

Dally stood beside me quietly for a minute, trying to grasp the fact that we had really beaten the Socs. Then, grabbing my shirt, he hauled me to my feet. "Come on!" He half dragged me down the street. "We're going to see Johnny."

I tried to run but stumbled, and Dally impatiently shoved me along. "Hurry!" He was gettin' worse when I left. He wants to see you."

I was going as fast as I could. How could Dally be moving so fast? We just finished a fight? "Dally! Wait up I can't go that fast!"

After about three more blocks, we made it to his car and hopped in. You don't even know how happy I was when I saw it. I could sit there and relax for a moment while Dally drove. "Dally, Do you think Johnny is going to be okay?"

"I really don't know Ponyboy.....all we can do right now is hope."

We made it to the hospital in about seven minutes. It sure doesn't take long to get there when Dally's driving. We walked down the long, quiet hallway until we made it to Johnny's room. There were some doctors and nurses in the room. Dally started knocking on the glass window. "What's going on with Johnny! Is he Okay? You have to let us in there!"

"Dally! Calm down he is Okay," I exclaimed, grabbing his arm.

One of the nurses rushed out of the room to come talk to us. "Hi boys. Johnny is not doing so well. I don't know if it is a good idea for you to see him tonight."

Dally got this really mad look on his face and he pulled out the switchblade that he had gotten from Two-Bit. The nurse hadn't noticed it yet. "Dally! Now don't go and do something you are going to regret."

I was too late. Dally had the switchblade out in front of him threatening the nurse. "You better let us see our friend or thing are not going to end well tonight."

The nurse had stayed overly calm through this. "Listening to your friend. you don't want to do anything that you are going to regret."

"Don't tell me what I should or shouldn't do. You are going to let us see our friend and you are not going to tell nobody about this. You hear me?"

The nurse never even flinched when Dally was yelling at her. "Okay fine. you can see him and I won't tell anyone as long as you promise not to do something that stupid again."

Dally put the switchblade back into his back pocket. "Fine, just let us see our friend."

Johnny's room was quiet. Just the faint noises of the monitors and people walking by. Johnny laid there still, didn't even bat an eye when we walked in. Why did he look so lifeless? It's like he wasn't even alive. "Hey Johnny. How are you doing bud?"

Johnny tilted his head to the side a bit so he was looking at Dally and I. "I-I'm not feel to special right now. His voice was weak, he was barely able to get those words out.

Dally just stood there in silence. I didn't know what to say to him. "Oh Johnny you're going to be ok."

There was a very long, quiet moment. No one saying a singling thing. No one walking by in the hall.

Dally finally broke the silence. "Yeah Johnny. You can't die on us now. We just beat the Socs in the rumble. That's why we look the way we do. The gang needs you man!"

"Don't worry guys I am going to be alright. Besides you guys don't need me. You will be just fine without me. It's not like I'm the best fighter of the group!"

Johnny was very, very pale. He was almost ghostly looking. "Don't say that Johnny we do need you!"

"Ponyboy, I want you to have this." He handed me a folded up piece of paper and his copy of "Gone with the Wind". "I love you guys."

All of a sudden all the the machines went quiet. Johnny just lay there lifeless and still. Johnny was dead.

Dally broke out into tears. "No Johnny! You can't die. I need you! Johnny please."

I couldn't speak. I had just watched my best friend die right in front of me and there was nothing I could do about it. I felt a lump form in my throat. Tears began streaming down my face. "Dally he is dead."

Dally just sat there staring at the body that lay in front of him. The world felt like it had stopped for a few minutes. It was so quiet and calm, like there was no one else around. Soon, one of the nurses came in. "I am very sorry boys. Take your time." The nurse left the room.

After about ten minutes Dally got up and left the room. I could just sense that he was going to blow. I raced to catch up to him. By the time I found him he was already outside of the hospital. He was just sitting on the curb sobbing. I didn't know what to say to him. Dally looked so upset and when Dally gets upset he does things without even thinking. Him pulling the switchblade was a prime example of this happening. I needed to do something to calm him down. If I don't he is going to blow.

I sat down beside him. I really needed to be careful because I could end up saying something that would make him SUPER mad! I thought of my options. I could try and calm him down myself or maybe I could get the rest of the gang to help me.

Dally had stopped crying now. He seemed fairly calm, but I thought that he should still get some help. "Dally, I think that we should maybe head back to my house and tell the rest of the gang what has happened. Will you come with me?"

