

THE OUTSIDERS

A Full Length Play in Two Acts
For 10 or 12 Men and 5 or 7 Women*, Extras

CHARACTERS

PONYBOYin his early teens, a greaser
JOHNNYPonyboy's friend, in his early teens
BOB a Soc
RANDY a Soc
DALLASearly 20s, a greaser
TWO-BITearly 20s, a greaser
DARRYPonyboy's oldest brother, 20 years old
SODAPOP .. Ponyboy's second oldest brother, mid teens
SANDYSodapop'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)

*If more female roles are desired for your production,
the roles of JERRY and MR. SYME may be played by
women.

(General light coming up. PONYBOY blinks his eyes and shakes himself. He's no longer remembering. He's in the present and now he looks directly at the AUDIENCE.)

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

Ponyboy #1

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.

(Two young men, RANDY and BOB, obviously "Socials" are entering. RANDY comes on L. PONYBOY turns to start R but BOB enters from that side.)

BOB. Hey, grease—

RANDY. How come you're all by yourself, grease?

PONYBOY *(tightly)*. Stay away from me.

BOB. Couldn't think of it.

RANDY. Not safe for you to be out here all alone.

BOB. We're gonna do you a favor, grease. We're gonna cut off that long greasy hair.

PONYBOY *(tight)*. Leave me alone.

BOB *(pulls a knife and flips open the blade)*. Need a haircut, grease?

PONYBOY *(backing up)*. No. *(BOB advances with the knife.)*

BOB. Gonna cut it real close! How'd you like the haircut to begin just below the chin?

PONYBOY *(panic)*. Are you crazy! *(Shouting.)* Soda! Darry!

BOB. Shut him up.

RANDY. *(looking off L)*. I see someone—

PONYBOY *(frantic)*. Darry!

BOB *(coming at him. Hard)*. Okay, greaser!

RANDY. Cool it, Bob!

BOB *(implacable)*. He's asking—

RANDY *(gestures L)*. Company coming—

Ponyboy
continued
#1
continued

#2
Bob
+
Randy
+
Ponyboy

(As JOHNNY follows, sliding under the imaginary fence, PONYBOY has turned out the desk lamp and is coming down to join them.)

PONYBOY *(as he comes)*. You know he hates to do things legal.

DALLAS *(calling)*. Move it, Ponyboy.

PONYBOY *(following)*. Sure, Dallas. *(MARCIA has turned to CHERRY.)*

MARCIA *(she giggles)*. You really made them mad.

CHERRY. You object?

MARCIA. Bob and Randy are disgusting. I don't want to sit with them either. *(DALLAS is now observing the GIRLS with interest.)*

CHERRY. They need a lesson. *(Turning front. Emphatically.)* We came to see a movie. We'll see a movie. *(DALLAS is strolling over, followed by the hesitant PONYBOY and JOHNNY.)*

MARCIA *(looking out front at where the screen must be. Reciting the title)*. "Bikinis on Muscle Beach."

CHERRY. Must be something by J. D. Salinger.

MARCIA *(seriously)*. Really?

CHERRY *(what an idiot)*. Marcia! *(DALLAS has seated himself right behind CHERRY while JOHNNY and PONYBOY sit uneasily beside him.)*

DALLAS *(leans over CHERRY's shoulder and looks at the side of her face)*. Is this hair real, or a wig? *(CHERRY leans forward away from him. He gives her hair a little tug.)*

CHERRY *(slaps his hand away)*. Stop that.

DALLAS. I guess it's real. *(Suggestively.)* Wanta check if I'm real?

PONYBOY *(a faint protest)*. Dallas —

Marcia
+
Cherry
#3

MARCIA. Watch the picture.

DALLAS. "Bikinis on Muscle Beach" — (He puts his feet up on the bench beside CHERRY.) Like to see some muscle?

CHERRY (*sharply*). Take your feet off my seat and shut up!

DALLAS (*looking at the sky. Amused*). Who's gonna make me?

MARCIA (*has looked at them and turns to CHERRY*). That's the greaser that jockeys for the Slash J sometimes.

DALLAS. I know you two. I've seen you around rodeos.

CHERRY (*coolly*). It's a shame you can't ride bull half as good as you can talk it.

DALLAS. You two barrel race, huh?

CHERRY. You'd better leave us alone — or I'll call the cops.

DALLAS (*bored out of his mind*). Oh, my, my — you've got me scared to death! You ought to see my record sometime, baby. (*Grinning slyly*.) Guess what I've been in for?

CHERRY. Please leave us alone. Why don't you be nice and leave us alone?

DALLAS. I'm never nice. Want a Coke?

CHERRY. I wouldn't drink it if I was starving in the desert. (*Over her shoulder.*) Get lost, hood! (*DALLAS shrugs and strolls off toward the popcorn stand. CHERRY glares at PONYBOY.*) Are you going to start on us?

PONYBOY (*sincerely*). No.

CHERRY (*suddenly she smiles*). You don't look the type. What's your name?

PONYBOY. I wish you hadn't asked. It's — Ponyboy Curtis.

