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I WALKED all the way back to the hotel. Forty-one gorgeous blocks. I didn't do it because I felt like walking or anything. It was more because I didn't feel like getting in and out of another taxicab. Sometimes you get tired of riding in taxicabs the same way you get tired riding in elevators. All of a sudden, you have to walk, no matter how far or how high up. When I was a kid, I used to walk all the way up to our apartment very frequently. Twelve stories.

You wouldn't even have known it had snowed at all. There was hardly any snow on the sidewalks. But it was freezing cold, and I took my red hunting hat out of my pocket and put it on—I didn't give a damn how I looked. I even put the earlaps down. I wished I knew who'd swiped my gloves at Pencey, because my hands were freezing. Not that I'd have done much about it even if I had known. I'm one of these very yellow guys. I try not to show it, but I am. For instance, if I'd found out at Pencey who'd stolen my gloves, I probably would've gone down to the crook's room and said, "Okay. How 'bout handing over those gloves?" Then the crook that had stolen them probably would've said, his voice very innocent and all, "What gloves?" Then what I probably would've done, I'd have gone in his closet and found the gloves somewhere. Hidden in his goddam galoshes or something, for instance. I'd have taken them out and showed them to the guy and said, "I suppose these are *your* goddam gloves?" Then the crook probably would've given me this very phony, innocent look, and said, "I never saw those gloves before in my life. If they're yours, take 'em. I don't want the goddam things." Then I probably would've

just stood there for about five minutes. I'd have the damn gloves right in my hand and all, but I'd feel I ought to sock the guy in the jaw or something—break his goddam jaw. Only, I wouldn't have the guts to do it. I'd just *stand* there, trying to look tough. What I might do, I might say something very cutting and snotty, to rile him up—*instead* of socking him in the jaw. Anyway if I did say something very cutting and snotty, he'd probably get up and come over to me and say, "Listen, Caulfield. Are you calling me a crook?" Then, instead of saying, "You're goddam right I am, you dirty crooked bastard!" all I probably would've said would be, "All I know is my goddam gloves were in *your* goddam galoshes." Right away then, the guy would know for sure that I wasn't going to take a sock at him, and he probably would've said, "Listen. Let's get this straight. Are you calling me a thief?" Then I probably would've said, "Nobody's calling anybody a thief. All I know is my gloves were in *your* goddam galoshes." It could go on like that for *hours*. Finally, though, I'd leave his room without even taking a sock at him. I'd probably go down to the can and sneak a cigarette and watch myself getting tough in the mirror. Anyway, that's what I thought about the whole way back to the hotel. It's no fun to be yellow. Maybe I'm not *all* yellow. I don't know. I think maybe I'm just partly yellow and partly the type that doesn't give much of a damn if they lose their gloves. One of my troubles is, I never care too much when I lose something—it used to drive my mother crazy when I was a kid. Some guys spend *days* looking for something they lost. I never seem to have anything that if I lost it I'd care too much. Maybe that's why I'm partly yellow. It's no excuse, though. It really isn't. What you should be is not yellow at all. If you're supposed to sock somebody in the jaw, and you sort of feel like doing it, you should do it. I'm just no good at it, though. I'd rather push a guy out the window or chop his head off with

an ax than sock him in the jaw. I hate fist fights. I don't mind getting hit so much—although I'm not crazy about it, naturally—but what scares me most in a fist fight is the guy's face. I can't stand looking at the other guy's face, is my trouble. It wouldn't be so bad if you could both be blindfolded or something. It's a funny kind of yellowness, when you come to think of it, but it's yellowness, all right. I'm not kidding myself.

The more I thought about my gloves and my yellowness, the more depressed I got, and I decided, while I was walking and all, to stop off and have a drink somewhere. I'd only had three drinks at Ernie's, and I didn't even finish the last one. One thing I have, it's a terrific capacity. I can drink all night and not even show it, if I'm in the mood. Once, at the Whooton School, this other boy, Raymond Goldfarb, and I bought a pint of Scotch and drank it in the chapel one Saturday night, where nobody'd see us. He got stinking, but I hardly didn't even show it. I just got very cool and nonchalant. I puked before I went to bed, but I didn't really have to—I forced myself.

Anyway, before I got to the hotel, I started to go in this dumpy-looking bar, but two guys came out, drunk as hell, and wanted to know where the subway was. One of them was this very Cuban-looking guy, and he kept breathing his stinking breath in my face while I gave him directions. I ended up not even going in the damn bar. I just went back to the hotel.

The whole lobby was empty. It smelled like fifty million dead cigars. It really did. I wasn't sleepy or anything, but I was feeling sort of lousy. Depressed and all. I almost wished I was dead.

Then, all of a sudden, I got in this big mess.

The first thing when I got in the elevator, the elevator guy said to me, "Innarested in having a good time, fella? Or is it too late for you?"

"How do you mean?" I said. I didn't know what he was driving at or anything.

"Innarested in a little tail t'night?"

"Me?" I said. Which was a very dumb answer, but it's quite embarrassing when somebody comes right up and asks you a question like that.

"How old are you, chief?" the elevator guy said.

"Why?" I said. "Twenty-two."

"Uh huh. Well, how 'bout it? Y'innarested? Five bucks a throw. Fifteen bucks the whole night." He looked at his wrist watch. "Till noon. Five bucks a throw, fifteen bucks till noon."

"Okay," I said. It was against my principles and all, but I was feeling so depressed I didn't even *think*. That's the whole trouble. When you're feeling very depressed, you can't even think.

"Okay *what*? A throw, or till noon? I gotta know."

"Just a throw."

"Okay, what room ya in?"

I looked at the red thing with my number on it, on my key. "Twelve twenty-two," I said. I was already sort of sorry I'd let the thing start rolling, but it was too late now.

"Okay. I'll send a girl up in about fifteen minutes." He opened the doors and I got out.

"Hey, is she good-looking?" I asked him. "I don't want any old bag."

"No old bag. Don't worry about it, chief."

"Who do I pay?"

"Her," he said. "Let's go, chief." He shut the doors, practically right in my face.