Dally just sat there without saying anything. After a few minutes he answered me. "Yeah, I guess that is a good idea. They are going to be wondering where you have gone to. I will walk with you if you really want me to."

My plan had worked. I got Dally to walk with me to my house and once we get there, the rest of the gang can help me keep him calm. "If you would Dally, that would be great."

It took us about twenty-five minutes to walk home. We decided to leave Dally's car at the hospital. It just didn't seem safe for him to be driving right now. Also, it gave him more time to calm down and think. It felt like a long twenty-five minutes because neither of us had said a single word.

Once we got to my house, everyone was waiting at the front door ready to get the news.

"So what's the news?" Sodapop and Darry were the first ones to rush out of the house.

I didn't know the best way to break the news, so I just said it as it was. "Johnny's dead."

Everything went silent. It was like the world had stopped, again. "I'm sorry guys. Were you there when it happened?" Darry asked.

Tears started to fill my eyes. I couldn't let any of the gang see me cry, so I tried to hold it back. "Yeah. He wasn't doing so well when we got there. He could barely talk. He gave me this letter though, but I haven't read it yet."

"Well only read it when you are ready." That was the first thing Two-Bit had said since we had got there.

Dally hadn't said a thing to anyone. I almost forgot that he was behind me, until I heard the slightest little snuffle. I had never seen anything bother Dally this much before in my entire life. Not even when he was sent to prison and his parents didn't really care about him anymore. "I think that we should maybe head inside and everyone can just calm down a bit." We all headed back in.

Once we were all settled in, I called Darry into the kitchen. "What's wrong Ponyboy?"

I'm just worried about Dally. He seems really upset about this and you know what happens when he get upset. He has already pulled a knife on one of the nurses at the hospital. I really think that someone should talk to him so he doesn't do anything stupid. Will you talk to him Darry?"

"Yeah of course Ponyboy. How are you doing with this whole thing?"

"I'm doing fine. It's not me you need to be worried about. Go deal with Dally. I am going to make myself a sandwich. I will be there in a couple minutes."

I wasn't doing so great after all. I can't believe that Johnny is dead. He can't be! I couldn't let the rest of the gang see me so upset. I am supposed to be tough. Also they shouldn't be worrying about me when Dally is needing help. This really was bothering me, though.

When I came back into the living room carrying my peanut butter sandwich. Darry was sitting beside Dally. The house was just so quiet. I don't ever remember it being this quiet when everyone was here. Soon Darry broke the silence. "So Dally, how are you doing with all of this?"

Dally didn't say anything for a few seconds, then he finally answered. "I don't know. Johnny was like a little brother to me, and now he is dead! Like how can that be?"

"I know Dally, it's hard. He was like a brother to all of us." Darry was trying to be as comforting as he could be.

"Now we don't want you to do anything that you are going to regret, so why don't you stay here tonight. All of you guys can stay if you want to."

"Oh I don't know I will be fine by myself!" Dally exclaimed.

Soon Sodapop piped up. "Dally you should just stay here with the rest of the gang. We will be able to relax if we know where everyone is."

"Okay fine. I will stay here. Not because I need you, because you guys need me."

Dally hated admitting to anyone that he needed help. He wanted to seem strong, even when he did need someone. "Thanks Dally." Sodapop exclaimed.

The rest of the night was spent with us sitting in the living room not saying much. We were much louder when Johnny was around. I really do miss Johnny. It is not the same without him.

That night all of the gang slept at our house. They made beds on the floor with extra blankets. It didn't take long before all of us were asleep.

The next few weeks were hard. Dally was having a hard time, but surprisingly enough he didn't do anything illegal. I, myself was having a very hard time with Johnny's death. I got very sick and wasn't even able to leave my bed. I was throwing up and became very dehydrated. My brothers were there for me whenever I needed them, though. They made me soup and made sure that the house stayed quiet and dark so I could sleep.

After about two weeks of the flu, I started to feel like myself again. I was able to stand up without feeling like I was going to fall over and I was even able to go for a walk around our neighbourhood with my brothers. In those past couple weeks, I had not been thinking right and didn't really remember what had happened with Johnny. Once my brothers had refreshed my memory about everything, it all came flooding back to me. I remembered being at the hospital when Johnny died. I remember talking Dally into coming over our house. I remembered it all again. There are some memories that I really do wish I could just erase from my memory, but I guess that's not possible.

