

## Holden

I know I told you a story a while ago. I think that was the story of why I was psychoanalyzed. I told everybody I was fine. I really did. I told them I was just taking some time for myself. I told them I wanted a few days before I went home and all. They didn't believe me. These people never believe you. It's been fifteen years since that crazy weekend and a lot has happened. Now I'm sitting here in this house with a pregnant wife and I think I may have become my father. I don't really want to get into most of it. You wouldn't like it. Bunch of just boring stuff, anyway. People do this, people do that, and it really just doesn't matter most the time. Everybody's got to always be doing something. I meet this guy, the other night at the diner, kind of struck up a conversation with him and the first thing he asked me is what I did. That kind of stuff doesn't interest me. I told him I was hot air balloon pilot, just goofing off. Let's get to it.

I remember it like it was yesterday. Jane Gallagher Caulfield was over nine months pregnant and about to burst any minute. I guess I forgot to mention that me and old Jane Gallagher were married. I decided to ask her to marry me during our last year at college in New York. I did it all suave on the top of the empire state building. Man was I nervous. I was pretty sure she was going to say yes but you never really know if those kinds of situations. But I asked her to marry me and she said yes and then we got married right after we graduated. I didn't really think we needed a big wedding, but I gave into old Jane and we did it up big. I tell you half of New York must have been there. All these people I didn't know. All these people coming up to you, shaking your hand, congratulating you, bunch of phonies. But Jane was over nine months pregnant and I was about to be a father. Something kind of came over me when I was sitting on the couch and I decided I need to get some air. I grabbed my jacket and put on my watch and headed out for some fresh air. Jane yelled something at me as I was shutting the door, but I didn't it pay it attention.

It was mid-April in New York. That time of year when its really nice and sunny during the day but it cools off in the evening, that little chill to remind you that winters not quite over yet. The air was crisp and there was a slight fog about the streets. I looked down at my watch and it said four pm. This watch was a gift from my father on graduation day. I was nice and all, gold, with one of those rotating bezels on the outside. The problem was, it always kept bad time. Every time I look down at this watch its always a few hours off. I change the time back but within a few days its back to being wrong. So, I changed the time back to nine pm and continued on my little journey.

Fixing that watch got me thinking about my father, the one who gave it to me. He was a good dad, made lots of dough, took care of me and all, but it got me thinking about what type of father I was going to be. I strolled past my pub and couldn't help but go in have a drink. I was all alone in this place. I knew the bar tender Sam, and there was usually a handful of the regulars in there. Not tonight, just old Sam, and the taps and bottles. Strangest thing, I'd been in here a hundred times and yet it all seemed so foreign. I sat at the bar and ordered a scotch and soda started shooting the bull with the bar tender.

"Nice evening," Sam said as he was pouring the soda into the scotch. He knew how I liked it, just scotch and soda no need to mix it. I've been drinking it like that for years, don't really know why to tell you the truth, just seems right.

"It is, nice and cool, just the right amount of nip in the air, you know," I replied, taking the drink from across and the bar and having a nice long pull.

"You ok Holden? You seem off tonight," he said, taking a pint glass of the counter and cleaning it with his rag.

You ever notice bar tenders do that, how they clean a glass that's probably already clean. I think they do it just to make themselves *look* busy even though most of the time they are just shooting the bull. He was right though, I did have a lot on my mind. I didn't want to get into with him though. Was I going to be able to go through with this? Having a kid and all. I keep thinking about all the things that I've been through and having a kid is going to be the toughest. Was I going to send them away to a boarding school when they got too much for me? Like I said my dad was a good dad, but I don't want to make the same mistakes he did. Or were they really mistakes? Did he do it right?

"No, I'm ok," I answered, "just a lot on mind."

I think he took the hint and kind of left me alone. Left me alone to sit and think. Every now again he would come back by and top off my glass. But, mostly just left me alone. I must have had five or six drinks and started to feel pretty drunk. I looked down and saw it was only ten, so I decided to have another drink.

"Last call," Sam announced as I ordered a drink.

Last call?? I looked down at my watch and it said ten, I noticed the clock behind the bar said one a.m. One a.m.?!? This damn watch! Always keeping bad time. I swear I need to do something about that. So I paid my tab and started to head home. I can't believe I lost track of the time in that place.

I half way stumbled through the door and you wouldn't believe what I came home to. Jane was yelling and screaming and told me this was it. This baby is coming now. I don't think I've ever sobered up so fast. Weird how things can come into focus as you are having a moment of sheer panic. But I came pretty quick and I get her into the car and we head off to the hospital. You wouldn't believe how fast I drove us to the hospital. I got her to that hospital just in time too. Doctors took her in and told me to sit in the waiting room. I didn't want to wait in the stork club though. I wanted to know what was going on back there. I marched back there inserted myself into the process. I tell you what, you wouldn't believe me if I told you, that was a truly remarkable experience. I won't go into *all* of the details, but the first time I saw my little boy, I think I figured it all out. I saw him lying in the nursery all swaddled up in the hospital birthing blanket and a wave of images crashed through my conscience. I see him taking his first steps, sitting in my lap as I read him his first book, saying his first words, riding a bike without training wheels, playing ball in the park, going to musical performances, watching him grow into a young man, leading him through the perils of child adolescent and then adulthood.

Jane and I walked out of the hospital a few days later, I noticed the flowers had started to bloom, and sky was a brilliant blue with only a few white puffy clouds to obscure the sun's warm glow. The song birds were chirping a pleasant symphony as we made our way home with our new baby boy, Allie. Jane asked me what time the rest of the family was going to stop by the house, and I looked down and saw my watch said three a.m. I made a decision right then and there. I took off that watch and chucked it in the garbage. That thing wasn't going to give me the wrong time ever again.

Coming of age and teenage angst are the main themes of *The Catcher in the Rye*. The story is told from the perspective of a teenage boy coming to terms that he can't be a child anymore and eventually must grow up. In my segment of fan fiction, I attempted to capture another moment in a person's life that forces them to grow up and have another coming of age. The birth of a child requires one to put themselves second, and to ensure the safety and well being of a fragile life.

I chose Jane Gallagher to be Holden's future wife because I think he truly loved her in the novel. Holden went on a date and used to "go around" with Sally Hayes. I think, Sally Hayes is who Holden thought that society perceives as the perfect girl. She is attractive and fun to be around, but Holden doesn't have a real connection with her and ends up call her a "phony." Jane Gallagher on the other hand, isn't overly attractive, but Holden clearly has feelings for her. He tries to defend her honor with Stradlater and remembers seemingly minor details about how she plays checkers. I used Allie in the story as well because of Holden's love and admiration of his deceased little brother. I thought it suiting Holden would name his first son after his brother Allie.

A prominent literary aspect Salinger's use of internal dialogue. This plain talk narrative gives readers the illusion that a teenager is sitting across them at a table and just telling a story. I strived to recreate that style for my fan fiction. The rambling inner thoughts of a person can be challenging to make sense.

American literature and themes are perhaps the most diverse in all the literary canon. Americans are comprised of all races and genders which gives it the unique perspective of having a worldly view within a single nationalistic literary canon. *The Cather in the Rye* is a classic American novel written by J.D. Salinger and follows the rambling story of Holden Caulfield. The themes of coming of age and self-discovery and the prominent use of plain talk dialogue, symbolism and metaphors cement *The Cather in the Rye* in the American literary canon.