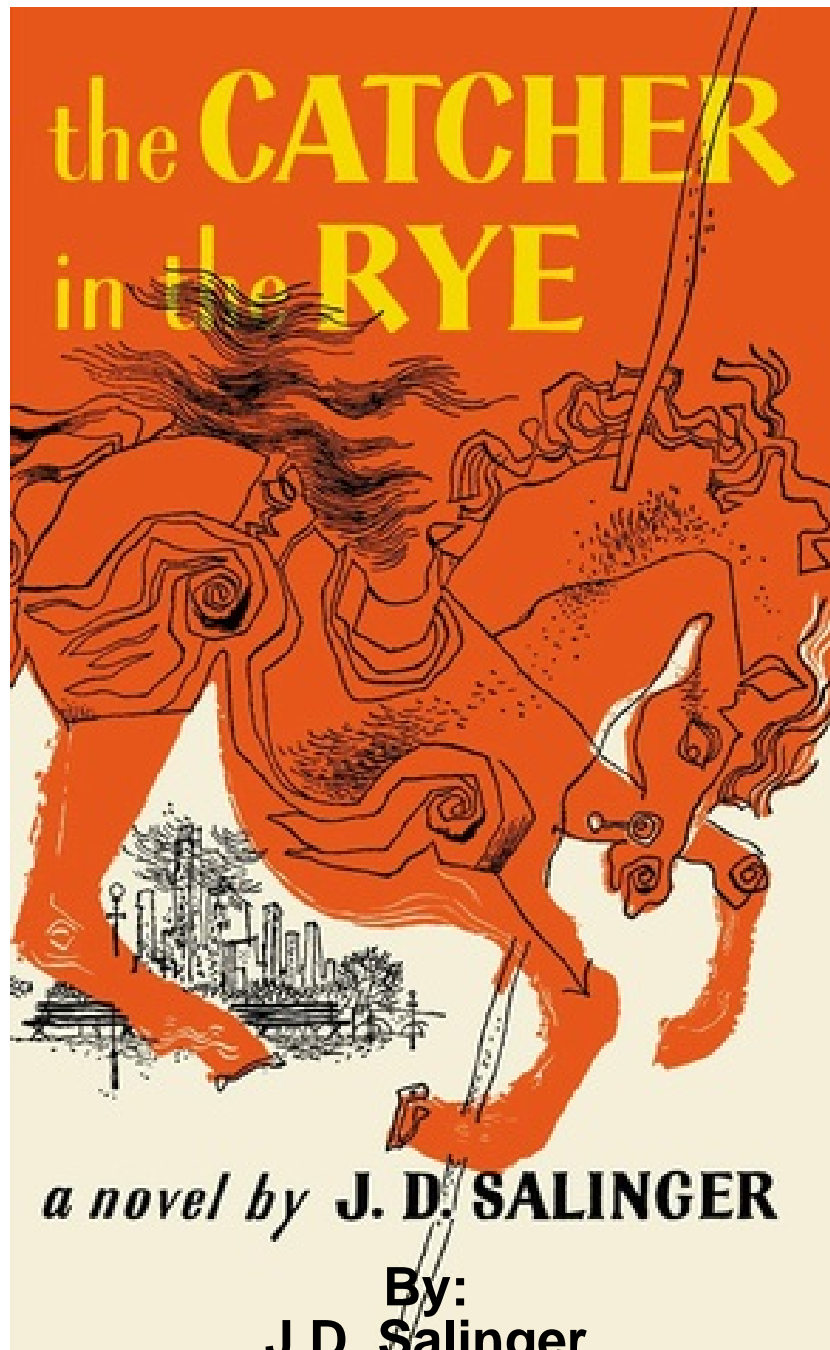


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What people Say:

mark monday

today i am 15 years old. everything is all bullshit, as usual. i can't believe how fucked everything is around me. like i'm surrounded by zombies. i can't talk to any of my so-called friends, i can't talk to jamie, i can't talk to my parents. who would bother listening anyway. i cannot wait to leave orange county! this place makes me fucking sick. everyone is a hypocrite. everything is so goddamn bright and shiny and sunny and meaningless. FUCK, life is so full of crap.

there is one

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there is one good thing in my life though. just read this book Catcher in the Rye. blown away! i don't know how a book written decades ago could say exactly what i would say. it is like the author was reading my thoughts and put it all down in this book. things i didn't even realize i felt were right there on the page! I LOVED IT. i think this is my favorite novel of all time. which is not saying a whole lot because there is a ton of pretentious bullshit out there and i bet mrs. durham will force us to read it all. man i hate that bitch.

