

Name _____



Golden Moments

In *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, Ponyboy and Johnny discuss a poem by Robert Frost called *Nothing Gold Can Stay*. The poem talks about how beautiful things, like the first leaves of spring, do not last forever. Johnny is deeply moved by the poem, and later in the novel, he reminds Ponyboy to "stay gold." But what does this really mean?

At first, Ponyboy does not fully understand Johnny's message. But as the story unfolds, he begins to see that being "gold" means staying pure, hopeful, and true to oneself. Ponyboy is different from many of the other Greasers. He loves books, movies, and sunsets. He sees beauty in the world, even though life is tough. Johnny notices this and wants Ponyboy to hold onto it.

Throughout *The Outsiders*, characters struggle with the idea that good things do not last forever. Johnny and Ponyboy experience a moment of peace while hiding out in the countryside, watching the sunrise. This "golden" time is short-lived, as they must soon return to their harsh reality. Johnny's life itself is like the poem—he is young and kind-hearted, but his time is cut short. His final words to Ponyboy remind him not to lose the part of himself that sees the good in life.

After Johnny dies, Ponyboy has a hard time coping. He starts acting tough and shutting out his emotions, much like Dally. But when he finds Johnny's note, he understands what his friend wanted him to learn. Ponyboy realizes that even though life is hard, he does not have to become cold or bitter. Instead, he chooses to "stay gold" by holding onto his love for reading, writing, and seeing the world differently.

By the end of the novel, Ponyboy takes Johnny's message to heart. He writes *The Outsiders* to share his story, hoping to help others see that everyone, no matter where they come from, has a chance to hold onto something "gold."

