

## Catcher in the Rye sequel published, but not by Salinger

Holden Caulfield returns in an unauthorised sequel by debut novelist

[Alison Flood](#)

Thursday 14 May 2009 14.40 BST



'The most terrific liar' ... JD Salinger in 1951, the year of *The Catcher in the Rye's* publication.

The last we saw of Holden Caulfield, he was in a mental hospital in California, reminiscing about the days he spent roaming New York City, watching his sister Phoebe ride a carousel. Now [JD Salinger's](#) much-loved teenage misanthrope is back, thanks to an unauthorised sequel to *The Catcher in the Rye*, which sees a 76-year-old "Mr C" flee a nursing home to journey again through the streets of New York.

"I open my eyes and, just like that, I'm awake," is the opening line of Swedish American writer John David California's *60 Years Later: Coming Through the Rye*, just out from tiny publisher Windupbird Publishing. "I suppose it's pretty damn early, but it must still be the middle of the night. It's so dark I can hardly see my goddamned hand in front of my face."

"Just like the first novel, he leaves, but this time he's not at a prep school, he's at a retirement home in upstate New York," said California. "It's pretty much like the first book in that he roams around the city, inside himself and his past. He's still Holden Caulfield, and has a particular view on things. He can be tired, and he's disappointed in the goddamn world. He's older and wiser in a sense, but in another sense he doesn't have all the answers."

JD Salinger himself, to whom the book is dedicated – "To ... the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life" – is also a character in the novel, battling with himself over what to do with the teenager who has gripped millions of readers from his very first words: "If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth."

[guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk)

The Salinger character in California's novel muses that Caulfield is "like a piece of paper upon which you have once started a story, and then locked in a box and buried deep in the ground. Now, 60 years later, you dig that same box up and continue the story from where the last sentence ended."

California said he was moved to write the book – his first - because he'd "always wondered what happened to [Caulfield] ... he deserves to have another life than just his 16 years". He'd tried, he added, to be "very respectful" to both Caulfield and Salinger's status as "American icons". "I thought about it and tried to handle it very delicately. I like the story and Holden and I wanted to keep it respectful."

The famously reclusive Salinger, who withdrew from public life in the 1950s, hasn't given permission for the sequel. "Maybe he will get upset, but I'm hoping he will be pleased," said California. "I'm not trying to lure him out of hiding – maybe he wants his privacy [but] it would be fun for me to hear what he thinks about this, and if he's pleased with the way I've portrayed Holden Caulfield and his future."

Salinger, however, has blocked all attempts to publish any of his writings not available before 1965, hindered would-be biographers, and kept his work out of Hollywood ever since the 1950 movie version of his short story *Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut*, *My Foolish Heart*, was panned by the critics. Perhaps California shouldn't hold his breath for a fairytale ending.

### Questions:

1. SOAPSTone
2. Would you read a sequel to *The Catcher in the Rye*? Explain.
3. Do you think it right that Salinger prevented this author from publishing a sequel? Explain.
4. Should Salinger's estate allow the sequel to be published? Explain.