

Study Guides For Dummies

"Can you tell me what this is?"

Holden coughed on the bite of pizza in his mouth as his eyes scanned over the paper his mother had pushed forward.

Well, that's just great.

A report card sat in front of him, consisting of F's and D's.

"You're grounded," His father said, "This is embarrassing. You're going to give the family a bad name if you continue going throughout life like this. You're going to be the boy who lives with his parents, and we're going to be the parents who didn't raise their child well."

His mother gave him a look, "Jerry, we talked about this. Slow down," She turned her attention back to Holden. "So, yes, you're grounded. Home and school only. You're still taking the dog out though," Looking back at her husband and the report card, she continued, "Actually, you're taking Buddy for a walk right now. Head over to Dog Beach. I have to talk to your father and it's going to be a while."

Holden nodded and stuffed his pizza slice in his mouth before putting his shoes on and grabbing Buddy's leash, going as fast as possible to get out of the house.

"Come on, boy! Let's go," Holden avoided looking at his parents as he hooked up the dog to his leash. Standing up, he patted the dog's head and walked out the door.

He hadn't even closed it yet, and his mom already started yelling at his father.

"Really? You just have to go and tell him all that? He knows he's in trouble, don't try to make it worse. I mean-"

He shut the door and shook his head angrily, heading towards Dog Beach. He had told his best friend, Avery, that he was planning on taking Buddy there anyway before his parents had grounded him.

He made his way down the street that connects his neighborhood and the beach. Once he reached the other side, he started walking down the boardwalk toward their usual spot.

"Holden!" He turned around, looking at Avery and smiling awkwardly.

"Hey."

She narrowed her eyes, "What's wrong?"

He sighed, sitting down on the ground, and picked Buddy up, petting him and pulling him close to his chest.

"My parents saw my report card, and I can't go anywhere but home and school until I get my grades up. And I'm stupid- I'm not going to be able to bring them up anytime soon. I just-ugh," He sighed, glaring off into the distance.

Avery gave him a look, sighing back at him dramatically, "You know, you have to talk to your parents about this. You can't just walk away from them and leave them to fight."

Holden looked back at her, frowning, "I don't want to talk to them. I don't even know how. And they don't even know how their fighting is affecting me. I mean- it's the reason that my grades are so bad."

"Well, obviously they care about you enough to ground you because of your grades! They-"

"They said that I was going to give the family a bad name and that I'm embarrassing them," Holden interrupted angrily.

"Tough love. Your parents care about you. You just don't want to admit it."

"Either way it doesn't matter. I'm not going to get my grades up anytime soon, and either way, my parents are gonna stay the same way they always are," He ran his hand through his hair, a nervous habit that he had picked up from his father.

"You know what? You're impossible. I was going to try to help you, but you won't let me. I'm leaving. Goodbye," Avery turned around and walked away, huffing angrily.

"Avery, wait," Holden got up and tried to chase after her, but she just shook her head and kept on walking. Buddy barked after her, but she was lost in a large crowd of people coming up. He sighed, turning around and pulling his dog along behind him.

He suddenly stopped, changing his mind and turning back around after remembering that his parents would still be talking. He led Buddy down the path leading to the shore, deciding he would allow the dog to play around for a few minutes before heading back home.

Holden let Buddy off his leash and sat down by a bush. A group of girls holding stacks of books passed in front of him, chattering noisily. One of them pushed one of the others jokingly, and a book fell off the top of her stack. She didn't notice, though, and continued walking.

"Hey- you dropped your book," Holden yelled after her.

He picked up the book and stood up, flipping it over in his hands.

How to Bring Your Grades Up - A Study Guide for Dummies

Holden glared at the book. Even that girl wanted him to bring his grades up. He watched as the group walked away, weighing out the choices in his head.

He tapped on the book, coming to a decision.

"Buddy! Come on, boy," He called for his dog and hooked him up to the leash before going back up to his house, study guide in hand.

Holden went straight back up to his room, avoiding his parents and sitting at his desk as soon as he made it up the stairs. Opening the book, he grabbed his computer and opened an ebook for a class.

Step One: Give Up

Holden stared at the page, "Okay, seriously?" Maybe that was why that girl didn't grab her book. He looked at his phone and decided to call Avery.

"I need help," Holden said nervously.

Avery sighed angrily, "Why should I? You said you don't need any help and that there's no use in trying to bring your grades up."