

# The Good Girl

(Drama/Comedy) (2002)  
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## Major Characters

Justine (“Teeny”).....Jennifer Aniston  
A 30 year old store clerk who is trapped in a bad job and a bad marriage.

Holden (John).....Jake Gyllenhaal  
An emotionally disturbed but handsome 22 year old who works at the same store as Justine, who begins to have an affair with her.

Phil.....John C. Reilly  
Justine’s husband, who is a house painter by day, who spends most of his free time watching TV and smoking marijuana.

Bubba.....Tim Blake Nelson  
Phil’s best friend and co-worker, who spends all of his time watching TV and smoking marijuana at Phil and Justine’s house.

Corny.....Mike White  
A security guard at the store where Justine works, who is a very religious and conservative Christian.

Cheryl.....Zooey Deschanel  
A clerk at the store, who loves to say inappropriate things to customers.

Jack.....John Carrol Lynch  
The generally nice and conservative store manager.

Gwen.....Deborah Rush  
Another clerk at the store who is one of Justine’s best friends.

## Plot Summary

This film is the story of a sensitive, pretty and somewhat depressed 30 year old woman who finds herself living in a small Texas town, trapped in a job that she hates and a marriage that is dying. One day while working at the Retail Rodeo store, she meets a new cashier named Holden. He is only 22, but Justine finds him very mysterious and attractive. Gradually the two get to know each other, and soon Justine decides to have an affair with him, despite the fact that he is clearly an unstable young man with deep psychological problems.

As their affair grows more intense, Justine must work hard to keep her life under control. She no longer loves her husband Phil, but they are still desperately trying to have a baby, and when Phil's friend Bubba finds out about her relationship with Holden, she finds herself in a crisis. Meanwhile, Holden himself grows ever more depressed and disturbed when he discovers that he can no longer keep Justine just for himself. In a last desperate effort to hold on to her, Holden tries to convince Justine to leave town for a new life with him, away from Phil, Bubba and the Retail Rodeo. For Justine, this forces her into a critical life decision between two bad choices....

### Some Words and Expressions that You May not Know

*Justine lives on with her horrible job and marriage,  
and then meets the mysterious Holden.*

You see the world filled with sweet candy and such.

In this context, a way of saying "and things like that."

You're on death row.

The place in prison where those who are sentenced (punished) to die pass their final days of life, or more generally, the condition of being sentenced to die for having committed a crime.

Are other folk's cows chewing cud till....their heads roll?

"Folks" is a word for people (or parents). "Cud" is food that has already been chewed by an animal. Note that "until"---> "till" in casual speech.

It's called work; You might want to give it a go some day.

"To give it a go" is a slangy way of saying to try something.

There's a Retail Rodeo special on aisle 3.

Here, a "special" is a lower than usual price. An "aisle" in a store is a passage for walking between products.

Liquid drain cleaner has churning power and it will churn right through your pipes.

If a liquid "churns," it moves about violently, perhaps eating or dissolving whatever it comes in contact with.

Shove something new and clean up your filthy pipes.

A ridiculous thing to say to a store's customers! "To shove" something is to forcefully push it (in this case inside a pipe), and "filthy" is an a powerful little adjective that means extremely dirty.

Well, we don't teach fire and brimstone.

A reference to the belief by some Christians that those who do not accept Jesus will burn in a hell of fire and brimstone (which is a type of rock).

The Ten Commandments; Gotta live by those.

"The Ten Commandments" are the basic rules of life expressed in the Bible, which prohibits such things as killing and stealing.

"To live by" certain rules is to agree to follow them.

Maybe you'll have night after night of eternal hell fire all by yourself. Just kidding you.

"Eternal hell fire" refers to the torture of going to hell forever, for not having accepted Jesus (in theory!). "To kid" a person is to joke around with them, or to say something to them that is not serious.

Paint stings. It feels like I've been attacked by hornets in my eyeballs.

"Hornets" are a type of flying insect that sting like bees.

Oh, for Christ's sake.

A common way of expressing anger or frustration.

Y'all got paint all over it. This ain't gonna come off! Damn it, Phil!

"Y'all" is a way of addressing a group of people, but only in the Southern states of the US (such as Texas, Alabama, etc...). If paint won't "come off," it can't be removed or eliminated. "Damn it" is a crude but common way of expressing anger.

You two were stoned. You keep frying your brain like that and you're gonna slip off a ladder and crack open your head bone.

"Stoned" is a colloquial adjective that refers to those people who are under the influence of marijuana or other types of illegal drugs. Note that "going to" ----> "gonna" in rapid speech. Also note that a person's "head bone" is much more commonly refers to as their skull!

You do really stupid things when you're high.

If a person is "high" on drugs, they are feeling its influence, often by feeling dizzy, spacey or just strange or different.

We finally get nice things...and then everything gets messed up.

If something is "messed up," it is injured or damaged.

Why is this TV buzzing?

"To buzz" is to make the sound that a bee makes when flying nearby.

The Catcher in the Rye; I'm named after it.

A classic and very famous book, written by J.D. Salinger in the 1950s, about a teenage boy who is forced into a mental hospital. Holden has named himself after Holden Caulfield, the main character in this book.

