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Character Analyses

Ponyboy's Different Thought of Life ← space behind title to text

"Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind," Dr. Seuss, a children's book author, once said. Greasers are the ripped jeans, poor, and least tolerated people in Tulsa, Oklahoma where *The Outsiders* is set. Socs are the upper class kids. Ponyboy was brought up a Greaser, he counts on smoking, fights are his second nature, and he hates all Socs. However, after a series of tragic events, Ponyboy changes his thoughts on what his priorities are, what is right and wrong, but most importantly himself.

Ponyboy Curtis started out as an average kid, but an abnormal Greaser. Unlike most Greasers, Ponyboy goes to school, he's not a dropout (like his brother Sodapop), he gets good grades, and he's more sensitive than his peers. "You read a lot, don't you, Ponyboy... I'll bet you watch sunsets, too..." (40) "I don't know why I handed you that busted bottle... You'd never use it." (47) Ponyboy doesn't like hurting people because he was sensitive and cares more deeply about others feelings than other Greasers.

Ponyboy's life was simple, before the night everything went a step too far. Johnny, Ponyboy's best friend, murdered a rival Soc, and Ponyboy with him; they fled as fugitives, the feeling of guilt with them. Just as Ponyboy's luck couldn't get worse, a church catches fire, with children in it. With a rush of adrenalin, heroism and certainty, Ponyboy and Johnny dive into the flames, to rescue the young lives. Later on in the hospital, where Johnny was recovering from third degree burns and a broken back, an old man who witnessed the whole fire and Ponyboy were talking. "Mrs. O'Briant and I think you were sent straight from heaven. Or are you just professional heroes or something?" (95) Without a thought, Ponyboy answered "No, we're Greasers... You know, hoods, JDs." (95). At that point, it was normal for Ponyboy to call himself a Greaser. That's what he was, he was proud of it. Then Johnny died. Then Dally, a Greaser, turned into more of a hood by getting himself shot on purpose. Then fights became harsher. Those were all points in Ponyboy's life that went flying off the charts. Finally Ponyboy realized that being a Greaser wasn't really that great. He began to get fed up with it, and he decided that fighting was stupid and pointless. Making that decision was better for himself so he wouldn't get hurt.

Ponyboy Curtis had transformed into a different person by the end of the novel. His change occurred after a rumble. Because he didn't have a ride, Ponyboy was sitting in a nice stranger's car getting a ride home. During the whole car ride, throughout a long conversation, Ponyboy never mentioned that he was a Greaser. Although this is a small change, the author, S.E. Hinton, most certainly put that in the book to contrast with the previous conversation Ponyboy

had with the older man. Also, Ponyboy made friends with a Soc, Randy, and that conversation helped him realize that the difference between a Soc and a Greaser was so small, that it was useless to fight about it.

Greasers were and still are, the ripped jean, poor, and the least tolerated people in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Socs are almost the exact opposite. Ponyboy was a Greaser; he still counts on smoking, fights used to be his second nature and one of his friends is a Soc. Growing up and declaring his independence helped him find out who he can trust, what's right and what's wrong, but most importantly who he really is.