

Name _____



Tough Choices

In *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, being "tough" means different things to different characters. Some believe toughness is about being strong and fearless, while others think it's about staying true to yourself even when life is hard.

Dally Winston is the toughest Greaser. He never backs down from a fight and doesn't show his emotions. He believes that being tough means never letting anyone hurt you. Dally grew up on the streets and has learned to survive by being hard and unbreakable. He thinks that if you care too much, you'll only get hurt.

Johnny Cade, on the other hand, sees toughness differently. At first, he admires Dally's strength, but after he and Ponyboy hide out in the church, he begins to understand that real toughness isn't about fighting—it's about bravery and doing what's right. When the church catches on fire, Johnny runs inside to save the children. This moment shows that toughness isn't just about being physically strong but about standing up for others, even when it's scary.

Ponyboy has his own idea of what it means to be tough. He isn't like Dally—he cares deeply about people, enjoys reading, and watches sunsets. Some of the other Greasers think this makes him soft, but Ponyboy learns that his kind of toughness is different. After Johnny dies, Ponyboy realizes that being tough doesn't mean becoming cold or angry—it means holding onto who you really are, even when life is hard.

Each character in *The Outsiders* defines toughness in their own way, and their beliefs shape their choices. Dally's toughness leads him to a tragic end because he doesn't believe in hope. Johnny's toughness makes him a hero. Ponyboy's version of toughness helps him find his voice and share his story. The novel teaches that real strength isn't about never getting hurt—it's about how you handle life's challenges.