He's put upon by society, the hypocrisy of the world.

The way Holden uses "put upon" probably means frustrated, mistreated or disgusted by, but this is not clear. "Hypocrisy" is a critical word that refers to the act of pretending to be what one is not, or to believe what one does not (A politician who talks of the importance of telling the truth but who also always lies is a hypocrite).

I noticed you're not very social.

If a person is "social," they like to talk and interact with other people.

He has a nervous breakdown, goes to a mental hospital.

If a person has a "nervous breakdown," they become so emotionally overwhelmed, nervous or depressed that they can not take care of themselves. A "mental hospital" is a place where people with serious psychological or emotional problems are treated.

You don't get paid to pick your crack.

In this case, a reference to the crack between the cheeks of a person's ass.

I'm not sure I can do makeovers. :: Oh come on, a little pancake, eyeliner, mascara, rouge on the cheeks, and powder it up!

A "makeover" is the act of changing a person's appearance. "Come on" is the most versatile phrasal verb in English, here meaning "be serious." The list that follows refers to various types of makeup, including "mascara" and "rouge," which are used to color a person's cheeks. "Powder" can be a type of makeup, but "powder it up" is not really used.

Take a moist tissue, roll it in a ball, and toss it in their face.

If a tissue is "moist," it is slightly wet. "To toss" something is to throw it.

Jeez-Louise, I'm talking to a tree stump, girl.

"Jeez-Louise" is a silly way of expressing emotion such as surprise. A "tree stump" is the bottom part of the tree that grows out of the ground, or more colloquially as here, a very quiet person.

It's why you walk around with that hung-jaw look on your face.

If a person looks like their jaw is hanging way down below their mouth, they probably look very sad or depressed.

He says I'm fertile. He says I can repopulate the entire planet. :: Then what's the deal here?

"To repopulate" a place is to fill it again with people. In this case, "What's the deal?" is a slangy way of asking "What exactly are you telling me?"

Or what would be really neat is a paint that could change the molecular structure of a house, like a chemical acid deal.

"Neat" is a way of saying excellent or fun. The "molecular structure" of something refers to the molecules that its made of. A "chemical acid deal" is Bubba's slangy way of referring to strange chemical interactions.

I think you two are a pair of potheads.

A funny slang word for people who smoke a lot of marijuana (pot).

This is a hand lotion, so don't put it on any other part of your body, even if that part needs lubrication.

"Lubrication" is any lotion or liquid that makes a surface more smooth or slippery. The above is obviously a ridiculous thing to tell a customer!

We try to keep frivolous lawsuits to a minimum, unless of course, the customer is at fault.

If a lawsuit is "frivolous," it is not valid or serious, and is generally a waste of time for all involved, including judges and defendants.

Do you always wear makeup?

Another word for cosmetics.

You might be interested in purchasing some of the products I used today.

"To purchase" something is to buy it.

These are bargain prices.

If a price is a "bargain," it is much cheaper than usual.

*Justine, 30, sad and lonely, begins an affair with  
Holden, 22, lonely and perhaps a little bit crazy.*

I hate Gwen; I don't know what the hell she is so happy about.

A slangy and common filler that is used to express emotions such as anger or frustration.

I'm starting to understand why maniacs go out there and get shotguns and shoot everybody to pieces.

A "maniac" is a good word for a crazy and often dangerous person.

A "shotgun" is a small gun that's frequently used for hunting.

Your lips are real pouty, like a woman, and your eyes always look sad, the way they droop off to the sides.

If lips are "pouty," they look unhappy, and if something "droops," it hangs, sags or falls low under its own weight.

Do you want to come in? :: I don't know; I'm in a funk.

If a person is "in a funk," they are feeling sad or depressed.

They call you Tom? :: It's my slave name.

This is Holden's ridiculous way of referring to the name that his parents gave him when he was born.

They don't get me.

This is Holden's way of saying his parents don't understand or appreciate him. This usage is common in this film, but "get" is rarely ever used to mean understand when referring to a person in general, as opposed to a specific statement or idea.

He talks but he doesn't think. I'm **sick of it**.

To be "sick of" something is to be extremely tired of it.

I had to **drop out** because I had a problem with drinking and stuff.

To "drop out" of school is to quit going. "Stuff" is a very general word for things, or in this case, things related to alcohol and drugs.

I've got to prove to my folks that I can fly straight.

Holden's very slangy way of saying that he needs to show his parents that he can stop drinking and return to school.

Now, it would be reason enough to go.

A stylistic way of saying "a good enough reason..."

I like how you kept to yourself.

If a person "keeps to themselves," they don't talk to others.

After living in the dark for so long, a glimpse of the light can make you giddy.

A "glimpse" is a very short look or view. If a person feels "giddy," they feel extremely happy, but in a silly and lighthearted way.

Has a special fate been calling you and you're not listening?

A person's "fate" is their destiny or unavoidable future.

Is this your last best chance? Or are you going to the grave with unlived lives in your veins?

A "grave" is the piece of land where dead bodies are buried, and a person's "veins" are the tiny tubes that carry blood.

