

Name _____



Chasing Meaning

Holden Caulfield didn't care about money, grades, or fancy things. While many people around him seemed obsessed with success and wealth, Holden felt different. He thought the world was full of "phonies"—people who cared more about status than about being real.

Holden had been kicked out of yet another private school, and instead of going home right away, he wandered around New York City. He met old friends, teachers, and strangers, but no one made him feel understood. He saw rich men in expensive suits and people bragging about money, and it all made him feel worse. He couldn't understand why so many people cared about material things when there were more important things in life—like kindness, honesty, and real connections.

At one point, Holden met an old teacher, Mr. Antolini, who tried to give him advice. He told Holden that the world would never be perfect, but that didn't mean he should give up on it. Holden wanted to believe that, but it was hard. Everywhere he looked, people seemed more focused on impressing others than on being good people.

Even his older brother, D.B., disappointed him. D.B. used to write stories Holden loved, but now he worked in Hollywood, writing movies. To Holden, that meant he had "sold out"—he had chosen money over passion. This only made Holden dislike the idea of success even more.

Holden's little sister, Phoebe, was one of the few people who gave him hope. She didn't care about money or status. She was just herself—honest, smart, and kind. When Holden told her he wanted to run away and live alone, she reminded him that not everything in the world was bad. Her words made him think: maybe there was a way to live in a world full of phonies without becoming one.

Holden's journey wasn't just about running from school or responsibility. It was about searching for meaning in a world that seemed to care about all the wrong things. By the end, Holden started to realize that maybe he didn't need to run away. Maybe, instead of avoiding the world, he could find a way to exist in it—without losing himself.