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# Franny and Zooey

J.D. Salinger

*Franny  
and  
Zoey*

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**FRANNY AND ZOOEY**

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As nearly as possible in the spirit of Matthew Salinger, age one, urging a luncheon companion to accept a cool lima bean, I urge my editor, mentor and (heaven help him) closest friend, William Shawn, *genius domus* of *The New Yorker*, lover of the long shot, protector of the unprolific, defender of the hopelessly flamboyant, most unreasonably modest of born great artist-editors, to accept this pretty skimpy-looking book.

# *Franny*



THOUGH brilliantly sunny, Saturday morning was overcoat weather again, not just topcoat weather, as it had been all week and as everyone had hoped it would stay for the big weekend—the weekend of the Yale game. Of the twenty-some young men who were waiting at the station for their dates to arrive on the ten-fifty-two, no more than six or seven were out on the cold, open platform. The rest were standing around in hatless, smoky little groups of twos and threes and fours inside the heated waiting room, talking in voices that, almost without exception, sounded collegiately dogmatic, as though each young man, in his strident, conversational turn, was clearing up, once and for all, some highly controversial issue, one that the outside, non-matriculating world had been bungling, provocatively or not, for centuries.

Lane Coutell, in a Burberry raincoat that apparently had a wool liner buttoned into it, was one of the six or seven boys out on the open platform. Or, rather, he was and he wasn't one of them. For ten minutes or more, he had deliberately been standing just out of conversation

range of the other boys, his back against the free Christian Science literature rack, his ungloved hands in his coat pockets. He was wearing a maroon cashmere muffler which had hiked up on his neck, giving him next to no protection against the cold. Abruptly, and rather absently, he took his right hand out of his coat pocket and started to adjust the muffler, but before it was adjusted, he changed his mind and used the same hand to reach inside his coat and take out a letter from the inside pocket of his jacket. He began to read it immediately, with his mouth not quite closed.

The letter was written—typewritten—on pale-blue notepaper. It had a handled, unfresh look, as if it had been taken out of its envelope and read several times before:

Tuesday I think

DEAREST LANE,

I have no idea if you will be able to decipher this as the noise in the dorm is absolutely incredible tonight and I can hardly hear myself think. So if I spell anything wrong kindly have the kindness to overlook it. Incidentally I've taken your advice and resorted to the dictionary a lot lately, so if it cramps my style your to blame. Anyway I just got your beautiful letter and I love you to pieces, distraction, etc., and can hardly wait for the weekend. It's too bad about not being able to get me in Croft House, but I don't actually care where I stay as long as it's warm and no bugs and I see you occasionally, i.e. every single minute. I've been going i.e. crazy lately. I absolutely adore your letter, especially the part about Eliot. I think I'm beginning



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to look down on all poets except Sappho. I've been reading her like mad, and no vulgar remarks, please. I may even do my term thing on her if I decide to go out for honors and if I can get the moron they assigned me as an advisor to let me. "Delicate Adonis is dying, Cytherea, what shall we do? Beat your breasts, maidens, and rend your tunics." Isn't that *marvellous*? She keeps *doing* that, too. Do you love me? You didn't say once in your horrible letter. I hate you when your being hopelessly super-male and retiscent (sp.?). Not really *hate* you but am constitutionally against strong, silent men. Not that you aren't strong but you know what I mean. It's getting so noisy in here I can hardly hear myself think. Anyway I love you and want to get this off special delivery so you can get it in plenty of time if I can find a stamp in this madhouse. I love you I love you I love you. Do you actually know I've only danced with you *twice* in eleven months? Not counting that time at the Vanguard when you were so tight. I'll probably be hopelessly selfconscious. Incidentally I'll kill you if there's a receiving line at this thing. Till Saturday, my flower!!

All my love,

FRANNY

XXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXX

P.S. Daddy got his X-rays back from the hospital and we're all so relieved. Its a growth but it isn't malignant. I spoke to Mother on the phone last night. Incidentally she sent her regards to you, so you can *relax* about that Friday night. I don't even think they heard us come in.

P.P.S. I sound so unintelligent and dimwitted when I write to you. Why? I give you my permission to analyze it. Let's just try to have a marvel-

## FRANNY

lous time this weekend. I mean not try to analyze everything to death for once, if possible, especially me. I love you.