I went to my room and put some water on my hair, but you can't really comb a crew cut or anything. Then I tested to see if my breath stank from so many cigarettes and the Scotch and sodas I drank at Ernie's. All you do is hold your hand under your mouth and blow your breath up toward the old nostrils. It didn't seem to stink much, but I brushed my teeth anyway. Then I put on another clean shirt. I knew I didn't have to get all dolled up for a prostitute or anything, but it sort of

gave me something to do. I was a little nervous. I was starting to feel pretty sexy and all, but I was a little nervous anyway. If you want to know the truth, I'm a virgin. I really am. I've had quite a few opportunities to lose my virginity and all, but I've never got around to it yet. Something always happens. For instance, if you're at a girl's house, her parents always come home at the wrong time—or you're afraid they will. Or if you're in the back seat of somebody's car, there's always somebody's date in the front seat—some girl, I mean—that always wants to know what's going on *all over* the whole goddam car. I mean some girl in front keeps turning around to see what the hell's going on. Anyway, something always happens. I came quite close to doing it a couple of times, though. One time in particular, I remember. Something went wrong, though—I don't even remember what any more. The thing is, most of the time when you're coming pretty close to doing it with a girl—a girl that isn't a prostitute or anything, I mean—she keeps telling you to stop. The trouble with me is, I stop. Most guys don't. I can't help it. You never know whether they really *want* you to stop, or whether they're just scared as hell, or whether they're just telling you to stop so that if you *do* go through with it, the blame'll be on *you*, not them. Anyway, I keep stopping. The trouble is, I get to feeling sorry for them. I mean most girls are so dumb and all. After you neck them for a while, you can really *watch* them losing their brains. You take a girl when she really gets passionate, she just hasn't any brains. I don't know. They tell me to stop, so I stop. I always wish I *hadn't*, after I take them home, but I keep doing it anyway.

Anyway, while I was putting on another clean shirt, I sort of figured this was my big chance, in a way. I figured if she was a prostitute and all, I could get in some practice on her, in case I ever get married or anything. I worry about that stuff sometimes. I read

this book once, at the Whooton School, that had this very sophisticated, suave, sexy guy in it. Monsieur Blanchard was his name, I can still remember. It was a lousy book, but this Blanchard guy was pretty good. He had this big *château* and all on the Riviera, in Europe, and all he did in his spare time was beat women off with a club. He was a real rake and all, but he knocked women out. He said, in this one part, that a woman's body is like a violin and all, and that it takes a terrific musician to play it right. It was a very corny book—I realize that—but I couldn't get that violin stuff out of my mind anyway. In a way, that's why I sort of wanted to get some practice in, in case I ever get married. Caulfield and his Magic Violin, boy. It's corny, I realize, but it isn't *too* corny. I wouldn't mind being pretty good at that stuff. Half the time, if you really want to know the truth, when I'm horsing around with a girl, I have a helluva lot of trouble just *finding* what I'm looking for, for God's sake, if you know what I mean. Take this girl that I just missed having sexual intercourse with, that I told you about. It took me about an *hour* to just get her goddam brassière off. By the time I did get it off, she was about ready to spit in my eye.

Anyway, I kept walking around the room, waiting for this prostitute to show up. I kept hoping she'd be good-looking. I didn't care too much, though. I sort of just wanted to get it over with. Finally, somebody knocked on the door, and when I went to open it, I had my suitcase right in the way and I fell over it and damn near broke my knee. I always pick a gorgeous time to fall over a suitcase or something.

When I opened the door, this prostitute was standing there. She had a polo coat on, and no hat. She was sort of a blonde, but you could tell she dyed her hair. She wasn't any old bag, though. "How do you do," I said. Suave as hell, boy.

"You the guy Maurice said?" she asked me. She didn't seem too goddam friendly.

"Is he the elevator boy?"

"Yeah," she said.

"Yes, I am. Come in, won't you?" I said. I was getting more and more nonchalant as it went along. I really was.

She came in and took her coat off right away and sort of chucked it on the bed. She had on a green dress underneath. Then she sort of sat down sideways on the chair that went with the desk in the room and started jiggling her foot up and down. She crossed her legs and started jiggling this one foot up and down. She was very nervous, for a prostitute. She really was. I think it was because she was young as hell. She was around my age. I sat down in the big chair, next to her, and offered her a cigarette. "I don't smoke," she said. She had a tiny little wheeny-whiny voice. You could hardly hear her. She never said thank you, either, when you offered her something. She just didn't know any better.

"Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jim Steele," I said.

"Ya got a watch on ya?" she said. She didn't care what the hell my name was, naturally. "Hey, how old are you, anyways?"

"Me? Twenty-two."

"Like fun you are."

It was a funny thing to say. It sounded like a real kid. You'd think a prostitute and all would say "Like hell you are" or "Cut the crap" instead of "Like fun you are."

"How old are *you*?" I asked her.

"Old enough to know better," she said. She was really witty. "Ya got a watch on ya?" she asked me again, and then she stood up and pulled her dress over her head.

I certainly felt peculiar when she did that. I mean

she did it so *sudden* and all. I know you're supposed to feel pretty sexy when somebody gets up and pulls their dress over their head, but I didn't. Sexy was about the *last* thing I was feeling. I felt much more depressed than sexy.

"Ya got a watch on ya, hey?"

"No. No, I don't," I said. *Boy*, was I feeling peculiar. "What's your name?" I asked her. All she had on was this pink slip. It was really quite embarrassing. It really was.

"Sunny," she said. "Let's go, hey."

"Don't you feel like talking for a while?" I asked her. It was a childish thing to say, but I was feeling so damn peculiar. "Are you in a very big hurry?"

She looked at me like I was a madman. "What the heck ya wanna talk about?" she said.

"I don't know. Nothing special. I just thought perhaps you might care to chat for a while."

She sat down in the chair next to the desk again. She didn't like it, though, you could tell. She started jiggling her foot again—boy, she was a nervous girl.

"Would you care for a cigarette now?" I said. I forgot she didn't smoke.

"I don't smoke. Listen, if you're gonna talk, *do* it. I got things to do."

I couldn't think of anything to talk about, though. I thought of asking her how she got to be a prostitute and all, but I was scared to ask her. She probably wouldn't've told me anyway.

"You don't come from New York, do you?" I said finally. That's all I could think of.

"Hollywood," she said. Then she got up and went over to where she'd put her dress down, on the bed. "Ya got a hanger? I don't want to get my dress all wrinkly. It's brand-clean."