The next couple days were spent around the house. My brothers didn't go to work because they were worried about me. "Darry, Sodapop, I will be fine you should go to work and get a break from looking after me all day."

"Oh, it's fine I really don't mind." Darry explained.

"Yeah, me neither Ponyboy. I want to make sure that you are all good before we go and leave you all by yourself." Sodapop joined in.

"Well thanks guys, but really don't need to worry about me!" I tried to explain that I would be fine, but they didn't listen to me.

"Oh! And Ponyboy, there is no need to stress about this, but we just found out that the court date to decide whether you will stay with us or go to a boys home is on Monday. It's nothing to worry about, though." Darry quietly said.

"Oh-umm-ok. What day is it today?" I really did not want to go to a boys home.

"It's Thursday. It's going to be fine, Okay Ponyboy." I could tell Darry was trying to calm me down, but he seemed worried about it himself.

The weekend appeared to fly by. It always does when you have something that you don't want to do on Monday. That "something" for me, was the court date. It was already today at eleven in the morning. Of course, all night I couldn't sleep. I lay there staring at the ceiling. I was out of bed a five. I went out to the kitchen to find Darry sitting at the table drinking a cup of coffee. "Wow you're up early!" I said to him. Darry sort of jumped and turned around to face me.

"Oh, Hey Ponyboy. You scared me. I didn't think anyone else was up." Darry said, his voice shaking a little bit.

"Oh Sorry. I couldn't sleep." I didn't look like he had slept much either.

"Yeah I couldn't sleep either. We have to be rested for the court. We don't want to look tired. Is Sodapop still sleeping?"

"I think so. He was pretty sound asleep when I left. He will probably get up soon."

"Yeah, he probably will, but let's let him sleep for as long as possible," Darry replied.

The morning past by really slow. The TV was never turned on. Darry and I just sat there in silence, the odd conversation happened. By seven-thirty Sodapop had woken up. The house didn't get any louder. You could hear a pin drop it was so quiet. Darry made us all breakfast and Soda and I did the dishes. After breakfast, we all went for a walk. The time still passing very slowly. We came home from our and watched a little TV while we got ready. "Make sure you boys put on your nicest clothes," Darry called down the hall. "You have to look good. This is an important day."

Soon it turned ten o'clock. It was time for us to head to the courthouse. Two-Bit was coming to pick us up in his car and give us a ride. There was a knock at the door.

"Are you all ready to go?" Two-Bit called through the door.

"Yeah come in!" Sodapop yelled back.

Two-Bit came through the door. "How is everyone doing today?"

"We are okay I guess," I replied.

"Well we better get a move on so we are not late," Darry said as he walked out the door.

I didn't take very long to get to the court house. It was about a half an hour drive, but it flew by because I was really dreading this day. We waited in the courtroom for the judge to show up. That took about twenty minutes. A few people came into the courtroom and sat down at the back. I recognized some of them, but most I didn't.

The judge called a few people to the stand to ask questions about Soda and I. The people were all saying good things, and they all talked about how we shouldn't be taken away from Darry. The judge listens to the people silently, not saying much.

All of the questionings took about an hour. The courtroom went silent while the judge was making his last finale decisions. "From the information that I have heard today and my previous knowledge of this subject, I have decided to let Ponyboy and Sodapop Curtis stay with there older brother Darry Curtis."

Darry, Sodapop and I all just looked at each other, then we all broke out into tears.

"I told you guys it was going to be Okay!" Darry said rather loud.

We left the courtroom and Two-Bit was waiting outside in the car. We all hoped in. "So how did it go?" Two-Bit asked cautiously. You could tell he didn't want to upset any of us.

"We get to stay!" I yelled at the top of my lungs.

"Really! That's great news!" Two-Bit replied.

On the way home I felt like I was on top of the world. All my worries were gone for that half an hour! I didn't have to worry anymore about me and Soda going to a boys home. I can't imagine leaving Darry by himself! There was still one thing that was bothering me, though. It was the fact that Johnny was dead. I still couldn't get over it. And the worst part was, if wouldn't have gone into that burning church in the first place, he would still be here. We could still have our talks about the sunsets and all of the things I couldn't talk to the rest of the gang about. It really should be me that was dead. Johnny really didn't deserve it. He always talks about how he wanted to die, but I don't think that he really meant it. I wish that I could bring Johnny back, but I guess that's not possible.