All that smooth skin, long hair.

If skin is "smooth," it has a continuous even surface, without bumps.

If I was a woman, I'd be a slut. A lesbian slut.

A "lesbian" is a female homosexual, and a "slut" is a stupid but still used slang word for a woman who sleeps with lots of men.

Gwen says smoking marijuana lowers your sperm. :: Lowers it to where?

Note that when a person is talking about male fertility, you should say certain products or drugs can lower one's *sperm count*.

Maybe every time you smoke a little doobie, you're killing an unborn child.

A very slangy word for a marijuana cigarette.

Why are you limping? :: I twisted up my ankle on the stairs.

“To limp” is to walk with difficulty, or favoring one leg over the other.

“To twist” your ankle is to injure it by turning it too sharply.

I was wondering, maybe you could give me a ride home.

“To give someone” a ride is to transport them in your car. Very useful!

Every woman should have one beau before any woman has two beaus.

A French word (pronounced ‘bow’) for a lover or boyfriend.

There’s a Retail Rodeo special on all bulk candy on aisle four.

In a store, “a special” is a lower than usual price, and anything sold in “bulk” is sold in very big bags, boxes or other containers.

Ghouls and goblins, witches and warlocks, wandering these aisles, day after day.

A “ghoul” is an evil being that robs graves, a “goblin” is a bad spirit,

a “witch” is a horrible old woman who flies on a broom handle, and a

“warlock” is a male witch who practices evil magic. “To wander” is travel around aimlessly, without direction.

I put a Halloween curse on your hellish heads.

“Halloween” is the October 31<sup>st</sup> holiday when kids go to neighborhood houses asking for candy. A “curse” is an evil magic spell that brings bad luck or fortune, often made by a witch. “Hellish” means horrible or awful.

Happy Halloween. :: I’m not a pagan, but thanks all the same.

An interesting word, often used very negatively, that refers to any religion that is not Christian, Jewish or perhaps Islamic. Many conservative Christians feel Halloween is a pagan holiday!

Maybe you should put some cold water on it, so it doesn’t swell up and inflame.

If an injured body part “swells up,” it grows bigger.

“To inflame” is to become hot, red or sensitive.

It’s baby-making sperm, but I suppose it couldn’t hurt to have it confirmed by an expert.

“To suppose” is to assume or believe. If a suggestion “couldn’t hurt,” it’s considered a good idea. “To confirm” something is to verify that it is true.

Oh, who gives a shit?! Who needs a fucking baby anyway?

If a person doesn’t “give a shit” about something, they don’t care about it.

Crude but common. Note that a modified version of “fuck” can function as an adjective! Also crude but common.

Why don’t you get that goddamn TV fixed?

A vulgar filler word to express such emotions as anger or frustration.

Where is he? :: He’s got the day off.

If a person has “the day off,” they don’t need to go to work that day.

He came by this morning with it.

“To come by” is a very common phrasal verb meaning to visit.

Because of you, I’ll be quitting the Retail Rodeo. The last two days here have been the most God awful of my life.

A dramatic way of saying horrible.

I’ve not been able to get rid of you in my head.

“To get rid of” a person is to eliminate or destroy them, or more generally, make them go away.

I’d given up long ago on being gotten by someone else, and then you came along.

This is Holden’s way of telling Justine that he always thought he would be alone until he met her.

The idea that I could be gotten because of circumstance or never get gotten was the worst feeling I ever felt.

“Circumstance” (usually said in the plural---*circumstances*) refers to the facts of a situation. The above sentence is Holden’s strange way of saying he was afraid that he would always be alone just because of bad luck, but note that no educated speaker would really ever say “get gotten”!

If for this reason you could change your mind, and would want to be with me body and soul, meet me after work.

If you are with a person “body and soul,” you are connected to them both emotionally or spiritually, and physically (or in this case, sexually).

I will be waiting for you at 5:00 outside of Chuck E Cheese.

This is a well known restaurant. In the context of such a serious speech, it just sounds funny to say this.

***Tragedy hits the Retail Rodeo as Justine and Holden continue their affair.***

I had a dream I was sprouting a beard made of bean sprouts.

“To sprout” is to grow rapidly, like a plant. “Bean sprouts” are a type of vegetable or bean that has a root attached to it.

I’m gonna let you off here, OK?

Note that “going to”---> “gonna” in rapid speech. “To let a person off” at a particular place is to drive them there (A more common version is to *drop* somebody off).

You’re a doll.

One way of telling a person they are extremely nice and much appreciated, often because they just did something so helpful.

I'm really glad you came. :: I just ditched Gwen at the hospital.

"Glad" means happy or pleased. "To ditch" a person is to run away or leave them, even though they were expecting you to stay and help them.

That's \$45 even, and I need you to fill this out for me.

In this context, "even" means exactly. "To fill out" a form is to write in information in all the empty spaces.

Gwen got really sick today. She was throwing up all over the store.

A truly sad phrasal verb meaning to vomit (Holden later says "to sick up," but like much of what he says, this is never used).

I went down to St. Catherine's to check up on Gwen.