CHERRY (*smiling*). That's an original and lovely name.

#4
Dallas
+
Cherry

CHERRY. I don't care.

(TWO-BIT has entered during this, coming up behind JOHNNY and PONYBOY. Now he puts a heavy hand on JOHNNY's shoulder, and the other on PONYBOY's shoulder.)

TWO-BIT *(in a deep threatening voice)*. Okay, greasers, you've had it. *(Both PONYBOY and JOHNNY gasp.)*

PONYBOY *(looking up. Relaxing)*. Glory, Two-Bit—you want to scare us to death? We—*(He stops as he looks at JOHNNY whose eyes are shut and he's shaking hard. Concerned.)* Johnny—

TWO-BIT *(realizing)*. Kid—*(Encouraging.)* Johnny—c'mon!

JOHNNY *(has opened his eyes and looks up. Weakly)*. Hey, Two-Bit.

TWO-BIT *(genuinely contrite)*. Sorry, kid. *(Messes JOHNNY's hair.)* I forgot. *(He climbs over to sit by MARCIA.)* Who's this, your great aunts?

MARCIA. Great grandmothers twice removed.

TWO-BIT. A sharp one. How could you two be picked up by a couple of greasy hoods like Pony and Johnny?

MARCIA. We really picked them up. We're Arabian slave traders and we're thinking about shanghaiing them. They're worth ten camels apiece.

TWO-BIT. Five. They don't talk Arabian. Say something in Arabian, Johnnycake.

JOHNNY *(embarrassed)*. Cut it out, Two-Bit. Dallas was bothering them, and when he left they wanted us to sit with them—to protect them against greasers like you.

TWO-BIT. Where is ol' Dallas? Tim Shepherd is looking for him.

#5
Two-Bit
Ponyboy
Johnny
+
Marcia

Johnny figured it was Soda holding him. He started shaking and crying—couldn't stop himself. He said there was a whole bunch—a blue Mustang full. Soda kept holding him saying, "Don't talk," and over and over, "They've gone. They've gone, Johnnycake."

CHERRY (*cautiously*). A blue Mustang?

PONYBOY (*nods again*). Johnny tried to run, but they caught him. One of them had rings on his hand. That's what cut Johnny so bad.

CHERRY (*disturbed*). All Socs aren't like that. You have to believe me, Ponyboy. Not all of us are like that.

PONYBOY. Sure.

CHERRY. That's like saying all greasers are like Dallas Winston. I bet he's jumped a few people.

PONYBOY (*conceding, nods*). Lotsa times.

CHERRY. You think the Socs have it made, don't you?

PONYBOY (*sharply*). Well you do.

CHERRY. It may come as a surprise, but we have troubles you've never even heard of. You want to know something. Things are tough all over.

PONYBOY. Then why are we so different?

CHERRY (*considering*). You're more emotional. We're sophisticated—cool to the point of not feeling anything. I'll catch myself talking and realize I don't mean half what I'm saying. I don't really think a beer blast on the river bottom is super-cool, but I'll rave about it just to be saying something. (*She suddenly smiles at him.*) I've never told that to anyone. You're the first person. (*Truly curious.*) Why is that?

PONYBOY (*wryly*). Because I'm a greaser and because I'm younger. So you don't have to keep your guard up.

CHERRY (*admiring*). For a kid, you're awful smart.

#6
Ponyboy
→
Cherry

DALLAS. I see. (*Looks off, then back.*) The police'll be here any minute. You need money and you need a plan. (*To PONYBOY.*) Darry and Sodapop know about this? (*PONYBOY shakes his head.*) Boy howdy, I ain't itchin' to be the one to tell Darry.

PONYBOY. Don't tell him.

DALLAS (*handing PONYBOY his jacket*). Put this on or you die of pneumonia 'fore the cops get you. There's fifty bucks in the pocket.

JOHNNY. What do we do?

DALLAS (*all business*). Hop the three-fifteen freight to Windrixville. There's an abandoned church on top of Jay Mountain with a pump in the back, so don't worry about water. Buy a supply of food as soon as you get there—*this* morning before the story gets out. Then don't stick your noses out till I come. (*Glances at his watch.*) Git goin'.

JOHNNY. Dallas—thanks.

DALLAS (*wryly*). I thought New York was the only place I could get mixed up in a murder rap.

PONYBOY. Murder rap?

DALLAS (*urgently*). I said—*git goin'!* (*They scurry off. DALLAS looks over at the dead BOB. There's a final crashing drumbeat.*)

BLACKOUT

#7
Johnny
Dallas
Ponyboy

DARRY. I asked about Johnny and Dallas, but no one would tell us anything.

NURSE. Are you members of the family?

DOCTOR. I'll only talk to the families.

DARRY (*quietly firm*). Doctor — Johnny and Dallas don't have any family 'cept us.

SODAPOPOP (*agreeing*). I think we're about as much family as they have.

DOCTOR (*deciding*). All right. (*To the GROUP.*) Dallas Winston should be okay after two or three days in the hospital. One arm is pretty bad, but he'll get back the use of it.

