



SUMMARY

Set in a divided Tulsa, Oklahoma in the 1960s, *The Outsiders* brings to the stage S.E. Hinton's landmark novel and the hit film it inspired. The musical follows Ponyboy Curtis and his chosen family, The Greasers. Poor kids from the wrong side of the tracks, The Greasers survive through loyalty and brotherhood. Their rivals, the wealthy Socs (pronounced sowsh), torment and terrorize them every chance they get. After a violent altercation between the rival camps at the local drive-in movie theater, The Greasers must grow up very quickly. As the stakes rise and innocence is lost, *The Outsiders* asks whether these young people will be crushed by the world they've inherited or fight to shape a future where loyalty and justice can defeat violence.

CHARACTER GUIDE

Ponyboy Curtis: A sensitive, observant Greaser who loves books and movies. Caught between childhood and adulthood, he struggles in a world divided by class and violence while searching for his own voice.

Johnny Cade: A quiet Greaser from a broken home. Gentle and loyal, Johnny's fear and tenderness make him the moral heart of the Greasers.

Dallas "Dally" Winston: A tough-as-nails Greaser shaped by the streets. Fierce and volatile, Dally believes the world is cruel, and survival means never showing weakness.

Sodapop Curtis: Ponyboy's older brother. His optimism masks the pain of being trapped between dreams and responsibility.

Darrel "Darry" Curtis: The eldest Curtis brother, Darry, is the only remaining parental figure for Ponyboy and Sodapop. Darry sacrifices his own future to keep his brothers safe.

Two-Bit Mathews: A wisecracking Greaser with a sharp sense of humor and deep loyalty.

Bob Sheldon: A wealthy, entitled Soc whose privilege has grown into cruelty.

Cherry Valance: Bob's girlfriend. A Soc cheerleader who dares to see the Greasers as human, Cherry is torn between loyalty to the Soc lifestyle and her sense of justice.



EXERCISES & ACTIVATIONS

Writing (spoiler alert!)

In *The Outsiders*, violence is real. Director Danya Taymor uses many theatrical devices to help the audience understand what it feels like to experience such violence. Think back to the scene in Act 1 when Ponyboy is held underwater by Bob Sheldon. What is going through Ponyboy's mind in this moment? Write a one paragraph monologue that gives voice to Ponyboy's experience during this fight with Bob.

Embodying

Ponyboy Curtis is obsessed with the movies, especially the blockbuster films of Paul Newman. His favorite place is the drive-in movie theater. Find some video footage of Paul Newman movies from the 1950s and 1960s. Study his mannerisms, his posture, and his voice. Then, with a partner, improvise a scene between Paul Newman and Ponyboy Curtis that takes place before the action of *The Outsiders* begins.

Contextual

The Outsiders is rooted in a very real moment in American history: the 1960s, a volatile time when anti-war protests, demands for racial integration, and the rise of feminism rocked American culture to its core. Choose one contextual subject connected to the world of the play, such as 1960s youth gangs, drive-in movie culture, women's rights, or the impact of racial segregation. Conduct brief research, then write a paragraph from the perspective of a teenager living in Tulsa during the time of the musical. Reflect on how the events of the play relate to the social trend you researched.

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