"To check up on" a person is to visit them in order to make sure they're OK, or to make sure they're doing what they're supposed to be doing.

She was heaving up until there was nothing left to heave. Doctor said she must have eaten something with some kind of parasite in it, some kind of bacteria.

"To heave up" is to throw up, but this is fairly rare. A "parasite" is a tiny bug or germ that can make you sick, and "bacteria" is also a biological word for tiny organisms or parasites that live in plants and animals.

I bet it was those blackberries.

A widely used way of saying "I'm sure that..."

You're going to have to supervise cosmetics.

"To supervise" a department in a store is to run it or be in charge of it.

I crave you. I want to know everything about you.

"To crave" something (or someone) is to very strongly desire it.

I wanna knock your head open and see what's inside.

Note that "want to"---> "wanna" in rapid speech. "To knock open" something is to hit it so hard that it cracks or splits into two pieces.

It was about a boy who was put upon, whose mother was cold and selfish and whose father wanted him to play football.

Again, this expression is common in this movie but not in everyday language. Here, it perhaps means frustrated or misunderstood by society.

Sure enough, the boy comes to believe that no one could ever really know him. He starts acting out, drinking and taking all kinds of drugs.

"Sure enough" is a way of saying "As one could have easily predicted..."

"To act out" is to behave in a loud, unstable and possibly violent way.

At the end, the boy kills himself by taking a bottle of bug poison.

Any kind of chemical that kills insects.

Your stories are **intense**. :: I just want to leave some kind of legacy.

“Intense” is a key adjective that means powerful or marked by great emotion, energy or determination. A person’s “legacy” is what they leave behind after they die, that other people still appreciate or are aware of.

You’re mysterious...and dark and twisted. :: I’m doomed to hell, aren’t I?

If a person is “dark,” they are usually quiet and often thinking about such things as death and suffering. If they are “twisted,” they are often very strange or sexually perverted. A person who is “doomed” is likely to suffer something horrible in the future.

He’ll beat me, but he will kill you.

“To beat” a person is to physically hurt or attack them.

She just passed. She passed away.

“To pass away” is to die, but note that it is becoming a bit more common to say just “pass” (though that still sounds a bit odd).

She was on life support all day, and...It was God’s will. No one can understand it, no point trying.

In a hospital, if a person is on “life support,” they are being kept alive by complicated machines. A person’s “will” is their determination or desire (though note that religious people will often say that God also has a will).

Gwen died today. :: Are you **kidding**? What for?

“To kid” a person is to say something in a joking manner, or not seriously. “What for?” means “why?”, and thus this is an interesting dialog because it sounds funny. Here, it’s better to say “what happened!?”

Knocked off early, about 4:00

If a person “knocks off” from work, they leave work.

Gwen was a real class act.

If a person is a “class act,” they have a lot of class, style or grace.

If any of y’all need to collect your thoughts and remember Gwen...

If you “collect your thoughts,” you stop to reflect on something serious.

Holden had the notion to spend the day at Gabler’s Creek, skinny dipping and making love.

A “notion” is an idea, or in this case, desire or inclination. A “creek” is a small river, and to “skinny dip” is to go swimming while naked.

He said we’d be like Adam and Eve, rolling in the sticks and dirt, and being one with the wilderness.

According to the Bible, Adam and Eve were the first people on earth. “To be one with” something is to be spiritually connected to it (this is a much loved expression for 1960s hippies). The “wilderness” refers to the great outdoors, or nature in general, outside of major cities.

He was so fixed on the idea.

To be “fixed on” an idea is to be focused on it, or even obsessed with it.

I thought about Gwen’s body rotting away.

If something “rots away,” it slowly falls apart or dissolves into nothing.

A hateful girl, a selfish girl. An adulteress.

A married woman who has sexual affairs with men who aren’t her husband (The male equivalent is an adulterer).

I haven’t thought this through.

To “think something through” is to think about it very carefully, especially in terms of what it means will happen in the future.

They’d stop thinking I’m such a loner.

A good word for a person who likes to be alone, away from others.

I’ll be immortal, and like J.D. Salinger, I’ll just vanish.

If a person is “immortal,” they never die. J.D. Salinger is the mysterious author of *The Catcher in the Rye*, and to “vanish” is to disappear.

We been up to no good. Got the day off on account of rain.

If a person is “up to no good,” they’re busy doing destructive things.

If a person has the “day off,” they don’t have to go to work that day.

How are you holding up?

If you ask this after a personal tragedy, you are asking them how they are surviving (“Despite the loss of her mom, she’s holding up well”).

I decided to move Cheryl to cosmetics; She got a little too creative on the P.A.

The “cosmetics” department in a store sells makeup such as lipstick and eye shadow. The “P.A.” is the public address system, which is used to speak to lots of people at once, in a school, store or other building.

Maybe she’ll watch her Ps and Qs over here. If she don’t, she’s out on her butt.

If a person needs to “watch their Ps and Qs,” they need to be very careful about how they behave or they will get into trouble. In this context, if a person is “out on their butt,” they have lost their job.

Do you want me to help you get stuff out of storage?

A critical word for things.

Are you going to give me a ride home today?