"Sure," I said right away. I was only too glad to get up and do something. I took her dress over to the closet and hung it up for her. It was funny. It made

me feel sort of sad when I hung it up. I thought of her going in a store and buying it, and nobody in the store knowing she was a prostitute and all. The salesman probably just thought she was a regular girl when she bought it. It made me feel sad as hell—I don't know why exactly.

I sat down again and tried to keep the old conversation going. She was a lousy conversationalist. "Do you work every night?" I asked her—it sounded sort of awful, after I'd said it.

"Yeah." She was walking all around the room. She picked up the menu off the desk and read it.

"What do you do during the day?"

She sort of shrugged her shoulders. She was pretty skinny. "Sleep. Go to the show." She put down the menu and looked at me. "Let's go, hey. I haven't got all —"

"Look," I said. "I don't feel very much like myself tonight. I've had a rough night. Honest to God. I'll pay you and all, but do you mind very much if we don't do it? Do you mind very much?" The trouble was, I just didn't want to do it. I felt more depressed than sexy, if you want to know the truth. *She* was depressing. Her green dress hanging in the closet and all. And besides, I don't think I could *ever* do it with somebody that sits in a stupid movie all day long. I really don't think I could.

She came over to me, with this funny look on her face, like as if she didn't believe me. "What's a matter?" she said.

"Nothing's the matter." Boy, was I getting nervous. "The thing is, I had an operation very recently."

"Yeah? Where?"

"On my wuddayacallit—my clavichord."

"Yeah? Where the hell's that?"

"The clavichord?" I said. "Well, actually, it's in the spinal canal. I mean it's quite a ways down in the spinal canal."

"Yeah?" she said. "That's tough." Then she sat down on my goddam lap. "You're cute."

She made me so nervous, I just kept on lying my head off. "I'm still recuperating," I told her.

"You look like a guy in the movies. You know. Whosis. *You* know who I mean. What the heck's his name?"

"I don't know," I said. She wouldn't get off my goddam lap.

"Sure you know. He was in that pitcher with Melvine Douglas? The one that was Melvine Douglas's kid brother? That falls off this boat? *You* know who I mean."

"No, I don't. I go to the movies as seldom as I can." Then she started getting funny. Crude and all.

"Do you mind cutting it out?" I said. "I'm not in the mood, I just told you. I just had an operation."

She didn't get up from my lap or anything, but she gave me this terrifically dirty look. "Listen," she said. "I was *sleepin'* when that crazy Maurice woke me up. If you think I'm—"

"I *said* I'd pay you for coming and all. I really will. I have plenty of dough. It's just that I'm practically just recovering from a very serious—"

"What the heck did you tell that crazy Maurice you wanted a *girl* for, then? If you just had a goddam operation on your goddam wuddayacallit. *Huh?*"

"I thought I'd be feeling a lot better than I do. I was a little premature in my calculations. No kidding. I'm sorry. If you'll just get up a second, I'll get my wallet. I mean it."

She was sore as hell, but she got up off my goddam lap so that I could go over and get my wallet off the chiffonier. I took out a five-dollar bill and handed it to her. "Thanks a lot," I told her. "Thanks a million."

"This is a five. It costs ten."

She was getting funny, you could tell. I was afraid something like that would happen—I really was.

"Maurice said five," I told her. "He said fifteen till noon and only five for a throw."

"Ten for a throw."

"He said five. I'm sorry—I really am—but that's all I'm gonna shell out."

She sort of shrugged her shoulders, the way she did before, and then she said, very cold, "Do you mind getting me my frock? Or would it be too much trouble?" She was a pretty spooky kid. Even with that little bitty voice she had, she could sort of scare you a little bit. If she'd been a big old prostitute, with a lot of makeup on her face and all, she wouldn't have been half as spooky.

I went and got her dress for her. She put it on and all, and then she picked up her polo coat off the bed. "So long, crumb-bum," she said.

"So long," I said. I didn't thank her or anything. I'm glad I didn't.

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AFTER OLD SUNNY was gone, I sat in the chair for a while and smoked a couple of cigarettes. It was getting daylight outside. Boy, I felt miserable. I felt so depressed, you can't imagine. What I did, I started talking, sort of out loud, to Allie. I do that sometimes when I get very depressed. I keep telling him to go home and get his bike and meet me in front of Bobby Fallon's house. Bobby Fallon used to live quite near us in Maine—this is, years ago. Anyway, what happened was, one day Bobby and I were going over to Lake Sedebego on our bikes. We were going to take our lunches and all, and our BB guns—we were kids and all, and we thought we could shoot something

with our BB guns. Anyway, Allie heard us talking about it, and he wanted to go, and I wouldn't let him. I told him he was a child. So once in a while, now, when I get very depressed, I keep saying to him, "Okay. Go home and get your bike and meet me in front of Bobby's house. Hurry up." It wasn't that I didn't use to take him with me when I went somewhere. I did. But that one day, I didn't. He didn't get sore about it—he never got sore about anything—but I keep thinking about it anyway, when I get very depressed.

Finally, though, I got undressed and got in bed. I felt like praying or something, when I was in bed, but I couldn't do it. I can't always pray when I feel like it. In the first place, I'm sort of an atheist. I like Jesus and all, but I don't care too much for most of the other stuff in the Bible. Take the Disciples, for instance. They annoy the hell out of me, if you want to know the truth. They were all right after Jesus was dead and all, but while He was alive, they were about as much use to Him as a hole in the head. All they did was keep letting Him down. I like almost anybody in the Bible better than the Disciples. If you want to know the truth, the guy I like best in the Bible, next to Jesus, was that lunatic and all, that lived in the tombs and kept cutting himself with stones. I like him ten times as much as the Disciples, that poor bastard. I used to get in quite a few arguments about it, when I was at Whooton School, with this boy that lived down the corridor, Arthur Childs. Old Childs was a Quaker and all, and he read the Bible all the time. He was a very nice kid, and I liked him, but I could never see eye to eye with him on a lot of stuff in the Bible, especially the Disciples. He kept telling me if I didn't like the Disciples, then I didn't like Jesus and all. He said that because Jesus *picked* the Disciples, you were supposed to like them. I said I knew He picked them, but that He picked them at *random*. I

said He didn't have time to go around analyzing everybody. I said I wasn't blaming Jesus or anything. It wasn't His fault that He didn't have any time. I remember I asked old Childs if he thought Judas, the one that betrayed Jesus and all, went to Hell after he committed suicide. Childs said certainly. That's exactly where I disagreed with him. I said I'd bet a thousand bucks that Jesus never sent old Judas to Hell. I still would, too, if I had a thousand bucks. I think any one of the Disciples would've sent him to Hell and all—and fast, too—but I'll bet anything Jesus didn't do it. Old Childs said the trouble with me was that I didn't go to church or anything. He was right about that, in a way. I don't. In the first place, my parents are different religions, and all the children in our family are atheists. If you want to know the truth, I can't even stand ministers. The ones they've had at every school I've gone to, they all have these Holy Joe voices when they start giving their sermons. God, I hate that. I don't see why the hell they can't talk in their natural voice. They sound so phony when they talk.