FRANCES (her mark)

Lane was about halfway through this particular reading of the letter when he was interrupted—intruded upon, trespassed upon—by a burly-set young man named Ray Sorenson, who wanted to know if Lane knew what this bastard Rilke was all about. Lane and Sorenson were both in *Modern European Literature* 251 (open to seniors and graduate students only) and had been assigned the Fourth of Rilke's "Duino Elegies" for Monday. Lane, who knew Sorenson only slightly but had a vague, categorical aversion to his face and manner, put away his letter and said that he didn't know but that he thought he'd understood most of it. "You're lucky," Sorenson said. "You're a fortunate man." His voice carried with a minimum of vitality, as though he had come over to speak to Lane out of boredom or restiveness, not for any sort of human discourse. "Christ, it's cold," he said, and took a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket. Lane noticed a faded but distracting enough lipstick streak on the lapel of Sorenson's camel's-hair coat. It looked as though it had been there for weeks, maybe months, but he didn't know Sorenson well enough to mention it, nor, for that matter, did he give a damn. Besides, the train was arriving. Both boys turned a sort of half left

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to face the incoming engine. Almost at the same time, the door to the waiting room banged open, and the boys who had been keeping themselves warm began to come out to meet the train, most of them giving the impression of having at least three lighted cigarettes in each hand.

Lane himself lit a cigarette as the train pulled in. Then, like so many people, who, perhaps, ought to be issued only a very probational pass to meet trains, he tried to empty his face of all expression that might quite simply, perhaps even beautifully, reveal how he felt about the arriving person.

Franny was among the first of the girls to get off the train, from a car at the far, northern end of the platform. Lane spotted her immediately, and despite whatever it was he was trying to do with his face, his arm that shot up into the air was the whole truth. Franny saw it, and him, and waved extravagantly back. She was wearing a sheared-raccoon coat, and Lane, walking toward her quickly but with a slow face, reasoned to himself, with suppressed excitement, that he was the only one on the platform who really *knew* Franny's coat. He remembered that once, in a borrowed car, after kissing Franny for a half hour or so, he had kissed her coat lapel, as though it were a perfectly desirable, organic extension of the person herself.

"Lane!" Franny greeted him pleasurably—and she was not one for emptying her face of expression. She threw her arms around him and

kissed him. It was a station-platform kiss—spontaneous enough to begin with, but rather inhibited in the follow-through, and with somewhat of a forehead-bumping aspect. "Did you get my letter?" she asked, and added, almost in the same breath, "You look almost frozen, you poor man. Why didn't you wait inside? Did you get my letter?"

"Which letter?" Lane said, picking up her suitcase. It was navy blue with white leather binding, like half a dozen other suitcases that had just been carried off the train.

"You didn't *get* it? I mailed it *Wednesday*. Oh, God! I even took it down to the post—"

"Oh, that one. Yes. This all the bags you brought? What's the book?"

Franny looked down at her left hand. She had a small pea-green clothbound book in it. "This? Oh, just something," she said. She opened her handbag and stuffed the book into it, and followed Lane down the long platform toward the taxi stand. She put her arm through his, and did most of the talking, if not all of it. There was something, first, about a dress in her bag that had to be ironed. She said she'd bought a really darling little iron that looked like it went with a doll house, but had forgotten to bring it. She said she didn't think she'd known more than three girls on the train—Martha Farrar, Tippie Tibbett, and Eleanor somebody, whom she'd met years ago, in her boarding-school days, at Exeter or someplace. Everybody else on the

train, Franny said, looked very Smith, except for two absolutely Vassar types and one absolutely Bennington or Sarah Lawrence type. The Bennington-Sarah Lawrence type looked like she'd spent the whole train ride in the john, sculpting or painting or something, or as though she had a leotard on under her dress. Lane, walking rather too fast, said he was sorry he hadn't been able to get her into Croft House—that was hopeless, of course—but that he'd got her into this very nice, cozy place. Small, but clean and all that. She'd like it, he said, and Franny immediately had a vision of a white clapboard rooming house. Three girls who didn't know each other in one room. Whoever got there first would get the lumpy day bed to herself, and the other two would share a double bed with an absolutely fantastic mattress. "Lovely," she said with enthusiasm. Sometimes it was hell to conceal her impatience over the male of the species' general ineptness, and Lane's in particular. It reminded her of a rainy night in New York, just after theatre, when Lane, with a suspicious excess of curbside charity, had let that really horrible man in the dinner jacket take that taxi away from him. She hadn't especially minded that—that is, *God*, it would be awful to have to be a man and have to get taxis in the rain—but she remembered Lane's really horrible, hostile look at her as he reported back to the curb. Now, feeling oddly guilty as she thought about that and other things, she gave Lane's arm a special little pres-

sure of simulated affection. The two of them got into a cab. The navy-blue bag with the white leather binding went up front with the driver.

