The Outsiders
Chapter 5 – 6

Reading Comprehension Questions
1. What is Ponyboy’s issue with Johnny’s suggestion that they disguise themselves?

Johnny suggests that he and Ponyboy cut and dye their hair so they will not be recognized by their descriptions in the newspaper. Ponyboy is immediately against this idea and shares that his hair “was [his] pride…our hair was tuff…our hair labeled us as greasers too – it was our trademark” (71). He feels by changing his hair, he is changing his identity.

2. Why does Johnny think Dally is a hero? Do you think he is a hero based on this?

While reading Gone With The Wind, Johnny expresses that he thinks the southern gentleman reminds him of Dally because of their gallant nature. Ponyboy does not see his point, so Johnny explains that Dally was once arrested, but he remained cool under pressure and “took the sentence” (76) even though it was Two-bit who committed the crime. Johnny says that this is gallant, and Ponyboy says it “was the first time [he] realized the extent of Johnny’s hero-worship for Dally Wilson” (76).

3. What poem is referenced to in these chapters? Who wrote the poem?

The poem referenced in these chapters is called “Nothing Gold Can Stay” by Robert Frost.

4. Why are the Socs and Greasers going to have a rumble?

Dally shares that the socs and the greasers are planning a brawl soon. He reveals that the “kid [Johnny] killed had plenty of friends and all over town it’s Soc against grease” (83). The tension is so strong that greasers cannot even walk alone for fear of being attacked. Dally even confides that he is carrying a gun now (heater).

5. Why doesn’t Dally want Johnny to turn himself in? Why does Johnny insist on confessing?

Dally does not want Johnny to turn himself in because he has been to jail before, and he knows how it can make someone bitter. Johnny insists on turning himself in because he believes he has “a good chance of bein’ let off early” (87). He has no criminal record and the crime was self-defense.
6. What happens at the church?

While on their way back home, the boys notice the church is on fire. Ponyboy thinks his cigarette may have started the fire. When there are children missing and after hearing screams coming from the church, Pony and Johnny heroically jump into the church to rescue the children. The roof is about to cave in as the last child is saved. Johnny pushes Ponyboy out through the window, and he is injured by a falling timber.

7. What does Ponyboy realize about Darry at the end of chapter 6?

When Ponyboy is in the hospital, Darry and Sodapop come to his room. Ponyboy sees Darry in tears and he realizes that “Darry did care about [him], maybe as much as he cared about Soda” (98).

Digging A Little Deeper Questions

8. How does Hinton use humor during the church fire? Why do you think she does this?

Hinton uses humor in a few different ways during this section of the novel. Firstly, she uses humor in the interactions between Ponyboy and Johnny. This is shown when Pony looks at him and Johnny “grinned at [him]…he looked like he was having the time of his life”. Another form of humor that Hinton uses is with the children. When Ponyboy picks up the first kid to help him out, the child bites him. Hinton lightens the mood through her use of humor in this scene.

Literary Devices Questions

9. Find a quote from chapter three that foreshadows Ponyboy and Johnny’s experience in the burning church.

“I saw Johnny’s cigarette glowing in the dark and wondered vaguely what it was like inside a burning ember” (47). This line foreshadows Ponyboy’s eventual entrance to the church when he returns to this idea when he says “I remembered wondering what it was like in a burning ember, and I thought: Now I know, it’s a red hell” (92).