today i am 20 years old. life is great as usual. just enjoyed my wednesday morning wake-and-bake session with j-p, the sun is shining, the san diego weather is beautiful, and tonight i'm off to rob & gregg's to destroy them at bullshit. love that game! gregg says that joelle will be there (yes!) but she'll probably bring that prick pete with her. one of these days i'm going to lose it and kick his ass. "i'm in a band"...fuck you, pete! i will never spin your records.

all i have on the agenda today is to go to the gym and then off to keracik's american lit class. it is not a bad class, although it is nowhere close to gender studies with halberstam. or davidoff's survey of modern postmodernism last semester. now that was a class! it blew my mind. so many things to think about. the reading in american lit has been okay. but we've been assigned to read Catcher in the Rye and

. can't believe i ever liked this book. caulfield is a whiny little bitch. the book has no depth. there is literally nothing going on with the narrative, style, theme, characterization, it is just one rote cliché after another. he thinks he is such a rebel-without-a-cause but in reality he is just another tired representation of rootless, stereotypical masculinity and gender essentialism. completely inane and without meaning. i think my essay will use some acker-style postmodernist techniques to show how

simplistic this trite "classic" truly is. i'm going to deconstruct the shit out of this novel, baby!

today i am 25 years old. another gray, drizzly san francisco morning. i wish christopher would wake up, i really need to talk to him after all that shit last night. notes on my pillow, really?? time to grow up dude, i will never "complete you". well actually i'm glad he's still asleep, my throat is too sore to get into it right now with him. plus Food Not Bombs is happening this morning and i have to get the kitchen ready. john is probably hard at work already, typical over-achieving behavior. i bet the wisconsin kids are still crashing on our living room floor. it's time for them to leave! they've seen The Vindictives at every single Epicenter or Gilman show now and it is time for them to hit the road. or learn to take a shower. this apartment is not the world's crashpad!

i woke up early this morning and thumbed through A Catcher in the Rye. i remember hating this book in college for some reason. probably wasn't po-mo enough for me. or "challenging". feh. what a pretentious idiot i was. this is a beautiful book. it changed my life as a kid, i'm not sure how i would have survived orange county without it. just re-reading parts of it brought back all that old angst about all the fucked-up shit in the world that kids have to deal with. i'm not sure there is another book as insightful or as meaningful. or funny! that part with the clipping-of-the-toenails is hilarious. ackley is such a douche. this book is the foundation of every zine that i have ever loved. a perfect novel. it is so...."human", i guess.

today i am 30 years old. man my head hurts...so hungover! my birthday party last night was awesome. even got to spend some time on the turntables (thanks kraddy for actually relinquishing a tiny bit of control for once). i must have made out with a half-dozen people. sadly, no real action. i think last night's party will be the last big party i will ever throw. things have got to change. no more partying like the world is about to end, i still have my entire life ahead of me! tomorrow i am going to go into AIG and hand in my notice. i am not an entertainment insurance underwriter,

Matt

I was worried as hell about reading this book again. The last time I read it was about a thousand years ago when I was just a kid. I was lousy with angst just like good old Holden back then. I really was. Now that I'm a crummy old guy I figured that I wouldn't like it anymore. That's the one thing about crummy old guys, they always hate books that kids like. Every time I reread a corny book that I really liked when I was a kid it makes me want to give the writer a buzz and ask what the hell is g

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was. Now that I'm a crummy old guy I figured that I wouldn't like it anymore. That's the one thing about crummy old guys, they always hate books that kids like. Every time I reread a corny book that I really liked when I was a kid it makes me want to give the writer a buzz and ask what the hell is going on. It's like they are trying to give you the time in the back of a cab when you don't feel like getting the time at all. It's damn depressing, I swear to God it is. If you want to know the truth, you probably couldn't even talk to a phony writer on the phone. You would just end up talking to his butler or some snobbish person like that and asking if they would give the writer your message. He probably wouldn't even do it. The thing with guys like that is that they will never give writers your messages. That's something that annoys the hell out of me.

Turns out this is still a damn good book. Salinger kid is a great writer. He really is. Maybe I'm still just an angst-ridden sonuvabitch, but this part kills me:

œAll the kids kept trying to grab for the gold ring, and so was old Phoebe, and I was sort of afraid she'd fall off the goddam horse, but I didn't say anything or do anything. The thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring, you have to let them do it, and not say anything. If they fall off, they fall off, but it's bad if you say anything to them.œp.211

I bet everyone is going to think that I'm just horsin' around or trying to be all sexy talking like this. The reason for this corny review is because a thousand other people have already written reviews for this book and I bet that they have already said everything that I want to say. It's pretty depressing. It really is. That's about all that I'm going to talk about. Now I just hope that no one writes œfuck youœ on this review. That's the thing with some people, they are always sneaking up and writing œfuck youœ on your book reviews when you are not looking. They really are.