"We'll drop your bag and stuff where you're staying—just chuck them in the door—and then we'll go get some lunch," Lane said. "I'm starved." He leaned forward and gave an address to the driver.

"Oh, it's lovely to see you!" Franny said as the cab moved off. "I've *missed* you." The words were no sooner out than she realized that she didn't mean them at all. Again with guilt, she took Lane's hand and tightly, warmly laced fingers with him.

ABOUT an hour later, the two were sitting at a comparatively isolated table in a restaurant called Sickler's, downtown, a highly favored place among, chiefly, the intellectual fringe of students at the college—the same students, more or less, who, had they been Yale or Harvard men, might rather too casually have steered their dates away from Mory's or Cronin's. Sickler's, it might be said, was the only restaurant in town where the steaks weren't "*that thick*"—thumb and index finger held an inch apart. Sickler's was Snails. Sickler's was where a student and his date either both ordered salad or, usually, neither of them did, because of the garlic seasoning. Franny and Lane were both having Martinis. When the drinks had first been served to them, ten or fifteen minutes earlier,

Lane had sampled his, then sat back and briefly looked around the room with an almost palpable sense of well-being at finding himself (he must have been sure no one could dispute) in the right place with an unimpeachably right-looking girl—a girl who was not only extraordinarily pretty but, so much the better, not too categorically cashmere sweater and flannel skirt. Franny had seen this momentary little exposure, and had taken it in for what it was, neither more nor less. But by some old, standing arrangement with her psyche, she elected to feel guilty for having seen it, caught it, and sentenced herself to listen to Lane's ensuing conversation with a special semblance of absorption.

Lane was speaking now as someone does who has been monopolizing conversation for a good quarter of an hour or so and who believes he has just hit a stride where his voice can do absolutely no wrong. "I mean, to put it crudely," he was saying, "the thing you could say he lacks is testicularity. Know what I mean?" He was slouched rhetorically forward, toward Franny, his receptive audience, a supporting forearm on either side of his Martini.

"Lacks what?" Franny said. She had had to clear her throat before speaking, it had been so long since she had said anything at all.

Lane hesitated. "Masculinity," he said.

"I heard you the first time."

"Anyway, that was the motif of the thing, so to speak—what I was trying to bring out in a

fairly subtle way," Lane said, very closely following the trend of his own conversation. "I mean, *God*. I honestly thought it was going to go over like a goddam lead balloon, and when I got it back with this goddam 'A' on it in letters about six feet high, I swear I nearly keeled over."

Franny again cleared her throat. Apparently her self-imposed sentence of unadulterated good-listenership had been fully served. "Why?" she asked.

Lane looked faintly interrupted. "Why what?"

"Why'd you think it was going to go over like a lead balloon?"

"I just told you. I just got through saying. This guy Brughman is a big Flaubert man. Or at least I thought he was."

"Oh," Franny said. She smiled. She sipped her Martini. "This is marvellous," she said, looking at the glass. "I'm so glad it's not about twenty to one. I hate it when they're absolutely all gin."

Lane nodded. "Anyway, I think I've got the goddam paper in my room. If we get a chance over the weekend, I'll read it to you."

"Marvellous. I'd love to hear it."

Lane nodded again. "I mean I didn't say anything too goddam world-shaking or anything like that." He shifted his position in the chair. "But—I don't know—I think the emphasis I put on *why* he was so neurotically attracted to the *mot juste* wasn't too bad. I mean in the light



of what we know today. Not just psychoanalysis and all that crap, but certainly to a certain extent. You know what I mean. I'm no Freudian man or anything like that, but certain things you can't just pass over as capital-F Freudian and let them go at that. I mean to a certain extent I think I was perfectly justified to point out that none of the really good boys—Tolstoy, Dostoevski, *Shakespeare*, for Chrissake—were such goddam word-squeezers. They just *wrote*. Know what I mean?" Lane looked at Franny somewhat expectantly. She seemed to him to have been listening with extra-special intentness.

"You going to eat your olive, or what?"

Lane gave his Martini glass a brief glance, then looked back at Franny. "No," he said coldly. "You want it?"

"If you don't," Franny said. She knew from Lane's expression that she had asked the wrong question. What was worse, she suddenly didn't want the olive at all and wondered why she had even *asked* for it. There was nothing to do, though, when Lane extended his Martini glass to her but to accept the olive and consume it with apparent relish. She then took a cigarette from Lane's pack on the table, and he lit it for her and one for himself.

After the interruption of the olive, a short silence came over the table. When Lane broke it, it was because he was not one to keep a punch line to himself for any length of time. "This guy Brughman thinks I ought to publish the