Anyway, when I was in bed, I couldn't pray worth a damn. Every time I got started, I kept picturing old Sunny calling me a crumb-bum. Finally, I sat up in bed and smoked another cigarette. It tasted lousy. I must've smoked around two packs since I left Pencey.

All of a sudden, while I was laying there smoking, somebody knocked on the door. I kept hoping it wasn't *my* door they were knocking on, but I knew damn well it was. I don't know *how* I knew, but I knew. I knew *who* it was, too. I'm psychic.

"Who's there?" I said. I was pretty scared. I'm very yellow about those things.

They just knocked again, though. Louder.

Finally I got out of bed, with just my pajamas on, and opened the door. I didn't even have to turn the light on in the room, because it was already daylight.

Old Sunny and Maurice, the pimpy elevator guy, were standing there.

"What's the matter? Wuddaya want?" I said. Boy, my voice was shaking like hell.

"Nothin' much," old Maurice said. "Just five bucks." He did all the talking for the two of them. Old Sunny just stood there next to him, with her mouth open and all.

"I paid her already. I gave her five bucks. Ask her," I said. Boy, was my voice shaking.

"It's ten bucks, chief. I tole ya that. Ten bucks for a throw, fifteen bucks till noon. I tole ya that."

"You did not tell me that. You said *five* bucks a throw. You said fifteen bucks till noon, all right, but I distinctly heard you—"

"Open up, chief."

"What *for*?" I said. God, my old heart was damn near beating me out of the room. I wished I was *dressed* at least. It's terrible to be just in your pajamas when something like that happens.

"Let's go, chief," old Maurice said. Then he gave me a big shove with his crumby hand. I damn near fell over on my can—he was a huge sonuvabitch. The next thing I knew, he and old Sunny were both in the room. They acted like they owned the damn place. Old Sunny sat down on the window sill. Old Maurice sat down in the big chair and loosened his collar and all—he was wearing this elevator operator's uniform. *Boy*, was I nervous.

"All right, chief, let's have it. I gotta get back to work."

"I told you about ten times, I don't owe you a cent. I already gave her the five—"

"Cut the crap, now. Let's have it."

"Why should I give her another five bucks?" I said. My voice was cracking all over the place. "You're trying to chisel me."

Old Maurice unbuttoned his whole uniform coat.

All he had on underneath was a phony shirt collar, but no shirt or anything. He had a big fat hairy stomach. "Nobody's tryna chisel nobody," he said. "Let's have it, chief."

"No."

When I said that, he got up from his chair and started walking towards me and all. He looked like he was very, very tired or very, very bored. God, was I scared. I sort of had my arms folded, I remember. It wouldn't have been so bad, I don't think, if I hadn't had just my goddam *pajamas* on.

"Let's have it, chief." He came right up to where I was standing. That's all he could say. "Let's have it, chief." He was a real moron.

"No."

"Chief, you're gonna force me inna roughin' ya up a little bit. I don't wanna do it, but that's the way it looks," he said. "You owe us five bucks."

"I *don't* owe you five bucks," I said. "If you rough me up, I'll yell like hell. I'll wake up everybody in the hotel. The police and all." My voice was shaking like a bastard.

"Go ahead. Yell your goddam head off. Fine," old Maurice said. "Want your parents to know you spent the night with a whore? High-class kid like you?" He was pretty sharp, in his crumby way. He really was.

"Leave me alone. If you'd *said* ten, it'd be different. But you distinctly—"

"Are ya gonna let us have it?" He had me right up against the damn door. He was almost standing on top of me, his crumby old hairy stomach and all.

"Leave me alone. Get the hell out of my room," I said. I still had my arms folded and all. God, what a jerk I was.

Then Sunny said something for the first time. "Hey, Maurice. Want me to get his wallet?" she said. "It's right on the wutchamacallit."

"Yeah, get it."

"Leave my wallet alone!"

"I awreddy got it," Sunny said. She waved five bucks at me. "See? All I'm takin' is the five you owe me. I'm no crook."

All of a sudden I started to cry. I'd give anything if I hadn't, but I did. "No, you're no crooks," I said. "You're just stealing five—"

"Shut up," old Maurice said, and gave me a shove.

"Leave him alone, hey," Sunny said. "C'mon, hey. We got the dough he owes us. Let's go. C'mon, hey."

"I'm comin'," old Maurice said. But he didn't.

"I mean it, Maurice, hey. Leave him alone."

"Who's hurtin' anybody?" he said, innocent as hell. Then what he did, he snapped his finger very hard on my pajamas. I won't tell you *where* he snapped it, but it hurt like hell. I told him he was a goddam dirty moron. "What's that?" he said. He put his hand behind his ear, like a deaf gny. "What's that? What am I?"

I was still sort of crying. I was so damn mad and nervous and all. "You're a dirty moron," I said. "You're a stupid chiseling moron, and in about two years you'll be one of those scraggy guys that come up to you on the street and ask for a dime for coffee. You'll have snot all over your dirty filthy overcoat, and you'll be—"

Then he smacked me. I didn't even try to get out of the way or duck or anything. All I felt was this terrific punch in my stomach.

I wasn't knocked out or anything, though, because I remember looking up from the floor and seeing them both go out the door and shut it. Then I stayed on the floor a fairly long time, sort of the way I did with Stradlater. Only, this time I thought I was dying. I really did. I thought I was drowning or something. The trouble was, I could hardly breathe. When I did finally get up, I had to walk to the bathroom all doubled up and holding onto my stomach and all.