Once we got back to our house I really just wanted to go to my room, but Darry and Soda were so happy that I couldn't be the one to rain on their parade with my sad feelings for Johnny. So I just sat on the couch and watched some TV with them. It felt real nice knowing that we weren't going to be torn apart by the court. The rest of the night was spent at home. A few of the others guys dropped in to hear what we learned from the court, but that was pretty much it.

I had been staying home from school last week so I could recover. And today I didn't go either because of the court case. I had probably missed a lot of work! Darry says I have to go back tomorrow, though. I really didn't want to go. People were going to ask me how I am doing and what really happened with Johnny. I really didn't want to deal with all of those questions, but Darry says I have to so I guess I will be going.

I ran into Cherry at school today. "Hey Johnny. I know that this must be hard for you to be here. How are you doing?" She asked.

"I guess I am doing alright. Not the best I have ever been though." I was trying to be polite, but I really didn't feel like talking.

She kept telling me how sorry she was about Johnny and she wished she could make me feel better, but it was really just making it worse. I know that she was just trying to help. I really just needed some space though.

The day was almost over. Just one more class till I could leave the place I really didn't want to be right now. That class was English. We were always reading something or writing about it. My teacher came to talk to me about what I had missed. "Hey Johnny you just missed the work time for that essay I was having you write before this whole incident happened. There is no rush to get it done. Just work on it when you have the time."

"Okay. I will try and get that done fairly soon." I replied

"That sounds great! Thanks Johnny." She then turned around and left.

I had totally forgot about that essay she was having us write. I hadn't really gotten that much of a start on it before I left. I hadn't even got my topic chosen. I just start there thinking about what to write about until the last bell of the day rung. Cherry came and found me before I left. "Hey Johnny, Randy and some of the other Socs want to talk to you later tonight. Will that work for you?"

I was feel a little bit sceptical about this. What did they want? Why just me? "Okay. Did you happen to get a reason why?" I answered, trying not to sound scared.

"No Johnny, they didn't tell me why, but it's nothing bad. Don't worry." She said trying to make me feel better.

"Okay. What time and where?" I really was wanting to just go home tonight and do nothing.

"They said six-thirty at the restaurant." Cherry replied.

"Okay. I better get going before my brothers start to wonder where I am." I rushed away quickly.

"See you later Ponyboy," she yelled down the almost empty hallway.

I walked home as quickly as I could. I didn't want them worrying about me. After a fairly good walk home, I came through the front door. "Hey I'm home!" I called.

“Hey Pony. How was your day?” Darry asked meeting me at the door.

“Oh it was alright I guess. I talked to Cherry today and she told me that some of the Socs want to talk to me at the restaurant tonight at six-thirty.” I had this feeling Darry wasn’t going to like this very much.

“Now why do they want to do that?” Darry asked in a harsh tone.

“She didn’t say, but she did say that it was nothing bad. Darry I want to go talk to them.” I could tell Darry didn’t want me to.

“ I don’t know. This sounds like a setup to me.” He start to sound mad.

“Oh just let him go Darry. He will be fine.” Soda piped up.

“Okay fine. You can go, but we have to come with you.” Darry still didn’t seem too convinced.

“Thanks Darry!” I exclaimed.

It was soon six-fifteen so we all set of walking to the restaurant. I was about a ten-minute walk so we ended up getting there at just the same time as the blue mustang came rolling up. All of the boys got out and came over to us. Randy spoke first “Hey Pony, can I talk to you?”

“Yeah,” I said following him to his car.

“So Ponyboy just listen to me for a second. Me and the rest of the Socs have been talking, and we think that it is time we end the fights. There are too many people being killed from it, and we are tired of it. We understand that it is hard to lose someone the way you lost Johnny. So if you agree with this we think it is time for this to be over.”

I was not expecting to hear that from Randy. “Yes. It is causing too many deaths and injuries that are entirely avoidable. I think that it is a very good idea to stop the fights and just be normal people for once.”

“So it’s settled I guess. The fights are over.” He said reaching his hand out to shake mine. I reached out and shook his. With that, I got out of the car and walked over to my brothers. “Do you want to go in and grab a bite to eat?” I asked nodding my head towards the doors.

“Yes, please. I am starving!” Soda replied walking to the doors.

We went and sat at in the corner booth of the restaurant and waited for a waiter to serve us. I told them both about what Randy and I had talked about. They both were a little shocked to

hear this, but they thought it was a fantastic idea. We all ordered our food and ate it down relatively quickly once it had arrived.

