

The Outsiders Introduction

By S. E. Hinton, 1967

S. E. Hinton



Susan Eloise Hinton was born in 1948 in Oklahoma, USA.

- She wrote *The Outsiders* when she was still in high school.
 - She was 16 years old.
- She is credited with introducing the YA genre (young-adult).

Her idea for *The Outsiders* came from two separate gangs from her high school; the Greasers and the Socs.

- This novel is her attempt to empathize with the Greasers, and decided to write it from their point-of-view.
- This novel has actually been banned in many states in the US for portrayal of Gang Violence

She used her initials instead of her full name because it was an attempt to appear male instead of female, so publishers and buyers would take her more seriously.

Her main inspirational authors are Jane Austen, F. Scott. Fitzgerald, and Mary Renault.

She is actually one of the nurses in the movie adaptation from 1983.

- A cameo.

A list of her novels:

1. *The Outsiders* 1967
2. *That was Then, This is Now* 1971
3. *Rumble Fish* 1975
4. *Tex* 1979
5. *Taming the Star Runner* 1988

Background

The two gangs at Hinton's high school, Will Rogers High School, were divided by their socioeconomic status

1. the working-class: "the Greasers", named after their greasy hair
2. The upper-class "the Socs", named after "The Socialites", which was a name used to describe an elite society of rich people who ONLY socialized with each other; they were very exclusive and pretentious.

The novel is narrated in first-person, which means that you see the world from the protagonist's eyes.

- This is a technique used by many authors, primarily to induce mystery.
 - By using only one character's perspectives, Hinton is able to manipulate the amount of information the reader gets and also manipulates how you are to feel at certain situations.
- The narrator is Ponyboy Curtis, also our protagonist (main character).

The location of the novel takes place in Tulsa, Oklahoma

<http://www.unitedstates-map.us/2016/11/map-of-oklahoma.html>

- It was full of gangs in the 1960s
- It had segregation laws: the action of setting certain people apart from others in society
 - Black and whites, Upperclassmen and the working class, etc.
 - Not only was this normal, but it was ENFORCED.
- Mining town: mined hydroelectricity from the large lake.
 - This caused many working class men and women to work on the hydro plants and many upperclassmen to own them.
- Big city; a consequence of large cities is that land is used to distribute different social classes and create ghettos.
- Only 3 high schools: Monte Cassino School, Bishop Kelley High School, and Will Rogers High School.
 - Had 261,685 as population in the 60s.

Themes and Content

The Division of Classes

- Despite the two gangs being "natural enemies", Hinton suggests a more grey area by having them share some things in common with one another.
 - Cherry Valance (Socs) and Ponyboy Curtis (Greaser) share their mutual love of literature, music, and sunsets.
 - These harmonious conversations fill a gap between the rich and the poor.
 - This potential of agreement symbolizes a mark of change for the future.

Unimportance of Women in Society

- The fights are always involved between boys and men, women can't even choose to be friends with men or women from the opposing class without the men fight their "honour".
 - They can't act friendly toward the Greasers to please the male counterpart of their class.
- Women barely have a voice in this novel.

Injustice and discrimination within the Law

- There is honour among the lawless; meaning the wrongfully unjust social class (Greasers) stick together and help each other, no questions asked, because they know they can't count on the law.
 - Greaser Behavioural Code (a duty)

Family dysfunctionality within lower classes

- All families pertaining to each character from the Greasers seem to be broken, whether certain parental figures are absent or dead, brothers taking care of their many siblings from way-too-young an age, mothers cheating and having other men's children, etc.