

Teaching Salinger's Nine Stories



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Brad McDuffie has compiled far more than a teaching aide. He provides an examination of Salinger's Nine Stories that is forensically detailed and thought provoking. Presented in two parts, the first section provides compelling overviews of each story, while the second offers a series of impressive essays contributed by eminent academics. Still, the book's greatest value may be in its ability to display the interaction between each separate story, revealing Salinger's NINE STORIES to be a unified work of art. This achievement is long overdue and is an innovative and invaluable resource.

- Kenneth Slawenski, author of J. D. SALINGER: A LIFE

This study is the most thorough and close reading that we have on Salinger's Nine Stories. It takes each story by turn and examines it carefully from its own point of view and theme and from the context of the collection. It develops a clear thesis that identifies Salinger's literary and religious intentions from "Bananafish" to "Teddy" so that the reader sees the unity and individual details with new appreciation. Questions at the end of each chapter help focus on these details and make this book an excellent teaching text. The chapter on "The Laughing Man," for example, demonstrates how Salinger's seemingly enigmatic hints illuminate his characters and plot in a masterful use of the short story form. A most helpful, well organized and insightful study.

- James Finn Cotter, Professor of English, Mount Saint Mary College

Brad McDuffie's text is a valuable addition to any classroom and will help any Salinger readers increase their pleasure and understanding of NINE STORIES. Whether young adult readers are inspired to read more by the author they loved in THE CATCHER IN THE RYE, or attend classes being taught to study Salinger's shorter masterpieces, Teaching Salinger's NINE STORIES will guide all readers into the complexities, wisdom and beauty they may experience with Salinger's shorter prose. McDuffie follows up nicely on the widely shared understanding that Salinger's "second masterpiece" is his Nine Stories. McDuffie's scholarship produces an honest and helpful reader's guide—I recommend it also because I share the text's critical respect for J. D. Salinger, as well as sharing McDuffie's belief that Salinger was one of the greatest writers of his time.

- William Hochman, co-editor of LETTERS TO J. D. SALINGER, coauthor of CRITICAL COMPANION TO J. D. SALINGER: A LITERARY REFERENCE TO HIS LIFE AND WORK

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