***The Catcher in the Rye***

***Chapter 3***

* **Holden is very sarcastic and prone to hyperbole and dishonesty *(“I’m the most terrific liar...”... “...he made a speech that lasted ten hours...”... “I’ve asked you fifty times...”).* These qualities help define his character.**
* **Ossenburger Hall: Holden’s dorm, named after a wealthy former student who returned to give a speech that Holden considered outrageously phony. The man operated a *chain* of funeral parlours (Holden probably thought that the blatant commercialization of something so intimate was incredibly crass). When Ossenburger discussed his strong relationship with God, it “killed” Holden, who thought the man was a hypocrite.**
* **Ackley: Holden’s describes him as a rather disgusting and unpleasant character *(poor dental hygiene, blemishes, aggravating demeanour, lack of respect for the property of others and their personal space...)***
* **Holden fixates on a person’s shortcomings (or what he perceives as shortcomings) when they annoy him in some way. Though there isn’t a doubt that Ackley is an outcast, remember that Holden’s point of view is highly subjective.**
* **They are the only two left in the dorm; everyone else is at the game.**
* **Red Hunting Hat: an important symbol of Holden’s personality. It reassures him. Even though it may be out of place in an urban or school setting, Holden liked how it looked, and wore it when he wanted to feel at ease with himself.**
* **He often wore it backward (when doing so wasn’t fashionable).**
* **Ackley dislikes Stradlater (Holden’s room mate). Holden claims this was because Stradlater advised Ackley on matters of hygiene and Ackley was offended. *Note Holden’s remark on page*  24: “I felt sort of sorry for him.” Holden again reveals sensitive side.**

***Chapter 4***

* **Holden admitted Stradlater was handsome, but called him a “secret slob” *This is a commentary on superficiality – Stradlater always looked great on the surface, and “spent about half his... life in front of the mirror” (33),* but he lacked substance.**
* **Holden finds it unusual that, in his experience, self-centred people assume everyone else is “...crazy about them too” (28). He asks Holden to write him an essay.**
* **Stradlater reminds Holden to make sure the essay isn’t *“...too good”*, because that may arouse suspicion. His suggestion: “...don’t stick all the commas and stuff in the right place” (28). This insults Holden, and further characterizes Stradlater as superficial. To him, good writing isn’t much more than grammar and punctuation.**
* **He reveals his date – Jane Gallagher, a girl admired by Holden.**
* **Referring to Stradlater as “a sexy bastard” was Holden’s way of offering further commentary on his room mate’s self-centredness and superficiality. Holden knew details of Jane’s life, but what sparked Stradlater’s interest was the mention of how her step-father would go around naked and drunk in her presence. Holden used the description again on page 34, while thinking of their date.**
* **Note that Holden knows many details of Jane’s life, and not simply hobbies and tendencies. He knew some intimate details of her life, which demonstrates that his interest in her was not merely superficial (30-34).**
* **Stradlater wears Holden’s jacket and uses Holden’s hair tonic to go on a date with a girl for whom Holden seems to have feelings.**
* **Note examples of Holden’s impulsivity in this chapter.**

***Chapter 5***

* **More cynicism: Saturday night steaks. Holden believes the Headmaster has this served purposely for the sake of appearances (35).**
* **Holden’s sensitivity: he asks his friend Mal if Ackley can come to the movies with them. *Remember, he has already gone into detail about Ackley’s unpleasant attributes.***
* **Back in his room, Holden puts on his hunting hat and begins to write the essay for Stradlater.** ***Note that Holden had been outside on a snowy evening without the hat that he professed to like so much.***
* **Holden ends up writing about his younger brother Allie’s old baseball glove (38-39). Allie had died of leukemia a few years ago at the age of ten. Holden described him as “terrifically intelligent...never got mad...used to laugh so hard.” It is obvious that Holden was distraught when this happened *(“...they were going to have me psychoanalyzed...because I broke all the windows in the garage...I broke all the goddam windows with my fist...”* He also tried to punch out the windows of the family car.It is obvious that Holden hasn’t fully comes to terms with all this, and it has been impacting his behaviour.**
* **The glove was covered in poetry that Allie would read if he got bored in the outfield. The mitt is a symbol of Allie’s uniqueness, individuality and authenticity. Holden *idealized* his dead brother.**

***Chapter 6***

* **Tension builds between Holden and Stradlater.**
* **Stradlater criticizes the essay Holden had written for him. As it was about Allie, Holden took it quite personally.**
* **At this point, Holden is quite upset, having recently revisited a painful, as yet unresolved chapter in his life. He smokes to annoy his room mate, and his references to Stradlater turn ugly (42).**
* **Having endured sly remarks about his impending departure, and contemplating what Stradlater may have been up to with Jane *(“Give her the time” is a sexual reference),* Holden finally snaps.**
* **His attack really didn’t do much damage, but his intentions were frightening: *“I tried to sock him...right smack in the toothbrush, so it would split his goddam throat open” (43).***
* **Holden hurled abuse as Stradlater kept him pinned. His feelings for Jane are laid bare: *“I told him he didn’t even care if a girl kept all her kings in the back row or not” (44).* He also resented how Stradlater didn’t know her name.**
* **Eventually, after enduring a string of insults, Stradlater finally punches Holden in the face.**
* **Bloodied and alone, he puts on his hunting hat and ventures out to Ackley’s room.**

***Chapter 7***

* ***“I felt so damn lonesome” (48).* Holden is desperate for companionship. Loneliness and isolation have a major impact on his life, and these concepts often drive his behaviour. The irony is that his attempts to deal with loneliness and isolation often lead to further loneliness and isolation!**
* **He attempts to engage the sleepy Ackley in conversation, and wants to sleep in the room.**
* ***“What’s the routine on joining a monastery” (50).* Holden attempts to legitimize his loneliness.**
* **He is still upset at the thought of Stradlater making advancements on Jane.**
* **His plan is to leave school and spend a few days in a cheap hotel in New York. This would, in theory, allow his parents time to calm down, since they would probably get the news of his expulsion by Monday or Tuesday.**
* ***“...every time somebody gives me a present, it ends up making me sad” (52).* Why??**
* **He gathered his money and his belongings and left. *Note how the departure saddened him: “I was sort of crying. I don’t know why” (52). He was also depressed about packing.***
* **“Sleep tight, ya morons” (52).** **Why did he leave like this?**