

The Outsiders

STUDY GUIDE

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Chapter One

1. Who is the narrator in this story? Describe him.
2. Who are the Socs? Who are the greasers?
3. Identify the following characters: Darryl, Sodapop, Steve Randall, Dallas Winston, and Johnny.
4. How did Two-Bit Mathews get his name? What type of stealing is his specialty?
5. Soda tells Ponyboy that Darryl keeps after him because the older boy loves his younger brother. Why does Ponyboy think that Soda is wrong?
6. Ponyboy tells us that Darryl grew up too fast and that Sodapop has never grown up at all. He concludes: "I don't know which way's the best. I'll find out one of these days." (Pg. 2) From this, what would you suppose this novel is going to be about?
7. What is Ponyboy's guess (Pg. 11) as to why Dallas is bitter about life?

Chapter Two

1. Why does Ponyboy get a sinking feeling and is embarrassed when he sees Dallas sit down behind the two Soc girls?
2. In addition to being older and tougher, in what other ways is Dallas different from Johnny and Ponyboy?
3. Why does Dallas not hit, or at least say something smart, to Johnny when Johnny tells Dallas to leave the girls alone?
4. What is Ponyboy proud of and what is he ashamed of regarding Soda?
5. In the flashback pages (31-34) how far in the past did the incident occur, and about what incidents do we learn the details?
6. What does Cherry tell Ponyboy about the Socs that he has a hard time believing?
7. What does Cherry's comment to Ponyboy about trouble suggest or foreshadow?
8. Earlier, Cherry showed herself to be a sensitive person when she finishes Marcia's statement by saying both boys look sixteen. What is it Marcia is going to say, and why does Cherry stop her?
9. The last line in Chapter Two refers to what? What is foreshadowed by this line?

Chapter Three

1. What do Cherry and Ponyboy say is the real difference between the Socs and greasers?
2. What is it in Ponyboy that Cherry likes?
3. What could Cherry possibly find interesting about Dallas?
4. Why does Ponyboy lash out at Johnny?
5. Sum up in one sentence what Ponyboy says "ain't fair"?
6. The blue Mustang is bound to show up again. Why?
7. On page 46, why does Ponyboy say, "Two-Bit was smart. He knew the score"?
8. Ponyboy has a hard time adjusting to life's injustices. How does he see the others deal with the inequalities of life?
9. What does the country represent for Ponyboy?
10. Why does Darryl slap Ponyboy?
11. What is foreshadowed by the last paragraph in this chapter?

Chapter Four

Vocabulary

contemptuously - scornfully

rueful - full of sorrow, shame

premonition - a feeling that something is going to happen

1. Why does Johnny take the action he does?
2. What does Ponyboy conclude Cherry must have seen in Dallas?
3. What is it that Ponyboy now thinks is worse than being a greaser?
4. Ponyboy says that the Church gave him a “creepy feeling”—a premonition. What kind of a premonition might he get in Church?
5. Throughout this story, loyalty among the greasers is brought up quite often. Why do they place such a high value on loyalty?
6. Was it a smart thing for Ponyboy to leave with Johnny?
7. Was it smart of Johnny to run away?

Chapter Five

Vocabulary

implore	- to beg, to request
gallant	- brave, bold
elude	- to avoid, to escape
indignant	- anger aroused by something unjust
wistfully	- sadly, full of yearning

1. Why does Ponyboy feel bad about cutting his hair?
2. According to Ponyboy, why do the courts cut people's hair?
3. Why does Johnny not like to think about the stabbing?
4. Having cried themselves out, what mood are Ponyboy and Johnny in now?
5. What can you infer from the crying incident?
6. The Frost poem that Ponyboy remembers on page 69 concludes, "Nothing gold can stay." What is that poem saying about nature? About youth?
7. How could the line, "Nothing gold can stay" apply to life?
8. When Johnny says, "I guess we're different" (Pg. 70), Ponyboy responds, "Maybe they are." What is Pony implying?
9. What is the situation in town? Who is the spy the greasers have?

