

**“Cinderella”: An Excerpt From *Bedtime Stories with Holden Caulfield***

“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” (Salinger 120). For instance, a couple summers ago there was a girl I liked quite a lot. She was my neighbor, but I hadn’t really spent time with her before that summer. She was always off with her father *vacationing*. She’s one of those girls that are always off *doing* something.

So we finally got to talking. She told me how her father had passed away. On a goddam yacht and all. And he wasn’t even that old. That wasn’t even the bad part though. She’d already lost her mother, and her step-mom and stepsisters were practically witches. They kept her locked up all day and made her do all the chores. She broke down right in front of me.

We became pretty good friends. Those kind of experiences can do that to you. When her family went to town she’d sneak out and talk to me. She was always sooty because she slept by the ashes, but she was a very attractive girl. “I don’t know why. It was just that she looked so damn *nice*” (275). Later in the summer we got around to necking a lot. Her goddam family would always come home though. Right in the middle of it. I always had to run. She wasn’t even supposed to have friends. She was so lonely she talked to animals. Lousy animals.

Anyways, this one day she walked up and she was in a really good mood. She told me “Oh Holden, I had the most amazing time last night! I went to the grand ball and met the prince, and we danced all night!”

I felt bad for her. This was obviously some sort of dream. Girls always blow things out of proportion. She probably walked by him in the marketplace.

“Cindy, stop kidding me.”

Even if she did meet the Prince, he was huge phony. He’s always running his hands through his golden locks like a prince. Which he is, but he doesn’t have to act like one all the time. Anyways, we got in this huge fight over this stupid grand ball. I hate that goddam word. *Grand*. The whole idea of dancing with a moron prince all night at a grand ball just sickens me.

She told me her family wouldn’t let her go. A fairy godmother showed up and gave her a beautiful dress and a carriage, and sent her to the ball. What a phony lie. She said she lost a slipper and she *knew* the prince would come find her. Then she ran away back towards her house. That killed me. She just *knew*.

Funny thing was, next day the prince’s stupid gold carriage showed up at their house. The stepmother and stepsisters all flounced out in *grand* gowns and talked to the phony prince. I couldn’t tell what the hell they were doing from over the fence. Suddenly, Cindy came out. She had this goddam smirk on right on top of those rags. Next thing I know, she’s riding off in the carriage. She was right. Damn near killed me.

#### Works Cited

Salinger, J.D. *Catcher in the Rye*. Little, Brown and Company, Boston: 1951.

## Rhetorical Analysis

I chose to write “Cinderella” in the style of J.D. Salinger (from Holden Caulfield’s perspective) because, to me, the main ideas interact in a dynamic and interesting way. The main idea of “Cinderella” is (arguably) that true love depends on nothing but human interactions; who you are as a person is the greatest factor. However, Cinderella, to even meet the prince, has to dress up and make a show of herself at the ball. Throughout *Catcher in the Rye*, Holden struggles to find meaning in human interactions because he alienates himself out of a fear of intimacy. Some argue that Holden’s quest is to find someone he can connect with on the same level as his interactions with Allie (his deceased brother), yet he will always fail while he judges the adult world as “phony”. Cinderella strives to find true love, and accepts the phoniness and materialism of the adult world by dressing up and attending a ball. Keeping the original form while changing the tone and narrator helps to add to the satirical nature of my altered fairy-tale. Holden’s unexpected, ironic, and cynical voice pulls the audience in immediately. This voice, the use of italics, and his colorful language present an incongruity. Holden and Cindy’s worlds of literature are in a way complete opposites: fairy-tales are the epitome of untrue and unrealistic (requiring suspension of disbelief more than any other genre) while Holden is somberly realistic to the point of depression. This incongruity of perspective combines with my incongruous tonal interpretation of the story (cynicism and swearing in a fairy-tale) to present an ultimately humorous “bedtime story” with a serious message. While Holden’s cynicism completely prevents him from finding meaningful interactions, Cinderella’s optimism and social conformism help her to

be happy in the end. In keeping with the traditional version of telling fairy-tales, I have added a moral to the end of Holden's bedtime story. The moral is: there is so much phoniness, conformity, and corruption of innocence in the adult world. However, in order to find meaningful interactions, one must attempt (to a degree) to put this out of mind and put yourself out in the world- you will not find someone you truly love and interact with on a meaningful level without meeting many people you feel differently about first.