“To give a person a ride” is to transport them in a car or other vehicle.

My ankle sure is acting up.

If an injured body part is “acting up,” it is starting to hurt a lot.

I think we got to take a breather.

“To take a breather” is to stop work and relax for a while.

Let’s go to the storeroom.

A large room for storage, often found at the back of a store.

You know, the couple that prays together stays together.

A totally ridiculous expression that a very religious person would say.

*Justine’s life grows ever more complicated as Bubba finds out about Holden, and threatens to tell Phil.*

We’re going to Bible study.

Note that in many parts of the US, especially in the Southern states, it is quite common for people to get together in order to study the Bible.

I heard it was the couple that lays together stays together.

This is a silly play on words but it’s worth noting here that “to lay” has a strong sexual connotation since “to get laid” means to have sex,

If it is, I’ll just put more makeup on your chin to offset it.

“To offset” one thing by doing another is to try and balance the two things (Here, Cheryl thinks makeup can offset long hair).

It’s got quite a lot of ingredients, so you’re getting a good deal. It’s got gingko extract in it.

“Ingredients” are anything that is used to make a food or other substance. A “good deal” is a good or cheap price for a product, and “gingko extract” is a now popular herb from East Asia.

It makes your skin real slick, so any liquid will roll right off of you, be it water or lemon juice or urine.

If your skin is “slick,” it is very smooth and slippery. If something “rolls right off” of you, it slides off easily. “Urine” is the official word for piss.

Would you get in the shower, dummy?

A gentle insult word for a stupid or dumb person.

Working on your spiritual life?

A person’s “spiritual life” refers to their religious life, or perhaps how they interact with God, nature or the universe as a whole.

Ain’t that a hoot and a holler?

A very old-fashioned way of saying “Isn’t that ridiculous?” (A “hoot” is an old word for anything that is funny, and a “holler” is a scream).

I don't know what to say about Jesus. I'm **stoned**.  
 A person who is "stoned" is under the influence  
 of marijuana or some other illegal drug.

Glad you could make it.  
 "I am happy that you were able to come."

Y'all are in for a treat. We got a good discussion planned for tonight.  
 If a person is "in for a treat," they are most likely going  
 to receive something that is truly special and enjoyable.

If man is made in God's image, what does that say about God?  
 If a person is made "in God's image," this could mean they look like  
 God (An "image" is a picture or imitation of how something looks).

We're running away from Bible study like a couple devil worshippers.  
 In the Bible, the "devil" is the angel of evil and badness. "To worship"  
 a person is to treat them with great respect, just as if they were a God.

You are **freaking me out**, man.  
 "To freak out" a person is to scare or disturb them. Slangy and fun.

Can we please just get the shit out of here!  
 Note that "the shit" is a crude filler used to express emotion such as anger  
 or excitement, though in general "get the *fuck* out of here" is both more  
 crude and much more common.

I think I look kind of **weird**. :: The first rule of fashion is you have to look weird.  
 "Weird" is an excellent word meaning strange or bizarre.

It's cirque de face, meaning circus of the face,  
 and it's all the rage with the Frenchies, mam.  
 "Cirque de soleil" (meaning circus of the sun) is a famous French theatre  
 show, but "cirque de face" is a stupid expression that would never exist.  
 If something is "all the rage," it is suddenly extremely popular, and  
 "Frenchy" is Cheryl's ridiculous way of referring to French people.

I saw you two driving off like vampires of the night.  
 "To drive off" is to leave in a car. A "vampire" is a dead person who  
 comes alive to suck the blood of people while they are sleeping.

What in blazes? :: Do you like it?  
 A very old-fashioned way of expressing  
 shock or great surprise (A "blaze" is a fire).

I can't go today. Something **came up**.  
 If something "comes up," it unexpectedly happens,  
 and it is often so important that it will change your plans.

You just don't want to get me because I'm too intensified for you.

If a person is "*intense*," they are extreme in their emotions, energy or concentration (though "intensified" is not a word!) Also note again that Holden's use of "get" here is not clear, though he probably means to understand or be with.

You're going to give up? You're going to go crawling back?

"To give up" is to surrender or stop trying, and if you "crawl back" after trying to escape, you admit that you should not have tried to leave in the first place (For example, a person can crawl back to a job, or a husband or a wife. "To crawl" is to move on your hands and legs, like a baby).

You're so fucking frightened it makes me sick.

"Frightened" is another word for scared or afraid (Note again that "fuck" can function as a crude adjective to express anger).

Don't give up on us!

One way of saying "Don't start thinking we can't stay together."

He talked a blue streak about the sad ruin that was his life.

"To talk a blue streak" is Justine's way of saying to talk a long time in a sad or depressed way. "Ruin" is a powerful word for total destruction.

He had accepted his fate of being Bubba, always and forever.

A person's "fate" is their destiny, or their unavoidable future.

Then last week, a door that had always been shut swung wide open.

Note that the past tense of to swing is "swung." This is Justine's way of saying that Bubba suddenly had an amazing and unexpected opportunity.

Bubba felt this was no chance coincidence; A cosmic force was at work.