Shana

I read this book for the first time in the 8th grade. I had to get my mom to sign a permission slip because of the cursing. Before I began reading, I had so many expectations. Back then, I read

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. I think there might have been some celebrity comments in there, too. At any rate, it was a ringing endorsement.

So you can imagine my disappointment when I hated it. Not only did I hate Holden, but I hated everything about the novel. There was nothing I enjoyed. I did my book report where I confessed my hatred (which led my teacher to confess that she did, too), but I couldn't let it go. I honestly felt that my loathing of a novel that so many others found "life-changing" indicated some deep and horrible flaw. I felt like hating

was my dirty little secret.

Richard

My theory as to this book's unusually polarizing nature: either you identify with Holden Caulfield or you don't.

Those who see themselves (either as they were or, God help them, as they are) in Holden see a misunderstood warrior-poet, fighting the good fight against a hypocritical and unfeeling world; they see in Salinger a genius because he

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it, and he gets

Those of us who don't relate to Holden see in him a self-absorbed whiner, and in Salinger, a one-trick-pony who lucked into performing his trick at a time when some large fraction of America happened to be in the right collective frame of mind to perceive this boring twaddle as subversive and meaningful.

Kathy

I read the end of *The Catcher in the Rye* the other day and found myself wanting to take Holden Caulfield by the collar and shake him really, really hard and shout at him to grow up. I suppose I've understood for some time now that *The Catcher in the Rye* -- a favorite of mine when I was sixteen -- was a favorite precisely because I was sixteen. At sixteen, I found Holden Caulfield's crisis profoundly moving; I admired his searing indictment of society, his acute understanding of human nature, his

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self-consciousness, Holden Caulfield is not really self-aware. He can't see that he himself is a phony.

Compare Salinger's novel of arrested development, for instance, with a real bildungsroman, *Great Expectations*. Holden Caulfield is an adolescent reflecting on childhood and adolescence; Pip Pirrip is an adult reflecting on childhood and adolescence. Holden Caulfield has the tunnel vision of teendom, and he depicts events with an immediacy and absorption in the experience that blocks out the broader context, the larger view. Pip Pirrip has the wonderful double vision of a sensitive adult recollecting the sensitive child he used to be; he conveys at the same time the child's compelling perspective and the adult's thoughtful revision of events. While Holden Caulfield litters his narrative with indignant exposes of phonies and frauds, Pip Pirrip skillfully concentrates on "the spurious coin of his own make" -- that is, without letting the child Pip and the adolescent Pip in on the joke, he exposes himself as a phony. Pip Pirrip grows up. Holden Caulfield has a nervous breakdown.

I suppose the only reason I begrudge him his breakdown is that so many in our culture -- many more, unfortunately, than just the legitimate adolescents among us -- seem fixated on Holden as a symbol of honesty and socially-liberating rebellion. We view nervous collapse and dysfunction as a badge of honor, a sign -- to put it in Caulfieldian terms -- that we are discerning enough to see through all the crap. Our celebration of overwrought disaffection reminds me of the last sentence of Joyce's *Araby*: "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger." Here is the adolescent pose non-pareil. Equally self-accusing and self-aggrandizing, it captures the adolescent at the precise moment when his own disillusionment becomes the object of his grandiose and self-dramatizing vision. That's the kind of crap that Holden Caulfield (and J. D. Salinger) cannot see through. And it is often the kind of crap that we "adults" like to slosh around in.

The Barney beating of several years ago is another symptom of our arrested adolescence, our inability to ride the wave of disillusion into the relatively calm harbor of adulthood -- as though flailing around in the storm and raging at the wind were in themselves marks of distinction and a superior sensibility. I remember a news story about a woman in a Barney costume being seriously injured when a rabid (and probably drunken) anti-Barney fanatic attacked the big purple dinosaur at some public event. Now, I don't know the age of the Barney-beater, but the act itself is a supremely adolescent one, in which the impulsive response to disillusionment is to lash out at those symbols of childhood which made the biggest dupes of us. At the dawn of adolescence, when Barney begins to appear cloying and false, it seems natural to want to beat up on him, as though it was Barney himself who pulled one over on us instead of our own poignant and necessary misapprehension of the nature of things. I could see Holden Caulfield beating up on Barney (at least rhetorically), and I could see Holden Caulfield missing Barney (as he misses all the "phonies" at the end of the book), but I cannot see Holden Caulfield accepting the postlapsarian Barney on new terms, as a figure who is meant for children and not for him. For all his touching poses about wanting to be the "catcher in the rye," what Holden really wants is not to save children but to be a child again.