

Title

The Outsiders

The Outsiders *Continued*

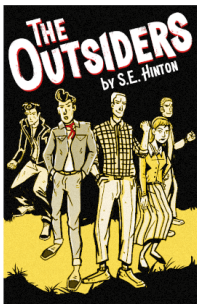
LEVEL 14, ACTIVITY 4

The Outsiders

by S.E. Hinton

Prologue:

The greasers, a group of poor teens that live on the east side of town, are constantly in conflict with the Socials (Socs), the rival group of rich kids from the west side. In Chapter 1, Ponyboy, the narrator of the story, is jumped by a group of Socs as he walks alone one afternoon. In Chapter 2, Ponyboy and some of the other greasers go to a drive-in movie. There they meet Cherry and Marcia, two Socs who had abandoned their boyfriends for the night. Ponyboy tells Cherry how Johnny had been brutally attacked by a group of Socs four months earlier. Cherry, Marcia, Johnny, Ponyboy, and Two-Bit watch the movie together.



[1] AFTER THE MOVIE was over it suddenly came to us that Cherry and Marcia didn't have a way to get home. Two-Bit gallantly offered to walk them home—the west side of town was only about twenty miles away—but they wanted to call their parents and have them come and get them. Two-Bit finally talked them into letting us drive them home in his car. I think they were still half-scared of us. They were getting over it, though, as we walked to Two-Bit's house to pick up the car.

It seemed funny to me that Socs—if these girls were any example—were just like us. They liked the Beatles and thought Elvis Presley was out, and we thought the Beatles were rank and that Elvis was tuff, but that seemed the only difference to me. Of course greasy girls would have acted a lot tougher, but there was a basic sameness. I thought maybe it was money that separated us.

[2] “No,” Cherry said slowly when I said this. “It's not just money. Part of it is, but not all. You greasers have a different set of values. You're more emotional. We're sophisticated—cool to the point of not feeling anything. Nothing is real with us. You know, sometimes I'll catch myself talking to a girl-friend, and realize I don't mean half of what I'm saying. I don't really think a beer blast on the river bottom is super-cool, but I'll rave about one to a girl-friend just to be saying something.” She smiled at me. “I never told anyone that. I think you're the first person I've ever really gotten through to.”

She was coming through to me all right, probably because I was a greaser, and younger; she didn't have to keep her guard up with me.

[3] "Rat race is a perfect name for it," she said. "We're always going and going and going, and never asking where. Did you ever hear of having more than you wanted? So that you couldn't want anything else and then started looking for something else to want? It seems like we're always searching for something to satisfy us, and never finding it. Maybe if we could lose our cool we could."

[4] That was the truth. Socs were always behind a wall of aloofness, careful not to let their real selves show through. I had seen a social-club rumble once. The Socs even fought coldly and practically and impersonally.

"That's why we're separated," I said. "It's not money, it's feeling—you don't feel anything and we feel too violently."

"And"—she was trying to hide a smile—"that's probably why we take turns getting our names in the paper."

[5] Two-Bit and Marcia weren't even listening to us. They were engaged in some wild conversation that made no sense to anyone but themselves.

I have quite a rep for being quiet, almost as quiet as Johnny. Two-Bit always said he wondered why Johnny and I were such good buddies. "You must make such interestin' conversation," he'd say, cocking one eyebrow, "you keepin' your mouth shut and Johnny not sayin' anything." But Johnny and I understood each other without saying anything. Nobody but Soda could really get me talking. Till I met Cherry Valance.