After finishing our meals, we walked back home. I went to my room to work on that essay and Soda and Darry started calling all of the greasers to tell them the news. I was having a very hard time deciding what to write about. Then I remembered my teacher telling me to write about something I was passionate about.

That's when it came to me. I will write about how fighting does more harm than good. That's a topic I knew very well and cared about a lot. I laid down on my floor, grabbed my paper and pencil and began to write. "The Outsiders."

The Grammarly Edited Version*****

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I tried to run but stumbled, and Dally impatiently shoved me along. "Hurry!" He was getting worse when I left. He wants to see you."

I was going as fast as I could. How could Dally be moving so quickly? We just finished a fight? "Dally! Wait up I can't go that fast!"

After about three more blocks, we made it to his car and hopped in. You don't even know how happy I was when I saw it. I could sit there and relax for a moment while Dally drove. "Dally, Do you think Johnny is going to be okay?"

"I don't know Ponyboy.....all we can do right now is hope."

We made it to the hospital in about seven minutes. It sure doesn't take long to get there when Dally's driving. We walked down the long, quiet hallway until we made it to Johnny's room. There were some doctors and nurses in the room. Dally started knocking on the glass window. "What's going on with Johnny! Is he Okay? You have to let us in there!"

"Dally! Calm down he is Okay," I exclaimed, grabbing his arm.

One of the nurses rushed out of the room to talk to us. "Hi, boys. Johnny is not doing so well. I don't know if it is a good idea for you to see him tonight."

Dally got this mad look on his face, and he pulled out the switchblade that he had gotten from Two-Bit. The nurse hadn't noticed it yet. "Dally! Now don't go and do something you are going to regret."

I was too late. Dally had the switchblade out in front of him threatening the nurse. "You better let us see our friend or thing are not going to end well tonight."

The nurse had stayed overly calm through this. "Listening to your friend. you don't want to do anything that you are going to regret."

"Don't tell me what I should or shouldn't do. You are going to let us see our friend, and you are not going to tell nobody about this. You hear me?"

The nurse never even flinched when Dally was yelling at her. "Okay fine. you can see him, and I won't tell anyone as long as you promise not to do something that stupid again."

Dally put the switchblade back into his back pocket. "Fine, just let us see our friend."

Johnny's room was quiet. Just the faint noises of the monitors and people walking by. Johnny laid there still, didn't even bat an eye when we walked in. Why did he look so lifeless? It's like he wasn't even alive. "Hey, Johnny. How are you doing bud?"

Johnny tilted his head to the side a bit, so he was looking at Dally and I. "I-I'm not feeling too special right now. His voice was weak; he was barely able to get those words out.

Dally just stood there in silence. I didn't know what to say to him. "Oh, Johnny you're going to be ok."

There was a very long, quiet moment. No one was saying a single thing. No one was walking by in the hall.

Dally finally broke the silence. "Yeah, Johnny. You can't die on us now. We just beat the Socs in the rumble. That's why we look the way we do. The gang needs you, man!"

"Don't worry guys I am going to be alright. Besides, you guys don't need me. You will be just fine without me. It's not like I'm the best fighter in the group!"

Johnny was very, very pale. He was almost ghostly looking. "Don't say that Johnny we do need you!"

"Ponyboy, I want you to have this." He handed me a folded up piece of paper and his copy of "Gone with the Wind". "I love you guys."

All of a sudden all the machines went quiet. Johnny just lay there lifeless and still. Johnny was dead.

Dally broke out into tears. "No Johnny! You can't die. I need you! Johnny please."

I couldn't speak. I had just watched my best friend die right in front of me, and there was nothing I could do about it. I felt a lump form in my throat. Tears began streaming down my face. "Dally he is dead."

Dally just sat there staring at the body that lay in front of him. The world felt like it had stopped for a few minutes. It was so quiet and calm like there was no one else around. Soon, one of the nurses came in. "I am very sorry boys. Take your time." The nurse left the room.

After about ten minutes Dally got up and left the room. I could just sense that he was going to blow. I raced to catch up with him. By the time, I found him he was already outside of the hospital. He was just sitting on the curb sobbing. I didn't know what to say to him. Dally looked so upset, and when Dally gets angry, he does things without even thinking. Him pulling the switchblade was a prime example of this happening. I needed to do something to calm him down. If I don't, he is going to blow.