PONYBOY (*he thought so*). Dallas is always okay.

DARRY (*wanting to hear the worst*). Tell us about Johnny.

NURSE (*to DOCTOR*). We already phoned his parents.

DARRY (*controlling his emotions*). Tell it to us straight.

DOCTOR. Johnny Cade is critical. His back is broken. He's in severe shock and suffering from third-degree burns. (*The THREE BROTHERS are in shock.*)

DARRY (*keeping his voice controlled*). What are you doing for him?

DOCTOR. Everything to ease the pain, but because his back is broken, he can't feel the burns below the waist. Even if he lives —

PONYBOY (*stung*). If? You said *if*?

DOCTOR. If he lives, he'll be a cripple.

DARRY. Is he conscious?

DOCTOR. In and out.

NURSE. He keeps calling for Dallas and Ponyboy.

DARRY. Can we see him?

DOCTOR. Not now. What you do now is you go home and you get some rest.

#8
Darry
Sodapop
Doctor
Ponyboy
Nurse

PONYBOY. He wants a copy of *Gone With the Wind* so I can finish readin' it to him.

TWO-BIT (*volunteering*). I'll go down to the drugstore 'n' get him one. It's just downstairs. (*As he goes.*) Don't y'all run away. (*PONYBOY pulls a chair up beside JOHNNY.*)

PONYBOY. Dallas's gonna be all right. And Darry and me—we're okay now. (*JOHNNY has closed his eyes.*) Johnny?

JOHNNY. It just hurts sometimes. It usually don't—I can't feel anything below the middle of my back. (*He breaths hard for a moment.*) I'm pretty bad off, ain't I, Pony?

PONYBOY. You'll be okay. You gotta be. We couldn't get along without you.

(*DALLAS, wearing a white hospital robe, has come in and stands just inside, not yet seen by the OTHERS.*)

JOHNNY. I won't be able to walk again.

PONYBOY (*keeping hold of himself with an effort*). You'll be okay. I'm tellin' you—

JOHNNY. I'm so scared. I used to talk about killing myself, but I don't want to die. (*With what strength he has.*) It ain't long enough, Ponyboy. Sixteen years ain't long enough. There's so much stuff I ain't done yet, and so many things I ain't seen. That time we were at the church in Windrixville was the only time I've been away from our neighborhood.

PONYBOY. You ain't gonna die.

DALLAS. That's right, Johnny.

JOHNNY. Dallas?

#9
Ponyboy
+
Johnny

(SODAPOP is coming back in.)

SODAPOP *(apologetic)*. Sorry.

PONYBOY. It's okay. Really.

SODAPOP. I'm telling you the truth, Ponyboy. I dropped out because I'm dumb. Look, I'm happy working in a gas station with cars. You'd never be happy doing that. You have to understand about Darry, too. He wants you to have the chance he missed. *(Emotional.)* We can't get hacked off at each other anymore. We're all we've got left and if we don't stick together, we don't have anything. *(His hope.)* Pony, if you make it you're making it for all three of us.

DARRY *(sincerely)*. What do you say, Pony?

PONYBOY *(coming to a decision)*. You guys get out of here so I can concentrate. I've gotta theme to write. *(BOTH BROTHERS are delighted with his decision. They're going.)*

DARRY. See you later.

SODAPOP. You'll think of something.

PONYBOY. Something important. *(As they go, PONYBOY crosses to the table. He notices the book and as he picks it up a piece of paper flutters to the floor. He picks up the paper as he did before. Recognizing.)* Johnny's handwriting—

(At the left a bit of light comes up on the only half-seen JOHNNY.)

JOHNNY *(what PONYBOY is reading)*. I asked the Nurse to give you this book so you could finish it—*(PONYBOY is skipping on down till he comes to a part he especially likes.)* I want you to tell Dallas to look at a sun-

#10
Johnny

set. He'll probably think you're crazy, but ask him for me. (*PONYBOY continues on down.*) Listen, I don't mind dying now. It's worth it saving those kids. Some of their parents came by to thank me, and I know it was worth it. (*PONYBOY focuses carefully on what follows.*) That guy who wrote the poem—he meant you're gold when you're a kid, like green. When you're a kid everything's new, dawn. It's just that when you get used to everything that it's day. The way you are, Pony. That's gold. (*PONYBOY looks on down the page.*) There's still lots of good in the world. Tell Dallas. I don't think he knows.

PONYBOY (reading signature). Your buddy. Johnny. (*PONYBOY considers for a moment. Then he comes to an important decision. He opens a composition book, picks up a pencil and with deliberation, begins to write. Saying what he writes.*) Semester Composition. Teacher — Mr. Syme. Ponyboy Curtis. (*The light begins to dim out. PONYBOY is repeating the words as he writes them.*) When I stepped out into the bright sunlight from the darkness of the movie house, I had only two things on my mind: Paul Newman and a ride home —

LIGHTS DIM OUT

THE END

Johnny
#10
continued