But I'm crazy. I swear to God I am. About halfway to the bathroom, I sort of started pretending I had a

bullet in my guts. Old Maurice had plugged me. Now I was on the way to the bathroom to get a good shot of bourbon or something to steady my nerves and help me *really* go into action. I pictured myself coming out of the goddam bathroom, dressed and all, with my automatic in my pocket, and staggering around a little bit. Then I'd walk downstairs, instead of using the elevator. I'd hold onto the banister and all, with this blood trickling out of the side of my mouth a little at a time. What I'd do, I'd walk down a few floors—holding onto my guts, blood leaking all over the place—and then I'd ring the elevator bell. As soon as old Maurice opened the doors, he'd see me with the automatic in my hand and he'd start screaming at me, in this very high-pitched, yellow-belly voice, to leave him alone. But I'd plug him anyway. Six shots right through his fat hairy belly. Then I'd throw my automatic down the elevator shaft—after I'd wiped off all the finger prints and all. Then I'd crawl back to my room and call up Jane and have her come over and bandage up my guts. I pictured her holding a cigarette for me to smoke while I was bleeding and all.

The goddam movies. They can ruin you. I'm not kidding.

I stayed in the bathroom for about an hour, taking a bath and all. Then I got back in bed. It took me quite a while to get to sleep—I wasn't even tired—but finally I did. What I really felt like, though, was committing suicide. I felt like jumping out the window. I probably would've done it, too, if I'd been sure somebody'd cover me up as soon as I landed. I didn't want a bunch of stupid rubbernecks looking at me when I was all gory.

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I DIDN'T SLEEP too long, because I think it was only around ten o'clock when I woke up. I felt pretty hungry as soon as I had a cigarette. The last time I'd eaten was those two hamburgers I had with Brossard and Ackley when we went in to Agerstown to the movies. That was a long time ago. It seemed like fifty years ago. The phone was right next to me, and I started to call down and have them send up some breakfast, but I was sort of afraid they might send it up with old Maurice. If you think I was dying to see him again, you're crazy. So I just laid around in bed for a while and smoked another cigarette. I thought of giving old Jane a buzz, to see if she was home yet and all, but I wasn't in the mood.

What I did do, I gave old Sally Hayes a buzz. She went to Mary A. Woodruff, and I knew she was home because I'd had this letter from her a couple of weeks ago. I wasn't too crazy about her, but I'd known her for years. I used to think she was quite intelligent, in my stupidity. The reason I did was because she knew quite a lot about the theater and plays and literature and all that stuff. If somebody knows quite a lot about those things, it takes you quite a while to find out whether they're really stupid or not. It took me *years* to find it out, in old Sally's case. I think I'd have found it out a lot sooner if we hadn't necked so damn much. My big trouble is, I always sort of think whoever I'm necking is a pretty intelligent person. It hasn't got a goddam thing to do with it, but I keep thinking it anyway.

Anyway, I gave her a buzz. First the maid answered. Then her father. Then she got on. "Sally?" I said.

"Yes—who is this?" she said. She was quite a little phony. I'd already told her father who it was.

"Holden Caulfield. How are ya?"

"Holden! I'm fine! How are you?"

"Swell. Listen. How are ya, anyway? I mean how's school?"

"Fine," she said. "I mean—you know."

"Swell. Well, listen. I was wondering if you were busy today. It's Sunday, but there's always one or two matinees going on Sunday. Benefits and that stuff. Would you care to go?"

"I'd love to. Grand."

Grand. If there's one word I hate, it's grand. It's so phony. For a second, I was tempted to tell her to forget about the matinee. But we chewed the fat for a while. That is, she chewed it. You couldn't get a word in edgewise. First she told me about some Harvard guy—it probably was a freshman, but she didn't say, naturally—that was rushing hell out of her. Calling her up *night and day*. Night and day—that killed me. Then she told me about some other guy, some West Point cadet, that was cutting his throat over her too. Big deal. I told her to meet me under the clock at the Biltmore at two o'clock, and not to be late, because the show probably started at two-thirty. She was always late. Then I hung up. She gave me a pain in the ass, but she was very good-looking.

After I made the date with old Sally, I got out of bed and got dressed and packed my bag. I took a look out the window before I left the room, though, to see how all the perverts were doing, but they all had their shades down. They were the height of modesty in the morning. Then I went down in the elevator and checked out. I didn't see old Maurice around anywhere. I didn't break my neck looking for him, naturally, the bastard.

I got a cab outside the hotel, but I didn't have the faintest damn idea where I was going. I had no place

to go. It was only Sunday, and I couldn't go home till Wednesday—or Tuesday the *soonest*. And I certainly didn't feel like going to another hotel and getting my brains beat out. So what I did, I told the driver to take me to Grand Central Station. It was right near the Biltmore, where I was meeting Sally later, and I figured what I'd do, I'd check my bags in one of those strong boxes that they give you a key to, then get some breakfast. I was sort of hungry. While I was in the cab, I took out my wallet and sort of counted my money. I don't remember exactly what I had left, but it was no fortune or anything. I'd spent a king's ransom in about two lousy weeks. I really had. I'm a goddam spendthrift at heart. What I don't spend, I lose. Half the time I sort of even forget to pick up my change, at restaurants and night clubs and all. It drives my parents crazy. You can't blame them. My father's quite wealthy, though. I don't know how much he makes—he's never discussed that stuff with me—but I imagine quite a lot. He's a corporation lawyer. Those boys really haul it in. Another reason I know he's quite well off, he's always investing money in shows on Broadway. They always flop, though, and it drives my mother crazy when he does it. She hasn't felt too healthy since my brother Allie died. She's very nervous. That's another reason why I hated like hell for her to know I got the ax again.

After I put my bags in one of those strong boxes at the station, I went into this little sandwich bar and had breakfast. I had quite a large breakfast, for me—orange juice, bacon and eggs, toast and coffee. Usually I just drink some orange juice. I'm a very light eater. I really am. That's why I'm so damn skinny. I was supposed to be on this diet where you eat a lot of starches and crap, to gain weight and all, but I didn't ever do it. When I'm out somewhere, I generally just eat a Swiss cheese sandwich and a malted milk. It isn't much, but

you get quite a lot of vitamins in the malted milk. H. V. Caulfield. Holden Vitamin Caulfield.