A "coincidence" is the occurrence of two or more events that happen at the same time by accident, but that seem to have some connection. A "cosmic force" is a way of referring to some great and unknowable power, such as God or nature or the universe in general.

The sound of me making love to a man who wasn't

Phil...was like a shout from the creator himself.

Often, as in this case, "the creator" is a reference to God.

He hated me for poisoning the well of idealism,  
from which he had drunk for so long.

"To poison" something is to kill it with any kind of chemical substance, such as a powder or liquid. A "well" is a deep hole in the ground for storing drinking water, and "idealism" is the belief in living with exceptionally high standards of morality, ethics or general behavior.

I was just a liar and a whore, and that sickened him.

A common and negative word to describe a prostitute.

He loved me for opening his eyes and releasing him from the bitter chains of envy that bound him to Phil.

“Bitter” means angry or resentful, and “envy” is the frustrated feeling one has when someone else has what you want. To be “bound” to a person is to be stuck to them, either physically or emotionally.

Phil was no superman, just a cuckold and a fool.

A “cuckold” is the husband of a woman who sleeps with other men.

A “fool” is a person who does not have good judgement, or perhaps who is particularly stupid or silly, who others often make fun of.

There was one thing left to do; Something that would solve both of our problems and end this whole tragic saga.

If a situation is “tragic,” it is filled with great suffering and loss.

A “saga” is a long and detailed story, often filled with tragedy.

Bubba, I’m not going to sleep with you. :: I can’t keep him in the dark about something this big. He’s a cuckold!

Usually (but not always!), “to sleep with” a person is to have sex with them. To keep a person “in the dark” about something is to keep it secret from them.

That’s about my salvation.

This is a religious word that refers to the act of being saved (And one can be saved from death, destruction, ignorance, life in hell, suffering, etc).

There’s someone at the window! :: Oh, you’re paranoid.

If a person is “paranoid,” they are convinced that others are always trying to spy on them or cause them great harm.

Phil isn’t going to find out about any of this. Don’t fret.

“To fret” is to become worried or angry and easily irritated.

I got to go to that doctor tomorrow and jism into a cup.

“Jism” is a silly slang word for a man’s semen, though it sounds even more ridiculous when used as a verb!

Well, aren’t you a fright!

A grammatically stylish way of saying “You look scary!”

He didn’t show up for work today.

A critical phrasal verb meaning to arrive or come.

I want to know what gives?

A very colloquial way of asking “what is happening?,” or perhaps “why did you do that?”

You're a hooker!....So how many guys are you getting with?

A "hooker" is another slang word for prostitute (Also note again that Holden uses "get" in strange ways, here meaning to have sex with. This is rarely if ever used this way).

He had me over a barrel. If I didn't sleep with him, he was going to tell Phil!

If you "have a person over a barrel," you find them in a situation where they have to do what you want or you could get them in big trouble (A barrel is a large round container for liquids).

You've got to get a hold of yourself!

The words to tell a person who is panicking or extremely nervous, who needs to calm down or relax.

You'll jump on any pecker that's put in front of you.

A silly slang word for a penis.

Sober up, meet me after work, and we'll talk about this.

"To sober up" is to return to a non-drunk condition after having drunk too much liquor.

*Holden's life starts to spin out of control.*

Good luck. Knock'em dead, partner.

If you tell a person to "knock them dead," you're telling them to impress the people they are talking to or performing for ("To knock" something is to hit it, and note "knock them"----> "knock'em" in rapid speech). In this context, "partner" is a slangy way of referring to a friend or colleague.

I know you're angry and I can figure why,  
but from where I stand, it was a wonderful thing.

In this case, "to figure" is to guess or think ("To figure *out*" a problem, which is much more common, is to solve it). "From where I stand" is Bubba's way of saying "from my point of view".

Nothing happened yesterday, so drop it.

A common way of saying "stop talking about it."

How do I stack up against them where it counts?

If a person want to know how you "stack up against" a person, they want to know how you compare to them (in this case, when Bubba says "where it counts," he means how he and Phil compare in sexual talent).

Let me hold your boob. :: Ow, they're sore.

"Boob" is a silly slang word for female breasts. "Ow!" is what you say when you are in sudden pain (rhymes with cow), and if a part of your body is "sore," it hurts.

My stomach's cramping. I feel sore.

If your stomach "cramps," it moves or contracts in a way that it hurts.

Is it your period?

The bleeding that woman have due to their menstrual or fertility cycle.

You're breaking out because you put so much makeup on your face.

In this context, if a person "breaks out," their face becomes covered with pimples.

As long as you can say you've hit rock bottom, you haven't.

If a person "hits rock bottom," their life has become so bad that they will do anything to change (such as deciding to no longer drink alcohol).

It would be easier if I were a hooker like you, then I could calm down all over town.

A funny line in Holden's often funny English. Note that "calm down" only means to relax, though here Holden uses it to mean to have sex.

I'm in agony.

A powerful word that means great and intense suffering.

Please, don't forsake me, Justine. I can't take it.

"To forsake" a person is to turn away from, or leave them. In this context, if a person "can't take" something, they can no longer physically or emotionally accept it, and may even not survive because of it.

