

START * PONYBOY. I wish I looked like Paul Newman. He looks tough and I don't. (*Traffic sounds are coming up and he considers the imaginary street.*) The other thing—it's a long walk home with no company. But I usually lone it anyway. I like to watch movies undisturbed so I can get into them and live them with the actors. I'm different that way. I mean my second oldest brother, Soda, never cracks a book at all, and my oldest brother, Darry, works too hard to be interested in a story or drawing a picture—so I'm not like them. And nobody in our gang digs movies and books the way I do. So I lone it. (*Sound of a car zooming by and as it does, someone shouts from it.*)

~~VOICE. Greaser!~~

PONYBOY (*looks after the car, then front. Defensively.*)

And I'm a greaser. (*Explaining.*) Greasers can't walk alone too much or they get jumped by the Socs. I'm not sure how you spell that, but it's the abbreviation for the Socials—the jet set, the rich kids. (*There's the sound of a car approaching, driving slowly. PONYBOY notices the sound.*) We're poorer than the Socs. I reckon we're wilder, too. But not like the Socs, who jump greasers and wreck houses and throw beer blasts for kicks. (*Frankly.*) Greasers are almost like hoods; we steal things and drive old souped up cars and have gang fights. I don't mean I do. Darry would kill me if I got in trouble with the police. Since Mom and Dad were killed in a car crash, the three of us get to stay together only as long as we behave. So Soda and I stay

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out of trouble as much as we can. (*The car has stopped and car doors are opened and then slammed shut. PONYBOY is getting nervous.*) I'm not saying that either the Socs or the greasers are better; that's just the way things are.

END

CHARACTERS

PONYBOYin his early teens, a greaser
JOHNNYPonyboy's friend, in his early teens
BOB a Soc
RANDY a Soc
DALLAS early 20s, a greaser
TWO-BIT early 20s, a greaser
DARRY Ponyboy's oldest brother, 20 years old
SODAPOP .. Ponyboy's second oldest brother, mid teens
SANDY Sodapop's girlfriend
CHERRY a Soc
MARCIA Cherry's friend
MRS. O'BRIANT a parent
JERRY a parent
DOCTOR at the hospital
NURSE at the hospital
MR. SYME an English teacher
PAUL early 20s, a Soc

Extras: GREASERS, SOCS, HOSPITAL WORKER,
CHILDREN (if available)

START * RANDY. Maybe you're right. (*Takes a breath.*) I'm not going to show at the rumble tonight. (*PONYBOY is surprised.*) I'm sick of all this. And no matter what you think, Bob was a good guy. He had a problem, but he was a real person.

~~PONYBOY. How could I know that?~~

RANDY. ~~You couldn't, and~~ Now he's dead. His mother had a total breakdown.

~~PONYBOY. Who's to blame?~~

RANDY. All I know, they spoiled him; they gave in to him all the time. He kept trying to make someone say "No" and they never did. He needed somebody to lay down the law, set limits, give him something to stand on. (*Tries to grin, but he's close to tears.*) One time he came home drunker than anything—falling down disgusting. He thought sure they'd raise the roof. (*It's so absurd.*) Know what they did? They said it was *their* fault, they'd failed him, *they* took the blame. Maybe if his father had given him a belt instead, he'd still be alive. (*With a small smile.*) Only person ever told Bob "No" was Cherry Valance. No wonder he was so crazy about her.

~~PONYBOY. I have to go to the hospital.~~

RANDY. That kid—your buddy—he might die?

~~PONYBOY. He might.~~

RANDY. And tonight—people get hurt in rumbles, maybe killed. And it doesn't do any good. Even if you whip us, you'll still be at the bottom and we'll still be the lucky ones with all the breaks. Greasers will still be greasers, and Socs will still be Socs. I'm going to get out of this town.

~~PONYBOY.~~

END

START * CHERRY. You only know his bad side. When he got drunk he was horrible—it's that part of him that beat up Johnny. I knew it was Bob when you told me the story. (*Bitterly.*) He was so proud of those rings. (*Trying to sort it out.*) When he wasn't trying to destroy himself, he could be something special—something that marked him different.

~~PONYBOY. Last time I saw Bob he was drowning me.~~

CHERRY (*bitterly*). Think hard, Ponyboy. When was the last time you saw, Bob?

~~PONYBOY (*as he remembers*). Last time I saw him he was—~~

CHERRY (*as PONYBOY winces*). Don't go to the rumble tonight.

PONYBOY. They bringin' blades?

CHERRY. ~~No~~. They play your way. No weapons. Fair deal. Your rules. Randy told me. He knows for sure. I already told Darry.

~~PONYBOY. I guess we're supposed to be grateful—~~

CHERRY. I'm not looking for gratitude. I only want to help. I like you, Ponyboy. I liked you from the start—

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Act II

the way you talk. Wouldn't you try to help me if you could?

~~PONYBOY. Sure—if I could.~~

CHERRY. I have to testify at your hearing. Randy, too.

~~PONYBOY. To clear Bob's good name?~~

CHERRY. You'll be there. You'll find out. (*As she looks at him.*) You'd make a good friend, Pony. Good friends are a little hard to find these days. **END**