While I was eating my eggs, these two nuns with suitcases and all—I guessed they were moving to another convent or something and were waiting for a train—came in and sat down next to me at the counter. They didn't seem to know what the hell to do with their suitcases, so I gave them a hand. They were these very inexpensive-looking suitcases—the ones that aren't genuine leather or anything. It isn't important, I know, but I hate it when somebody has cheap suitcases. It sounds terrible to say it, but I can even get to hate somebody, just *looking* at them, if they have cheap suitcases with them. Something happened once. For a while when I was at Elkton Hills, I roomed with this boy, Dick Slagle, that had these very inexpensive suitcases. He used to keep them under the bed, instead of on the rack, so that nobody'd see them standing next to mine. It depressed holy hell out of me, and I kept wanting to throw mine out or something, or even *trade* with him. Mine came from Mark Cross, and they were genuine cowhide and all that crap, and I guess they cost quite a pretty penny. But it was a funny thing. Here's what happened. What I did, I finally put *my* suitcases under *my* bed, instead of on the rack, so that old Slagle wouldn't get a goddam inferiority complex about it. But here's what he did. The day after I put mine under my bed, he took them out and put them back on the rack. The reason he did it, it took me a while to find out, was because he wanted people to think my bags were his. He really did. He was a very funny guy, that way. He was always saying snotty things about them, my suitcases, for instance. He kept saying they were too new and bourgeois. That was his favorite goddam word. He read it somewhere or heard it somewhere. Everything I had was bourgeois as hell. Even my fountain pen was bourgeois. He borrowed it off me all the time, but it was bourgeois anyway. We

only roomed together about two months. Then we both asked to be moved. And the funny thing was, I sort of missed him after we moved, because he had a helluva good sense of humor and we had a lot of fun sometimes. I wouldn't be surprised if he missed me, too. At first he only used to be kidding when he called my stuff bourgeois, and I didn't give a damn—it *was* sort of funny, in fact. Then, after a while, you could tell he wasn't kidding any more. The thing is, it's really hard to be roommates with people if your suitcases are much better than theirs—if yours are really *good* ones and theirs aren't. You think if they're intelligent and all, the other person, and have a good sense of humor, that they don't give a damn whose suitcases are better, but they do. They really do. It's one of the reasons why I roomed with a stupid bastard like Stradlater. At least his suitcases were as good as mine.

Anyway, these two nuns were sitting next to me, and we sort of struck up a conversation. The one right next to me had one of those straw baskets that you see nuns and Salvation Army babes collecting dough with around Christmas time. You see them standing on corners, especially on Fifth Avenue, in front of the big department stores and all. Anyway, the one next to me dropped hers on the floor and I reached down and picked it up for her. I asked her if she was out collecting money for charity and all. She said no. She said she couldn't get it in her suitcase when she was packing it and she was just carrying it. She had a pretty nice smile when she looked at you. She had a big nose, and she had on those glasses with sort of iron rims that aren't too attractive, but she had a helluva kind face. "I thought if you were taking up a collection," I told her, "I could make a small contribution. You could keep the money for when you do take up a collection."

"Oh, how very kind of you," she said, and the other one, her friend, looked over at me. The other one was reading a little black book while she drank her coffee.

It looked like a Bible, but it was too skinny. It was a Bible-type book, though. All the two of them were eating for breakfast was toast and coffee. That depressed me. I hate it if I'm eating bacon and eggs or something and somebody else is only eating toast and coffee.

They let me give them ten bucks as a contribution. They kept asking me if I was sure I could afford it and all. I told them I had quite a bit of money with me, but they didn't seem to believe me. They took it, though, finally. The both of them kept thanking me so much it was embarrassing. I swung the conversation around to general topics and asked them where they were going. They said they were schoolteachers and that they'd just come from Chicago and that they were going to start teaching at some convent on 168th Street or 186th Street or one of those streets way the hell uptown. The one next to me, with the iron glasses, said she taught English and her friend taught history and American government. Then I started wondering like a bastard what the one sitting next to me, that taught English, thought about, being a nun and all, when she read certain books for English. Books not necessarily with a lot of sexy stuff in them, but books with lovers and all in them. Take old Eustacia Vye, in *The Return of the Native* by Thomas Hardy. She wasn't too sexy or anything, but even so you can't help wondering what a nun maybe thinks about when she reads about old Eustacia. I didn't say anything, though, naturally. All I said was English was my best subject.

"Oh, really? Oh, I'm so glad!" the one with the glasses, that taught English, said. "What have you read this year? I'd be very interested to know." She was really nice.

"Well, most of the time we were on the Anglo-Saxons. Beowulf, and old Grendel, and Lord Randal My Son, and all those things. But we had to read outside books for extra credit once in a while. I read *The*

Return of the Native by Thomas Hardy, and *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius*—"

"Oh, *Romeo and Juliet!* Lovely! Didn't you just love it?" She certainly didn't sound much like a nun.

"Yes. I did. I liked it a lot. There were a few things I didn't like about it, but it was quite moving, on the whole."

"What didn't you like about it? Can you remember?"

To tell you the truth, it was sort of embarrassing, in a way, to be talking about *Romeo and Juliet* with her. I mean that play gets pretty sexy in some parts, and she was a nun and all, but she *asked* me, so I discussed it with her for a while. "Well, I'm not too crazy about *Romeo and Juliet*," I said. "I mean I like them, but—I don't know. They get pretty annoying sometimes. I mean I felt much sorrier when old Mercutio got killed than when *Romeo and Juliet* did. The thing is, I never liked *Romeo* too much after *Mercutio* gets stabbed by that other man—*Juliet's* cousin—what's his name?"

"Tybalt."

"That's right. Tybalt," I said—I always forget that guy's name. "It was *Romeo's* fault. I mean I liked him the best in the play, old *Mercutio*. I don't know. All those *Montagues* and *Capulets*, they're all right—especially *Juliet*—but *Mercutio*, he was—it's hard to explain. He was very smart and entertaining and all. The thing is, it drives me crazy if somebody gets killed—especially somebody very smart and entertaining and all—and it's somebody else's fault. *Romeo and Juliet*, at least it was their own fault."

"What school do you go to?" she asked me. She probably wanted to get off the subject of *Romeo and Juliet*.

I told her *Pencey*, and she'd heard of it. She said it was a very good school. I let it pass, though. Then the other one, the one that taught history and government, said they'd better be running along. I took their check

off them, but they wouldn't let me pay it. The one with the glasses made me give it back to her.