Chapter Six

1. What seems to give Johnny the most pain in his life?
2. On page 90, what side of Dallas does Ponyboy see that he never saw before?
3. Why do the boys feel responsible for the fire?
4. At the end of this chapter what is it that Ponyboy comes to understand?
5. What unusual sound do they hear?
6. What is the irony of the boys' actions at the fire?
7. Explain Ponyboy's feelings about why Darry cries.

Chapter Seven

1. After reading the morning paper what is Ponyboy's biggest fear?
2. What does the narrator mean when he says, "Serious reality has a hard time coming through to Soda, but when it does, it hits him hard"? (Pg. 103)
3. What does Ponyboy's nightmare seem to foreshadow?
4. What is the implication that is made about Soda's girl friend Sandy?
5. What is odd that Ponyboy says about Randy?
6. Randy says that Bob always wanted his parents to say "No" to him. He says, "That's what we all want, really." (Pg. 116) Do you think this statement is accurate?
7. What is Randy's dilemma?
8. How has Ponyboy's view of the Socs changed?

Chapter Eight

1. What do you suppose Dallas wants with Two-Bit's knife?
2. In what way could Darry be a Soc?
3. Again, Ponyboy talks about his feeling that something bad is going to happen that night. What do you guess might happen?
4. Why does Ponyboy turn and ask Cherry, "Can you see the sunset real good from the West Side?" (Pg. 129)

Chapter Nine

Vocabulary

contracted	- the act of muscles tensing
agony	- great pain
bolted	- run off

1. Sometimes Ponyboy seems ashamed to be a greaser; sometimes he seems proud to be one. How is he feeling about this on page 132?
2. Why is Darryl, who is older, brighter and more clean cut than most of the others, getting in this fight?
3. Why does Ponyboy think that he, Darryl, and the others do not really belong with the Brumley boys and Tim Shepard's gang?

4. Why does Pony say the Socs get away with a lot while the greasers get blamed for everything?
5. Do you find Ponyboy's observation in question four to be accurate?
6. Ponyboy says that Darryl looked jealous and ashamed. Why would he be having those feelings at this time?
7. What does Johnny mean when he tells Ponyboy, "Stay gold, Ponyboy. Stay gold"? (Pg. 148)

Chapter Ten

Vocabulary

stupor - a daze
dumbfounded - speechless; disbelieving

1. Why does Ponyboy conclude that he is able to take Johnny's death, but that Dallas cannot?
2. Why does Dallas pull out the gun knowing it has no bullets?
3. What technique does Ponyboy use for dealing with the deaths of his friends?
4. What is Ponyboy's greatest fear when he is unconscious? Why?

Chapter Eleven

Vocabulary

liable - likely; legally responsible

1. What comes to Ponyboy's mind when he sees Bob's picture in the yearbook?
2. Why is being able to feel "lousy" because he disappointed his father a break-through for Randy?
3. What does Darryl call him that makes Ponyboy feel good?

Chapter Twelve

1. When he returns to school, Ponyboy has a difficult time concentrating. Why?
2. What does Two-Bit mean when he tells Ponyboy "you're not like the rest of us"? (Pg. 171)
3. Why does Two-Bit grin when Ponyboy is picking up the glass?
4. What does Darryl tell Ponyboy about the deaths of Dallas and Johnny?
5. Sandy has returned Soda's letter unopened, and he is upset about that. Why, though, does he run out of the house?

6. What does Soda mean when he says, "If you don't have anything, you end up like Dallas...and I don't mean dead either. I mean like he was before. And that's worse than dead"? (Pg. 176)

7. What does Ponyboy finally understand about Darryl?

8. In his letter to Ponyboy, Johnny explains what he meant when he said "stay gold." (Pg. 178) Put his explanation into your own words.

9. When he sits down to write his English theme, how is Ponyboy different from the way he is at the opening of this chapter?

10. How has he changed since the beginning of the novel?