I realized that Holden was at best a child, and at worst a demon.

A "demon" is an evil spirit, like the devil.

If I was ever going to go straight, I'd have to ditch him. Sometimes to get back on the road to redemption, you have to make a few pit stops.

In this context, "to go straight" is to stop living a dangerous or criminal life. "To ditch" a person is a colloquial way of saying to secretly leave them. "Redemption" is the act of living a better life in order to perhaps be forgiven for having done bad things in the past. A "pit stop" is a brief stop by a car in an auto race, for gas and mechanical services.

We can't keep living day to day. We just got to chart a course, and we just got to stick to it.

If a person is "living day to day," they are surviving one day at a time and have no plans for the future. "To chart a course" is to make a general plan for the future, perhaps in this case for how to survive financially.

I just befriended Tom recently.

"To befriend" a person is to become friends with them.

I think he's mentally ill; He's got this idea in his head that we've had some sort of affair.

If a person is "mentally ill," they are emotionally or psychologically unstable or sick.

He's been saying all sorts of strange things and making threats and drinking.

In this case, "sort" is another word for type. A "threat" is the act of telling a person you may attack or harm them (The verb is to threaten).

The little plastic dooickey is turning blue. Bright blue.

A "dooickey" is a funny word for a thing or object for which you can't remember the name.

It's too early to be having a party. ∴ Let's do it mellow, then.

"Mellow" is a somewhat dated word from the 1960s which means in a calm or relaxed way.

We could have ourselves a tiny Phil or a tiny Teeny.

An important word meaning extremely small.

Teeny is going to have a teeny-weeny Teeny.

A young child's word for very small.

I'm calling from the Harlan County Psychiatric Hospital.

A hospital where people with emotional or psychological problems are treated.

It was a wrong number.

The expression used when a person calls your phone number by accident.

That boy is out on his ass.

In this context, if a person is "out on their ass," they've just lost their job.

Somebody stole \$15,000 from the safe. They blew it open with a gun.

A "safe" is a secure metal box for storing valuable things such as jewelry or money. "To blow open" something is to forcefully or violently open it.

Not only that, but the cops know who did it.

"Cops" is a very common colloquial word for the police.

They say he robbed his folks, too. Took off. You in on it?

If a person "took off," they left, quite often in a hurry. If you are "in on" an illegal plan, you are at least aware of it and may have actually participated in it.

I know you two played hooky in the storeroom.

If two people "play hooky," they leave where they're supposed to be (in this case at work) , to go somewhere else where they shouldn't be.

I'll never rat on you.

"To rat on" a person is to inform the police or other authorities after they have done something wrong or illegal.

I don't know what you're talking about. :: Suit yourself.

An interesting little expression that means "OK, be that way, it's fine with me" (If something "suits you," you like it).

You wouldn't want to jeopardize all that by making some silly error in judgement, would you?

"To jeopardize" something is to put it at great risk of harm or injury. An "error in judgement" is a complicated way of saying a mistake.

Did you have anything to do with it?

One way of asking "are you involved in this?"

We know you're very tight with Holden. :: I hardly know him.

To be "tight with" a person is to be friendly or close to them. Very slangy.

Fuck them, fuck all of them. :: Hey, they think I'm in on it, too.

Note that when "fuck you" is directed toward other people, it simply becomes "fuck them." Of course, this is equally vulgar! Again, if you are "in on" an illegal plan, you are at least aware of it and may have actually participated in it.

That Bible-thumping pervert has been watching us the whole time.

A "Bible thumper" is a person who is always talking or screaming about the moral lessons one should learn from the Bible ("To thump" is to strike with a thick object so that a soft sound is produced). A "pervert" is a person interested in sexual practices that are considered unusual, kinky or inappropriate.

Oh, God, I'm getting all goosey. I think I'm gonna crash.

If a person is "goosey," they are very scared or nervous (like a goose). In this case, "to crash" is to faint or lose consciousness.

You cannot raise a baby on the run.

If you are "on the run," you are constantly in the process of running away from something or someone (often the police).

Here's a story of your life; You inspired me.

"To inspire" a person is to influence them in a way that they feel moved or motivated to do something creative or different.

Jeez, what do you have to lose?

A great question that is asked of people who must make a difficult decision. The speaker is saying that you should take the risk since even if you fail, you will not lose much because you already have so little.

Congratulations on your expectation.

This is Bubba's completely ridiculous way of congratulating Justine on the fact that she is expecting a baby.

It don't make no difference, as long as it plays quarterback for the Cowboys.

A "quarterback" is the most important position on an American football team, and the Cowboys are the official football team for Dallas, Texas.

You don't know shit, OK?

A crude way of saying "You don't know anything."

It just means they messed up, that's all.

In this context, "to mess up" is to make a mistake.

It looks like the wind's picking up again.

If wind "picks up," it becomes stronger.

*Justine is forced to choose between two bad choices,  
and then tragedy strikes one more time.*

How it all came down to this, only the devil knows.

If a situation all "comes down to" a single decision, then how everything will end or turn out will be determined in that final action or moment.