"You've been more than generous," she said. "You're a very sweet boy." She certainly was nice. She reminded me a little bit of old Ernest Morrow's mother, the one I met on the train. When she smiled, mostly. "We've enjoyed talking to you so much," she said.

I said I'd enjoyed talking to them a lot, too. I meant it, too. I'd have enjoyed it even more though, I think, if I hadn't been sort of afraid, the whole time I was talking to them, that they'd all of a sudden try to find out if I was a Catholic. Catholics are always trying to find out if you're a Catholic. It happens to me a lot, I know, partly because my last name is Irish, and most people of Irish descent are Catholics. As a matter of fact, my father *was* a Catholic once. He quit, though, when he married my mother. But Catholics are always trying to find out if you're a Catholic even if they don't know your last name. I knew this one Catholic boy, Louis Shaney, when I was at the Whooton School. He was the first boy I ever met there. He and I were sitting in the first two chairs outside the goddam infirmary, the day school opened, waiting for our physicals, and we sort of struck up this conversation about tennis. He was quite interested in tennis, and so was I. He told me he went to the Nationals at Forest Hills every summer, and I told him I did too, and then we talked about certain hot-shot tennis players for quite a while. He knew quite a lot about tennis, for a kid his age. He really did. Then, after a while, right in the middle of the goddam conversation, he asked me, "Did you happen to notice where the Catholic church is in town, by any chance?" The thing was, you could tell by the way he asked me that he was trying to find out if I was a Catholic. He really was. Not that he was prejudiced or anything, but he just wanted to know. He was enjoying the conversation about tennis and all, but you could tell he would've enjoyed it *more* if I was

a Catholic and all. That kind of stuff drives me crazy. I'm not saying it ruined our conversation or anything—it didn't—but it sure as hell didn't do it any good. That's why I was glad those two nuns didn't ask me if I was a Catholic. It wouldn't have *spoiled* the conversation if they had, but it would've been different, probably. I'm not saying I *blame* Catholics. I don't. I'd be the same way, probably, if I was a Catholic. It's just like those suitcases I was telling you about, in a way. All I'm saying is that it's no good for a nice conversation. That's all I'm saying.

When they got up to go, the two nuns, I did something very stupid and embarrassing. I was smoking a cigarette, and when I stood up to say good-by to them, by mistake I blew some smoke in their face. I didn't mean to, but I did it. I apologized like a madman, and they were very polite and nice about it, but it was very embarrassing anyway.

After they left, I started getting sorry that I'd only given them ten bucks for their collection. But the thing was, I'd made that date to go to a matinee with old Sally Hayes, and I needed to keep some dough for the tickets and stuff. I was sorry anyway, though. Goddam money. It always ends up making you blue as hell.

16

AFTER I HAD my breakfast, it was only around noon, and I wasn't meeting old Sally till two o'clock, so I started taking this long walk. I couldn't stop thinking about those two nuns. I kept thinking about that beat-up old straw basket they went around collecting money with when they weren't teaching school. I kept trying

to picture my mother or somebody, or my aunt, or Sally Hayes's crazy mother, standing outside some department store and collecting dough for poor people in a beat-up old straw basket. It was hard to picture. Not so much my mother, but those other two. My aunt's pretty charitable—she does a lot of Red Cross work and all—but she's very well-dressed and all, and when she does anything charitable she's always very well-dressed and has lipstick on and all that crap. I couldn't picture her doing anything for charity if she had to wear black clothes and no lipstick while she was doing it. And old Sally Hayes's mother, Jesus Christ. The only way *she* could go around with a basket collecting dough would be if everybody kissed her ass for her when they made a contribution. If they just dropped their dough in her basket, then walked away without saying anything to her, ignoring her and all, she'd quit in about an hour. She'd get bored. She'd hand in her basket and then go someplace swanky for lunch. That's what I liked about those nuns. You could tell, for one thing, that they never went anywhere swanky for lunch. It made me so damn sad when I thought about it, their never going anywhere swanky for lunch or anything. I knew it wasn't too important, but it made me sad anyway.

I started walking over toward Broadway, just for the hell of it, because I hadn't been over there in years. Besides, I wanted to find a record store that was open on Sunday. There was this record I wanted to get for Phoebe, called "Little Shirley Beans." It was a very hard record to get. It was about a little kid that wouldn't go out of the house because two of her front teeth were out and she was ashamed to. I heard it at Pencey. A boy that lived on the next floor had it, and I tried to buy it off him because I knew it would knock old Phoebe out, but he wouldn't sell it. It was a very old, terrific record that this colored girl singer, Estelle Fletcher, made about twenty years ago. She sings it

very Dixieland and whorehouse, and it doesn't sound at all mushy. If a white girl was singing it, she'd make it sound *cute* as hell, but old Estelle Fletcher knew what the hell she was doing, and it was one of the best records I ever heard. I figured I'd buy it in some store that was open on Sunday and then I'd take it up to the park with me. It was Sunday and Phoebe goes roller-skating in the park on Sundays quite frequently. I knew where she hung out mostly.

It wasn't as cold as it was the day before, but the sun still wasn't out, and it wasn't too nice for walking. But there was one nice thing. This family that you could tell just came out of some church were walking right in front of me—a father, a mother, and a little kid about six years old. They looked sort of poor. The father had on one of those pearl-gray hats that poor guys wear a lot when they want to look sharp. He and his wife were just walking along, talking, not paying any attention to their kid. The kid was swell. He was walking in the street, instead of on the sidewalk, but right next to the curb. He was making out like he was walking a very straight line, the way kids do, and the whole time he kept singing and humming. I got up closer so I could hear what he was singing. He was singing that song, "If a body catch a body coming through the rye." He had a pretty little voice, too. He was just singing for the hell of it, you could tell. The cars zoomed by, brakes screeched all over the place, his parents paid no attention to him, and he kept on walking next to the curb and singing "If a body catch a body coming through the rye." It made me feel better. It made me feel not so depressed any more.

