

Name _____



Changing Views

Ponyboy Curtis starts off seeing the world in simple terms. He is a Greaser, and the Socs are his enemies. The Greasers, like Ponyboy, don't have much money, but they have each other. The Socs, short for "Socials," have fancy cars, expensive clothes, and big houses. Ponyboy believes that Socs have perfect lives and don't care about anything or anyone.

But things start to change when he meets Cherry Valance, a Soc girl who surprises him. She listens to him and tells him that Socs have problems too, even if they don't show them. This is the first time Ponyboy begins to question his beliefs. Maybe Socs aren't as different from Greasers as he thought.

His understanding grows when he and his best friend, Johnny, run away after Johnny kills a Soc in self-defense. While hiding, Ponyboy reads *Gone with the Wind* to Johnny, and they talk about being heroes. When they later save children from a burning church, Ponyboy realizes that actions matter more than labels like "Greasers" or "Socs."

After Johnny dies from his injuries, Ponyboy struggles with grief. He doesn't want to believe Johnny is gone, and he becomes angry and lost. But in Johnny's last note, he tells Ponyboy to stay "gold"—to keep seeing beauty in the world and to stay true to himself. This message changes Ponyboy's perspective. He realizes that fighting and hate won't solve anything.

By the end of the novel, Ponyboy understands that people are more than their social class. He decides to write his story so others can see the truth—that Greasers and Socs are not so different after all. His journey proves that identity isn't about being a Greaser or a Soc—it's about the choices a person makes.

