

Name _____



Saving Innocence

Holden Caulfield had a dream. It wasn't about becoming rich or famous. It wasn't about getting good grades or impressing people. His dream was something different—something that showed how much he cared about children and their innocence.

One day, Holden told his little sister, Phoebe, about a picture he had in his mind. He imagined a big field of rye, golden and endless, with children

running and playing freely. They laughed and chased each other, having the time of their lives. But at the edge of the field, there was a steep cliff. If a child ran too far, they could fall off.

Holden said he wanted to be "the catcher in the rye." His job would be to stand near the edge and catch any child who got too close. He wanted to protect them from falling—falling into what, he wasn't exactly sure. Maybe he was afraid of them growing up, changing, or losing their innocence.

Holden thought the world was full of phoniness. He saw adults lie, pretend, and act selfishly. He saw how growing up often meant losing honesty and kindness. He wanted to stop children from stepping into that world too soon. If he could, he would keep them safe in the field of rye forever.

But life didn't work that way. No matter how much Holden wanted to protect innocence, he couldn't stop time. People grew up. Even Phoebe, as smart and honest as she was, would one day become an adult. Holden had to face the fact that he couldn't be the catcher in the rye, no matter how badly he wanted to be.

Still, the idea of protecting innocence stayed in his heart. He realized that instead of stopping people from growing up, maybe he could learn to appreciate the good moments while they lasted. Maybe he could still hold onto kindness and honesty, even as he got older.

And maybe, just maybe, he could find his own way to make the world a little less phony.