I closed my eyes and tried to peer into the future.

"To peer into" the future is to try and judge what will happen (One can also peer into a window to try and see what's inside).

On my left I saw days upon days of lipstick and clicking clocks, dirty looks and quiet whisperings, and burning secrets that just won't ever die away.

A clock that "ticks" makes the sound of the second hand moving forward.

If people give you "dirty looks," they are looking at you in a very disapproving manner, perhaps because you did something immoral.

And on my right, what could I picture? The blue sky and eerie earth stretching out into the eerie infinity, a beautiful never ending nothing.

Here, "to picture" is to see or visualize. "Eerie" is an excellent word that means emotionally disturbing, in a strange sort of way. If the land "stretches out," it goes on and on for a great distance, and "infinity" is the mathematical word that means unlimited in time, space or quantity..

What's going on in the bathroom? Looks like a twister hit it.

A "twister" is a tornado, which is a violent whether storm that rotates or spins with great destructive force.

A standoff between the police and a local man has just ended in bloodshed.

A “standoff” is a tense situation in which two parties (often the police and a suspect in a crime), face each other with guns, and perhaps try to negotiate an agreement or deal. “Bloodshed” is lost blood that usually results from violence.

Police had been given a **tip** that a man suspected of burglaring a local Retail Rodeo discount store had been staying at the hotel.

In this case, a “tip” is a critical piece of information that helps the police capture a criminal. “To burglar” a store is to break into it in order to steal something (This verb is rare; It’s better to say “commit a burglary”).

Worther allegedly began brandishing a handgun.

To “allegedly” do something is to be accused of doing it, though it hasn’t yet been proven that this is true. “To brandish” a gun is to wave it around in a very aggressive manner.

Details are rather sketchy; We’ll continue to monitor the situation.

If details are “sketchy,” they are not yet clear or well known. “To monitor” a situation is to watch over it very carefully.

A spokesmen for the sheriff’s office will be joining us for an update.

The “sheriff” is the top police officer in a police department. “To update” a situation is to let people know everything that is known about it up to that point in time.

Holden was a thief and a **disturbed** young man, and what happened was a sad thing.

In this context, if a person is “disturbed,” they are emotionally unstable.

Perhaps we can learn a lesson from this tragedy, like don’t steal and don’t be disturbed. The important thing is to move on.

“To move on” is to decide to look to the future instead of focusing on something horrible that has just happened. Note that the first sentence is funny because it is completely ridiculous; You can tell a person to not steal, but you can’t seriously tell them to not be disturbed!

I thought we were gonna get a day to grieve and go to the movies.

Another ridiculous sentence; “To grieve” is to allow oneself to feel great sadness or sorrow (but you don’t usually do it while going to a movie!)

He opened this bill from a credit card company, and fuck! Please don’t tell him about us!

Note the use of “fuck” here as a vulgar filler to express great amazement or fear, but like “wow!,” it has no real grammatical function.

Please have mercy on me!

To have “mercy on” a person is to treat them with kindness, often despite the fact that they have done something bad.

Have you been sleeping around behind my back?

“To sleep around” with different people is to have sex with them.

To do something “behind a person’s back” is to do it secretly, in such a way that they won’t find out.

It’s your baby! I swear, I swear to God!

Note that “to swear” means both to use

vulgar words, and, as in this case, to promise.

It’s that Nazarene. That’s why you’re acting so spooked.

A “Nazarene” is a Biblical term for a person from the town of Nazareth in modern day Israel. If a person is “spooked,” they are very scared by something in particular.

I want to beat his ass.

“To beat a person’s ass” is to violently attack them, or to beat them up.

You’re getting all swollen.

If a body part gets “swollen,” it starts to get bigger than its normal size, usually because it has been hit or injured.

Fake eye-glasses, extra long.

If something is “fake,” it is counterfeit or not real or authentic.

You want me to make the other cheek purple to even it out.

“To even out” one cheek with another is to make it as similar to that one as possible (in this case, to use makeup to make the cheek more purple).

Two beefy guys with painted faces pulled up in a truck and jumped him.

“Beefy” is an interesting colloquial adjective which means muscular and strong. If a car “pulls up,” it comes to a stop, in order for people to get out. In this context, “to jump” a person is to mug them, or physically attack them with great surprise.

After spending her whole life never getting got,  
with one look they got each other completely.

Here, Justine uses Holden’s usage of “to get” to mean understood or possibly attached to another person. While interesting, “get” is never used this way (although “I get it” does mean I understand it).

In the end, the girl and boy run away together into  
the wilderness, never to be heard from again...

The “wilderness” refers to the great outdoors,  
or nature in general, outside of major cities.

## **The Good Girl**

### **Some Possible ESL Questions for Class Discussion**

1. Who are the better couple---Justine and Phil, or Justine and Holden?
2. Why is Justine's life so depressing? Are there a lot of people like her?
3. If you were in Justine's situation, would you have had an affair with Holden? Would you have slept with Bubba?
4. Do you know people like Holden? Like Phil? Like Bubba?
5. What's worse---a bad job that you need to keep, or a bad marriage?
6. What did you like and not like about this movie?