

In this chapter, Holden calls Mr. Antolini, his former teacher, feeling anxious about being caught by his parents. Mr. Antolini assures him that he can come over anytime, which signifies the strong bond they share. Holden reflects on Mr. Antolini's character, describing him as humorous and respectful, recalling an incident where Mr. Antolini compassionately helped a student, James Castle, who had died by jumping from a window.

Later, at his brother D.B.'s apartment, Holden finds his younger sister Phoebe listening to music and sitting cross-legged on the bed, creating a light-hearted atmosphere. He encourages Phoebe to dance, boasting about her dancing skills, which she indeed possesses. They share a playful moment, dancing together in a way that feels innocent and familial. Unlike most adults who dance poorly with children, Holden appreciates that Phoebe can follow his lead seamlessly, illustrating their close connection.

As they dance, Phoebe gets tired, and they sit down together. She playfully insists that her forehead is feverish, trying to impress Holden with her ability to make herself feel hot. However, this lighthearted exchange turns into a tense moment when Phoebe hears their parents return home. Holden quickly hides in the closet, his heart racing with fear of being discovered.

Their mother's entry into the room reveals her strictness and vigilance, especially concerning Phoebe's actions. She questions Phoebe's late-night activities and addresses her about smoking, though Phoebe cleverly downplays it. This interaction showcases the contrast between childhood innocence and adult concerns, deepening the chapter's emotional weight.

After a moment of tension, Phoebe urges Holden not to leave, leading him to reveal that he needs money, which she reluctantly offers despite wanting to keep it for Christmas presents. As they navigate these exchanges, Holden unexpectedly bursts into tears, overwhelmed by the gravity of leaving Phoebe and the emotional burden he carries. This poignant moment emphasizes their sibling bond and Holden's struggles with guilt and despair. Regardless, as he prepares to leave, he gives Phoebe his favorite hunting hat, symbolizing care and a wish for her to remember him, further complicating his departure from the safety he feels with her.