

The Catcher in the Rye - What Happens Next-

by Paul de Denus

I'm not going to tell you much, only that I didn't go back to school. Those morons didn't want me back anyway. Mr. Antolini, my old English teacher talked it up with the faculty at Pencey about my potential but I'd be crazy to go back. To tell the truth, I wasn't in the mood. You got to be in the mood to try something again especially if it didn't work out the first time. I don't miss any of those lousy creeps anyway. I bet if I went back, Old Stradlater would still be combing his gorgeous locks in front of the same goddam mirror. He spent half his life in front of a mirror. I swear he did.

I decided instead to come out to Hollywood and stay with my brother D.B. for a while. I probably told you about him. He's a Hollywood writer and writing a new movie. I'm staying at his house. It's not some crummy place either. It's all organized and everything with a pool that looks out onto the hills. That's what they call the mountains out here. The Hills. That kind of thing drives me crazy. It really does. Like some rich bastard woke up one day and decided it would be smart to start calling mountains *hills*. Like it was a brilliant idea. Maybe his phony wife thought it was sophisticated. Strictly for the birds.

I can tell you everything in Hollywood is phony. It's all make-believe. That's what they do out here for a living. They make up corny stuff. Everyone is a show-off. Like some dopey looking guy in the movies isn't just an actor. He's known as a celeb. I could puke every time I hear that word. That's what they call them. Celebs. The actresses fall all over themselves trying to become celebs themselves or a girlfriend of some lousy celeb. D.B. says that's just the way it is in Hollywood. It's the new thing. Most people aren't that bad. I wouldn't argue with him. Why bother. These morons

wouldn't know a mountain from a molehill even if they stepped in one.

I've been hanging out by D.B.'s pool. It's pretty small. It's got a bunch of cactus plants sticking out of giant pots around it. Real California. The weather's not bad either. Much better than New York. D.B. advised me to work on my tan. He says I look sickly. He should look in a goddam mirror. His English girlfriend hangs out sometimes. She's pretty sexy I have to admit. D.B. pretty good at that sort of thing. Girls I mean. She's all skinny all over and wears those big sunglasses all the time. It's a phony Hollywood thing. Every jerk and their brother out here wear sunglasses. They're real grand she says. God I hate that word.

D.B. wants to write a script about me. About all that boring stuff that happened in New York. That knocked me out. I told him it wasn't such a good idea. Besides, who would want to be in a picture like that? To tell the truth, it was all kind of depressing. In New York I mean. I didn't tell him about meeting a prostitute. It was too embarrassing. I wouldn't want any sexy parts to be in a movie anyway. Not that there were any. Then I thought about that dirty crooked bastard Maurice punching me. We had a disagreement over money. For the prostitute I mean. He got all bent out of shape and took a swing at me. I got upset which I wasn't too crazy about. I tried not to show it. I wouldn't want some phony crying on the big screen. Except a flit like James Dean. How depressing would that be? Then I thought about old Spencer, my history teacher and to tell you the truth, an actor like Melvyn Douglas could play him exactly, only bony and wheezy and all. The thing is, I couldn't think of anyone to play Jane. Jane Gallagher. She's a girl I know. I wouldn't want anyone to anyway. I don't think there's even one actress that could play her. Not in all of Hollywood I bet.

Anyway, D.B. said he'd work on it all. I can stay at his place as long as I want. He said whatever he wrote he would let me read first. I wasn't going to stop him. If something like that became a movie, I'd be real surprised. I swear to God I would be. *The goddam movies. They can ruin you. I'm not kidding.*

