

## J.D. Salinger's Personal Life

Lots of people have asked me for "the goodies" on JDS' personal life. Frankly, I don't understand why. Because so many have asked, and keep asking, I thought I'd put down my reasons. Remember, though, that this isn't a monarchy. It's not even a democracy. It's just my opinion. Please feel free to disagree.

My main reason to respect Salinger's privacy is just that, respect. He has asked very loudly for us to leave him alone, and who can blame him? If you were in his place, would you want hundreds (maybe thousands) of people tramping up your front steps to talk to you every year? How about a thousand letters from people who expect you to respond and then get angry when you don't? Even if every letter and every person just said "thanks for everything you gave me", I suspect it would get a bit old. Remember, he's not "the writer", he's a regular person who happens to have a talent for writing.

The same goes for dishing the dirt on his life. He's a private person who wrote very personal stories. I feel that, even if there is not enough on the pages to satisfy, what is there is filling enough. He gave the world one novel and 35 short stories and that's all. He has actively resisted surrenderring his whole life to public scrutiny, and that is not an easy thing to do. I refuse to chip away at that shell. Besides, who cares about his old loves and trips to Europe and family problems and all? That's what fiction is for, after all!

So, some ask, why do I reveal the 22 "missing" stories and the titles of so many others? I do it because that IS part of what he has given the world. He chose to share those with us and they are good enough to share. I'm sure he would rather have every single fan look up all those old things, even the somewhat embarrassing ones like *The Hang of It*, than tramp onto his lawn all Summer in some crazy, never-ending Woodstock.

Another question I hear often (and don't ask me why people ask me) is, "why doesn't he publish anymore?" Well, here's my guess, and remember it's just a guess. He took longer and longer working at each published piece, culminating with *Hapworth...* in 1965. This gives a really strong clue what's going on. He's a perfectionist. I have heard of him working for days just mulling over a certain way to say one little thing, and I don't doubt it. He's the opposite of the Steven Kings and Tom Clancys of the world who just say "well, that gets the point across". Salinger is trying to get it right and that's not an easy thing to do! I believe that the reason he hasn't published since 1965 is that his "projects" simply aren't done. Sure all the invasions of privacy haven't helped, and the fact that if he did publish he'd be swamped with publicity, but that wouldn't have to stop him. He could have published under a different name, something which (though others think he has) I sincerely doubt. In the *Salinger v. Random House* case, it was made public that he has prepared two full-length manuscripts. It's a pity that they're not done. I would love to see them, but not unfinished. We'll get them when (if) they're done, but let's not hold our collective breath.

