

Book Review

Coming-of-Age, Thriller

Genre

The Outsiders

Title

S.E. Hinton

Author

Quick Take

The Outsiders is the story of Ponyboy, a working class teenager. He and his friends are in constant conflict with the rival, upper class 'Socs.' One night a fight goes too far, and Ponyboy finds himself on the run from the law.

Why I Love It

S.E. Hinton wrote *The Outsiders* in high school, a fact that shines through in every aspect of the novel. It's the story of Ponyboy, a bright young teenager who finds himself at the center of a dangerous conflict between the working class 'Greasers' and the upper class 'Socs.' When his friend kills a socs, he must go into hiding without so much as returning home for a change of clothes. This plot could have easily become melodramatic, especially considering the age of Hinton when she crafted the novel. However, I think it is because Hinton was 16 when she wrote the book that everything feels so real. The emotions of the characters not only seem real, but justified. The interactions between the characters are near perfect mirrors of how teenagers communicate in real life. When Ponyboy returns from his time on the run, Hinton's depiction of how teenagers and their families deal with trauma is likewise authentic. The action scenes are gripping and each of the greasers are lovable. Hinton's *The Outsiders* may take place in the 1960s, but the tale, the themes, and the characters are all timeless. Any teenager, especially those with a taste for stories about misfits, would enjoy this novel.