Broadway was mobbed and messy. It was Sunday, and only about twelve o'clock, but it was mobbed anyway. Everybody was on their way to the movies—the Paramount or the Astor or the Strand or the Capitol or one of those crazy places. Everybody was all dressed up, because it was Sunday, and that made

it worse. But the worst part was that you could tell they all *wanted* to go to the movies. I couldn't stand looking at them. I can understand somebody going to the movies because there's nothing else to do, but when somebody really *wants* to go, and even walks fast so as to get there quicker, then it depresses hell out of me. Especially if I see millions of people standing in one of those long, terrible lines, all the way down the block, waiting with this terrific patience for seats and all. Boy, I couldn't get off that goddam Broadway fast enough. I was lucky. The first record store I went into had a copy of "Little Shirley Beans." They charged me five bucks for it, because it was so hard to get, but I didn't care. Boy, it made me so happy all of a sudden. I could hardly wait to get to the park to see if old Phoebe was around so that I could give it to her.

When I came out of the record store, I passed this drugstore, and I went in. I figured maybe I'd give old Jane a buzz and see if she was home for vacation yet. So I went in a phone booth and called her up. The only trouble was, her mother answered the phone, so I had to hang up. I didn't feel like getting involved in a long conversation and all with her. I'm not crazy about talking to girls' mothers on the phone anyway. I should've at *least* asked her if Jane was home yet, though. It wouldn't have killed me. But I didn't feel like it. You really have to be in the mood for that stuff.

I still had to get those damn theater tickets, so I bought a paper and looked up to see what shows were playing. On account of it was Sunday, there were only about three shows playing. So what I did was, I went over and bought two orchestra seats for *I Know My Love*. It was a benefit performance or something. I didn't much want to see it, but I knew old Sally, the queen of the phonies, would start drooling all over the place when I told her I had tickets for that, because the Lunts were in it and all. She liked shows that are

supposed to be very sophisticated and dry and all, with the Lunts and all. I don't. I don't like any shows very much, if you want to know the truth. They're not as bad as movies, but they're certainly nothing to rave about. In the first place, I hate actors. They never act like people. They just think they do. Some of the good ones do, in a very slight way, but not in a way that's fun to watch. And if any actor's really good, you can always tell he *knows* he's good, and that spoils it. You take Sir Laurence Olivier, for example. I saw him in *Hamlet*. D.B. took Phoebe and I to see it last year. He treated us to lunch first, and then he took us. He'd already seen it, and the way he talked about it at lunch, I was anxious as hell to see it, too. But I didn't enjoy it much. I just don't see what's so marvelous about Sir Laurence Olivier, that's all. He has a terrific voice, and he's a helluva handsome guy, and he's very nice to watch when he's walking or dueling or something, but he wasn't at all the way D.B. said *Hamlet* was. He was too much like a goddam general, instead of a sad, screwed-up type guy. The best part in the whole picture was when old Ophelia's brother—the one that gets in the duel with *Hamlet* at the very end—was going away and his father was giving him a lot of advice. While the father kept giving him a lot of advice, old Ophelia was sort of horsing around with her brother, taking his dagger out of the holster, and teasing him and all while he was trying to look interested in the bull his father was shooting. That was nice. I got a big bang out of that. But you don't see that kind of stuff much. The only thing old Phoebe liked was when *Hamlet* patted this dog on the head. She thought that was funny and nice, and it was. What I'll have to do is, I'll have to read that play. The trouble with me is, I always have to read that stuff by myself. If an actor acts it out, I hardly listen. I keep worrying about whether he's going to do something phony every minute.

After I got the tickets to the Lunts' show, I took a cab up to the park. I should've taken a subway or something, because I was getting slightly low on dough, but I wanted to get off that damn Broadway as fast as I could.

It was lousy in the park. It wasn't too cold, but the sun still wasn't out, and there didn't look like there was anything in the park except dog crap and globs of spit and cigar butts from old men, and the benches all looked like they'd be wet if you sat down on them. It made you depressed, and every once in a while, for no reason, you got goose flesh while you walked. It didn't seem at all like Christmas was coming soon. It didn't seem like *anything* was coming. But I kept walking over to the Mall anyway, because that's where Phoebe usually goes when she's in the park. She likes to skate near the bandstand. It's funny. That's the same place I used to like to skate when I was a kid.

When I got there, though, I didn't see her around anywhere. There were a few kids around, skating and all, and two boys were playing *Flys Up* with a soft ball, but no Phoebe. I saw one kid about her age, though, sitting on a bench all by herself, tightening her skate. I thought maybe she might know Phoebe and could tell me where she was or something, so I went over and sat down next to her and asked her, "Do you know Phoebe Caulfield, by any chance?"

"Who?" she said. All she had on was jeans and about twenty sweaters. You could tell her mother made them for her, because they were lumpy as hell.

"Phoebe Caulfield. She lives on Seventy-first Street. She's in the fourth grade, over at—"

"You know Phoebe?"

"Yeah, I'm her brother. You know where she is?"

"She's in Miss Callon's class, isn't she?" the kid said.

"I don't know. Yes, I think she is."

"She's prob'ly in the museum, then. We went last Saturday," the kid said.

"Which museum?" I asked her.

She shrugged her shoulders, sort of. "I don't know," she said. "The museum."

"I know, but the one where the pictures are, or the one where the Indians are?"

"The one where the Indians."

"Thanks a lot," I said. I got up and started to go, but then I suddenly remembered it was Sunday. "This is Sunday," I told the kid.

She looked up at me. "Oh. Then she isn't."

She was having a helluva time tightening her skate. She didn't have any gloves on or anything and her hands were all red and cold. I gave her a hand with it. Boy, I hadn't had a skate key in my hand for years. It didn't feel funny, though. You could put a skate key in my hand fifty years from now, in pitch dark, and I'd still know what it is. She thanked me and all when I had it tightened for her. She was a very nice, polite little kid. God, I love it when a kid's nice and polite when you tighten their skate for them or something. Most kids are. They really are. I asked her if she'd care to have a hot chocolate or something with me, but she said no, thank you. She said she had to meet her friend. Kids always have to meet their friend. That kills me.

Even though it was Sunday and Phoebe wouldn't be there with her class or anything, and even though it was so damp and lousy out, I walked all the way through the park over to the Museum of Natural History. I knew that was the museum the kid with the skate key meant. I knew that whole museum routine like a book. Phoebe went to the same school I went to when I was a kid, and we used to go there all the time. We had this teacher, Miss Aigletinger, that took us there damn near every Saturday. Sometimes we looked at the animals and sometimes we looked at the stuff the Indians had made in ancient times. Pottery and straw baskets and all stuff like that. I get very