

S. E. Hinton

The Outsiders

book-report by Christoph Saulder

Summery:

Ponyboy was walking home after cinema. He was a member of a street gang called Greasers and he didn't have a good reputation. Suddenly some Socs, rich boys from the West Side, appeared. They attacked him and forced him while they were trying to give him a new haircut. The rescue came when other Greasers arrived and the Socs ran away. Another day the gang was illegally going into a car cinema. Dally, the most aggressive criminal of the gang, tried to flirt with two good-looking girls. As he became too rude Johnny helped those girls. He and Ponyboy were allowed to sit next to them and protect them. While they were talking Pony told the story where Johnny was beaten up by Socs. After the movie the two girls, Ponyboy, Johnny and Two-Bit escorted them to car, because the boys offered them to drive the girls home. On their way a car full with Socs appeared and one of them was Curry's boyfriend Bob. Avoiding a fight, Curry and her friend left the Greasers and Bob brought them home. Ponyboy suspected Bob to be the Soc who has beaten up Johnny. Both children rested a while on the wasteground and fell asleep. After midnight Pony woke up and went home being afraid his brothers were worrying about him. That was true and during a quarrel Darry hit Pony and the young boy ran away. On the wasteground he picked up Johnny. After he had ran a long distance he stopped and decided to walk home. In a park they met the group of Socs led by Bob. After insulting each other Bob pushed Pony's head into a fountain. He lost consciousness. Johnny saved his life by killing Bob with a blade. The Socs retreated and after the boys saw what had happened, they ran to Dally who helped them to get out of the town. Armed and alone they were hiding in an old church outside town. After a week Dally came and the boys were informed that police was searching them. As they returned to church after a walk the building was on fire. Risking their lives they saved some young children from burning. Ponyboy woke up in an ambulance. The other two Greasers were in sterner condition than Pony. He told his story to a doctor. The three boys were celebrated as heroes. Pony could leave hospital soon while Johnny was fighting against death. He solved his problem with his big brother Darry and decided to take part in the fight between Socs and Greasers. In the evening the fist fight started on the wasteground. After the Greasers had won Ponyboy and Dally visited Johnny in hospital. The doctor informed them that he was dying. After Johnny's death Dally went mad and ran away. At home Ponyboy and the gang were called by Dally who was hunted by police. They only arrived soon enough to see how Dally was killed by police forces. After these events Pony got physically and mentally ill. He had to stay a week at home and then he had to go to court because of the murder on Bob. Every witness told the truth that Johnny had killed Bob in case of self-defence. Ponyboy claimed that he had been the murderer. Pony's marks at school became worse and worse. His teacher advised him to write a text to pass this school year. And so he wrote that book and recovered from his feeling of guilty.

Persons:

Ponyboy:

He is the youngest boy of the family Curtis. His parents died a few months ago and so Pony has to live with his brothers. With 14 years he is also the youngest member of the gang but some think he behaves older. Pony likes films and goes to cinemas very often. Ponyboy is also an intelligent boy and gets good marks at school. Pony is sometimes very dreamy and because of this he is able to establish a friendship with the Soc girl Cherry. Despite Ponyboy is proud to be a greaser and if someone assaults him he gets angry easily. To his buddies he is very loyal and he likes them a lot. Johnny's death is a good example of this friendship. He really gets mad after his best friend died. Pony doesn't like fights but he takes part for revenge. He wants to be the avenger of the problems which have been caused by the Socs. But in normal cases he won't use any arms or won't start a fight. After Johnny's death Ponyboy feels guilty and gets sick, because he has thought that it has been his fault. Finally he solves his problems but he will never be the same boy.

Johnny:

Johnny is the shy 16-year old boy who's the gang's pet. Everybody in the gang likes him. One day he has been beaten up by Socs. This was a shock for his life, he never recovers from. After that day he

wears a blade for self-defence. Johnny has to use it one time to save his friend Ponyboy. He has killed an other child and so he and Pony ran away. Nothing hold him back home because he hates his parents because they are always drunken. Hiding in that church has been a good experience for him. There Johnny has saved the lives of some children by risking his own. Badly hurt he gets into hospital and after some days he dies in the arms of his best friend.

Dally:

The most aggressive and criminal Greaser is of course Dally. He has a police record which is longer than anybody can imagine. He has sometimes been in jail. This has been a bad experience for him but he continues mugging and shop lifting. Dally is very proud of his record and likes fighting. He also wears an unloaded gun for bluff. The only thing he likes is Johnny and he does everything to protect him. After his death he has done a kind of suicide. He has mugged an old man and has got hunted by police. In a critical situation he has shown his gun and the policemen have killed him. Despite his rude behaviour Cherry thinks he has good sides too.

Sodapop:

The seventeen-year old Sodapop is the most handsome and nicest of the Curtis brothers. He has dropped out of school to work at a filling station. He is in love with a girl called Sandy. He likes his little brother and they do a lot together. Sodapop gets really worried when Ponyboy has run away. The imagination to be sent into a boys home frightens him. Sodapop is also proud to be Greasers.

Darry:

As the oldest brother he carries the responsibility for Ponyboy and Sodapop. Sometimes he has to be unfriendly. Darry behaves cold to Pony because he wants to protect him. One day Pony has got home late and during a quarrel Darry has slapped him. He has felt very sorry because of this and Pony has run away. Darry wants Pony to stay away of fights but in the end the young brother makes him to do so. Darry is very strong and he will be able to be a Soc if he has the money, but he is loyal to his brothers.

Interpretation and own opinion:

I don't liked that book. It was mostly boring and you knew the following happenings before you read them. Sometimes it reminded my to „The West Side story“. I am unable to find a real sense in this book. After all the deaths, fights and events in the book, nothing has changed. Perhaps this is the meaning of the book but then it is a stupid meaning. The language of the book was easy in spite of it was a slang. The whole book is very shoddy and some events don't cope with an possibility. I also don't know why the book is called „The Outsiders“. There are two groups who hate each other. Nearly the same number of people belong to each gang. I see two enemies but not a majority and some far away outcasts. For me the book was, by one word, nonsense.