

Chapters 1 - 2



Plot Summary

Ponyboy Curtis lives with his two older brothers, Sodapop and Darry. Ever since their parents died, Darry has worked hard to keep the remaining family together. They all belong to a gang of tough kids from the East Side known as greasers.

The novel opens as Ponyboy is walking home from the movies alone. He is suddenly attacked by a gang of Socs (West Side rich kids). His brothers and greaser friends are quick to answer his cries for help and chase the Socs off. Steve, Two-Bit, Dally, and Johnny are the other members of the greaser gang. Ponyboy and Johnny agree to go to the drive-in movies with Dally the following night.

After Ponyboy finishes his homework, Soda secretly tells Pony that he plans to marry Sandy.

The next evening, Dally, Ponyboy, and Johnny sneak into the drive-in on foot. Dally begins harassing two Soc girls sitting in front of them and gets a Coke thrown in his face in return. Then the girls, Cherry Valance and Marcia, invite Ponyboy and Johnny to sit with them. Later, Two-Bit joins the group.

Pony and Cherry go to get some popcorn. While standing in the concession line, Pony recounts the story of the Soc attack on Johnny. Cherry is appalled, but she tells Pony that the Socs have plenty of troubles too.

Pre-Reading Focus Activities

1. Outsiders in Society

Ask students to brainstorm about types of people that might be classified as "outsiders" in our society. Write the student responses on the board. Cite a few examples and briefly discuss what keeps these people "on the outside."

2. Formal and Informal Writing

Ask students in what cases they feel it is appropriate to write the way they speak. For what audiences might they choose the formal over the informal? Have them explain their answers.