

The Outsiders Summary

By S. E. Hinton, 1967

Chapter 3

Ponyboy, Two-Bit, and Johnny walk to Two-Bit's house with Cherry and Marcia so that they can give the girls a ride home. Ponyboy and Cherry keep talking about his brothers and he takes a second to notice how easy it is to talk to her. When Cherry asks him about his older brother Darry, he says that he thinks his brother doesn't like him and that it would be easier if he were in a group home. Johnny and Two-Bit were astonished to hear Ponyboy say this because they thought the three brothers always got along well.

- Hinton provides us with evidence showing that Ponyboy does in fact believe that his brother wishes he were gone and also how right Darry is in accusing him of having little common sense; Ponyboy isn't able to understand how much his brother loves him and how much he has sacrificed for him and how difficult his life is.

After Ponyboy tells Cherry about Sodapop's old horse, Mickey Mouse, the two move to discuss the differences they perceive between the Socs and Greasers. They continue to realize how much they have in common. Ponyboy admits his belief that greasers have terrible luck while the socs lead comfortable lives and simply jump the greasers out of sheer boredom and superiority. Cherry then explains to him that the socs aren't quite as simple as he believes. They both end up agreeing that the main difference between the two is that the socs act too cool and aloof to acknowledge their emotions and that they live their lives trying to fill up their emotional void, while the greasers feel everything too intensely and oversensitivity.

- This is a balanced belief due to the fact that it was chosen by a girl and a boy of opposite social-economic values, equally.

"Just don't forget that some of us watch the sunset too" - Ponyboy says this to Cherry to signify that despite their differences the sunset they both watch is the same.

- At the end of the day, realizing how large the world is and how small and insignificant each human being is individually provides insight and a large sense of relief.
 - Everyone watches the same sunset, it's equal for everyone.

A blue mustang cruises by the group, which belongs to Bob and Randy; Cherry and Marcia's boyfriends. They both get out of the car. Ponyboy notices that Bob wears three heavy rings on his hand. They all nearly get into a fight, but the girls agree to leave to avoid violence. Before leaving, Cherry tells Ponyboy that she hopes that she won't see Dally again, because if she does she may fall in love with him.

- The heavy rings symbolize Ponyboy's fear that all socs are the same; for when he shared what happened to Johnny, the socs was also wearing a fistfull of rings.
- Cherry represents the author even more because her actions now, not just her words, indicate that she is indifferent to gangs and social standing, she too looks at people she meets individually and independently of who they are.

Ponyboy walks home and finds Darry furious with him for staying out so late. During their argument, Darry slaps him, causing Ponyboy to storm out of the house in a rage. He feels he knows for sure now that Darry doesn't want him around. It is after 2 in the morning and he finds Johnny in the lot where the greasers hang out, and tells Johnny that they are running away. Johnny isn't hard to convince because he lives with his abusive, alcoholic father. The boys decide to walk through the park to determine whether they really want to leave.

- Darry's anxieties of keeping his little brother safe overwhelm him and cause him to hurt Ponyboy, and then causes Ponyboy to really believe his brother doesn't want him around so he leaves.
- Ponyboy finds comfort knowing that Johnny was also out very late at night in an attempt to get away from his father.

Chapter 3

The park is deserted at 2:30am, so Ponyboy and Johnny walk along the fountain. It is cold out, and Ponyboy is only wearing a short-sleeved shirt. Suddenly, the boys see the blue mustang again from earlier that night. Five Socs, including Randy and Bob jump out of the car and approach them. The Socs have come to get even with the boys in honour of their girlfriends, but they are very drunk and their reactions are escalated. Bob tells ponyboy that greasers are just white trash with long hair and Ponyboy retorts that Socs are just white trash with mustangs and madras shirts, and enraged then spits at the Socs. A soc grabs Ponyboy and holds his head under the frigid water of the fountain. Ponyboy feels himself drowning and blacks out. When he regains consciousness, the socs have run away. He is lying on the pavement next to Johnny and Bob's bloody corpse. Johnny immediately tells him that he killed him with his switchblade.

- Both the boys know that self-defence against the socs, while being greasers isn't an option when turning themselves into the police. They are both wise enough to know they don't stand a chance and invoke the greaser behavioural code on Dally, who is honorable to his brethren and helps them, no questions asked.
- The blue mustang is a symbol of everything that represents a soc; their class and power, since a greaser could never afford such an expensive car.
 - This creates even more tension between them because the socs are able to be fast, while greaser have to walk around on foot, causing them to be even more vulnerable to their violence.
- Bob's ring collection is also another form of symbolism and a contrast against the greasers' poverty, but also similar in terms of wearing "weapons"
 - Bob transforms his wealth into a physical weapon, while greasers cannot represent themselves with material luxuries.
 - Their primary symbol is their long hair, which is a costless symbol unlike jewelry or cars.
 - So when the socs' pick on their hair, Ponyboy retorts with an insult to their cars and fancy shirts.

Ponyboy panics, but Johnny remains calm. They decide to immediately go to Dally, thinking he'll be able to help them. They find him at Buck Merrill's house, his rodeo partner. He manages to get them \$50 and a change of clothing for Ponyboy, and a loaded gun. He instructs them to take a train to Windrixville, where they can hide in an abandoned church. Ponyboy and Johnny get on a train and then Ponyboy goes to sleep. When they get to Windrixville, they get off the train and find the church where they collapse into an exhausted sleep.

- This part of the novel introduces its major crisis; the socs attack Ponyboy and Johnny outnumbered on their territory and start an unfair fight, taking advantage of their size as well as their underrepresentation.
- On a psychological level, this incident presents a crisis for ponyboy because he just came to terms to accept that greasers and socs were more similar than he had been led to believe, and by Cherry, Bob's girlfriend, no less.
 - Also, the question Ponyboy had about soc girls being different to greaser girls is answered; Cherry is also able to date a guy she has no respect or love for, just like Sylvia and Sandy.
- If Johnny hadn't attacked Bob, Ponyboy would have drowned; Hinton makes this dilemma very uncomplicated for us to further define the theme of the injustice of law at the time.
 - She portrays him not as a killer, but as a saviour of his best friend's life.
 - Despite killing someone, his actions are noble.