

Nine Stories

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Nine Stories

J D Salinger wrote *Nine Stories* with the same brilliance as *Catcher In The Rye*. His style is so unique and complex that all of his short stories are truly enjoyable. Two of those stories are *A perfect day for a bananafish* and *For Esme with love and squalor*. The main characters in both of these stories, Seymour and Sargent X, have served in World War II, and the fighting has taken its toll on them. Their physiological well being was sacrificed and as a result they are no longer the same people they were before. Both feel alienated from the

people in their life, the same people they had loved before the war.

The isolation the war has caused is carried over into their lives, and it caused these men to search for new forms of comfort and security, in the respective forms of Sybil and Esme.

In "A Perfect Day for a Bananafish," Muriel and her husband Seymour have different perspectives of life. Muriel is a carefree and complacent person, while her husband is quite strange and slightly paranoid. His paranoia is illustrated when he loses it in the hotel elevator, "I have two normal [feet](#) and I can't see the slightest God-damned reason anyone should stare at them." Muriel, however, is unacquainted with Seymour's wild breakdowns. She is rather confident that Seymour is perfectly sane as she reports to her mother on the telephone. Muriel doesn't know about this side of Seymour because he has become alienated from her after the war. Their personalities don't [match](#) anymore, if they ever did, and he is seeking some sort of understanding that he knows Muriel can not provide. Seymour's relationship with Sybil is making up for Muriel's shortcomings. Seymour is looking for the understanding of a child and the love of an adult. He wants someone who will not judge him. He realizes the impossibility of his desires with Sybil when he gets a loud reaction from her after kissing the arch of her [foot](#). Seymour has no one who understands him, which causes his feeling of

isolation. He can no longer relate to the world he lives in and with no one to provide comfort and security he is driven to suicide.

Sargent X has an interesting relationship with Esme in *For Esme with Love and Squalor*. Esme is quite aware of the horrors of war and says to Sgt. X, "I hope you return from the war with all your faculties intact." Sgt. X in fact would not have returned with all of his faculties intact if it were not for

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