



death was a big cause of trauma and change in Holden's life and change is not something that Holden Caulfield likes. In the museum scene, Holden talks about the wax figures of the Native Americans in the glass boxes and how they never change even though the people walking by do. Holden wishes that he wishes some things in life could be put into a glass box and kept that way forever, but in the carousel scene³

Holden realizes that growing up is okay, seeing his little sister risk her life grabbing at the golden ring on the carousel. The golden ring represents acceptance in this story with Holden saying that this moment is the happiest he's ever felt. He realizes that though adulthood can be bad, some people can remain innocent even in adulthood. hates death and everything around him because death took his younger brother away from him. Holden's younger brother Allie was seen as a perfect child, sort of acting as Holden's catcher in the rye. Holden views Allie as his Catcher in the Rye. Similarly to how Allie died, the time period is also signifies death. World War II was occurring around the main character and he felt like no one cared that it was happening, considering everyone phony for covering up their grief with religion and pop culture. The graffiti that is seen written inside of Phoebe's school is shown to destroy innocence through the cuss words that Holden erases. The fact that this was Holden's school and is now Phoebe's is symbolic that change happens and we can't do much about it. Phoebe is what Holden believes a person should be like and she represents the childhood innocence Holden wishes he still had. Holden's childish mind also takes a particular interest in learning about what happens to the ducks⁴. The ducks are symbolic of where Holden is in his life right now. Ducks migrate through different seasons just as Holden throughout the year to different schools. Ducks also don't have a set home land just as Holden doesn't. The hunter's hat⁵ that Holden wears is also symbolic of his true self showing up throughout the book at important



times where Holden is alone with his thoughts. It is also said that he doesn't like wearing around other people or people he knows meaning he wants to keep that part hidden from everyone. The character Holden himself is symbolic of Salinger himself as a child. In a book review called "The real message of 'The Catcher in the Rye'" Salinger said it was "almost autobiographical" to his own life being as he grew up in New York City and endured some of the same childhood challenges as Holden's character. Salinger connects various symbols to create an emotional appeal which builds up to the purpose of the novel.

³ Borrowed from Wordsmith

⁴ Borrowed from Shmoop

⁵ Borrowed from Pinterest

PURPOSE

The purpose of *Catcher in the Rye*⁶ is to emphasize that having money and an elite status may seem all that a person needs but in reality, that doesn't mean that life is perfect. In the novel Holden feels lonely and empty because he no longer has his childhood innocence. His childhood has been replaced with elite junior high schools where he doesn't fit in and feels misunderstood. The purpose of Holden's character is to be the "catcher"⁷ in the rye for Phoebe and other children like her to protect their childhood innocence. Holden feels it is his job to shield Phoebe and other children from feeling this sense of loneliness. Phoebe is very important to Holden because she is the only one who truly understands him. Holden starts talking about running away and when he tells everyone they tell him to think about the consequences he would face except for Phoebe who said she would pack her



things and run away with

him. "She knows what know

one else knows- that to rescue someone, you don't hand them a

pamphlet, you take their hand." ("The real message of "The Catcher in the Rye" by Gene Kahane).

In the book Phoebe is riding on a carousel and she reaches for the gold ring on the ride, you would try to grab these rings for prizes but it was dangerous. Holden sees that as a coming of age moment instead of the darkness sucking her into adulthood⁸.

Salinger embeds the purpose of the novel into the progression of Holden's character throughout the novel. In the beginning of the novel Holden is seen as a corrupted teen who fears adulthood and the elite status because it only offers him lonely and misunderstood feelings, but by the end of the book his character realizes that adulthood is learning to accept the inevitable, which is growing up and becoming an adult. Overall, the feelings that are associated with adulthood shouldn't be feared and unaccepted, but rather adulthood should be learning to accept the inevitable and act as the "catcher" in the rye, by saving young children from fearing adulthood.



⁶ Borrowed from Tes

⁷ Borrowed from Tes

⁸ Borrowed from Kerisu @ DeviantART

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