I sat down beside him. I needed to be careful because I could end up saying something that would make him SUPER mad! I thought of my options. I could try and calm him down myself, or maybe I could get the rest of the gang to help me.

Dally had stopped crying now. He seemed fairly calm, but I thought that he should still get some help. "Dally, I think that we should maybe head back to my house and tell the rest of the gang what has happened. Will you come with me?"

Dally just sat there without saying anything. After a few minutes, he answered me. "Yeah, I guess that is a good idea. They are going to be wondering where you have gone to. I will walk with you if you want me to."

My plan had worked. I got Dally to walk with me to my house, and once we get there, the rest of the gang can help me keep him calm. "If you would Dally, that would be great."

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Once we got to my house, everyone was waiting at the front door ready to get the news.

"So what's the news?" Sodapop and Darry were the first ones to rush out of the house.

I didn't know the best way to break the news, so I just said it as it was. "Johnny's dead."

Everything went silent. It was like the world had stopped, again. "I'm sorry guys. Were you there when it happened?" Darry asked.

Tears started to fill my eyes. I couldn't let any of the gang see me cry, so I tried to hold it back. "Yeah. He wasn't doing so well when we got there. He could barely talk. He gave me this letter, though, but I haven't read it yet."

"Well only read it when you are ready." That was the first thing Two-Bit had said since we had got there.

Dally hadn't said a thing to anyone. I almost forgot that he was behind me until I heard the slightest little snuffle. I had never seen anything bother Dally this much before in my entire life. Not even when he was sent to prison and his parents didn't care about him anymore. "I think that we should maybe head inside, and everyone can just calm down a bit." We all headed back in.

Once we were all settled in, I called Darry into the kitchen. "What's wrong Ponyboy?"

I'm just worried about Dally. He seems upset about this, and you know what happens when he get angry. He has already pulled a knife on one of the nurses at the hospital. I think that someone should talk to him, so he doesn't do anything stupid. Will you talk to him Darry?"

"Yeah, of course, Ponyboy. How are you doing with this whole thing?"

"I'm doing fine. It's not me you need to be worried about. Deal with Dally. I am going to make myself a sandwich. I will be there in a couple of minutes."

I wasn't doing so great after all. I can't believe that Johnny is dead. He can't be! I couldn't let the rest of the gang see me so upset. I am supposed to be tough. Also, they shouldn't be worrying about me when Dally is needing help. Johnny's death was bothering me, though.

When I came back into the living room carrying my peanut butter sandwich. Darry was sitting beside Dally. The house was just so quiet. I don't ever remember it being this quiet when everyone was here. Soon Darry broke the silence. "So Dally, how are you doing with all of this?"

Dally didn't say anything for a few seconds, then he finally answered. "I don't know. Johnny was like a little brother to me, and now he is dead! Like how can that be?"

"I know Dally; it's hard. He was like a brother to all of us." Darry was trying to be as comforting as he could be.

“Now we don’t want you to do anything that you are going to regret, so why don’t you stay here tonight. All of you guys can stay if you want to.”

“Oh, I don’t know I will be fine by myself!” Dally exclaimed.

Soon Sodapop piped up. “Dally you should just stay here for the rest of the gang. We will be able to relax if we know where everyone is.”

“Okay fine. I will stay here. Not because I need you, because you guys need me.”

Dally hated admitting to anyone that he needed help. He wanted to seem strong, even when he did need someone. “Thanks, Dally,” Sodapop exclaimed.

The rest of the night was spent with us sitting in the living room not saying much. We were much louder when Johnny was around. I do miss Johnny. It is not the same without him.

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The next few weeks were hard. Dally was having a hard time, but surprisingly enough he didn’t do anything illegal. I, myself was having a very hard time with Johnny’s death. I got very sick and wasn’t even able to leave my bed. I was throwing up and became very dehydrated. My brothers were there for me whenever I needed them, though. They made me soup and made sure that the house stayed quiet and dark so I could sleep.

After about two weeks of the flu, I started to feel like myself again. I was able to stand up without feeling like I was going to fall over and I was even able to go for a walk around our neighbourhood with my brothers. In those past couple weeks, I had not been thinking right and didn’t remember what had happened to Johnny. Once my brothers had refreshed my memory about everything, it all came flooding back to me. I remembered being at the hospital when Johnny died. I remember talking Dally into coming over to our house. I remembered it all again. There are some memories that I do wish I could just erase from my memory, but I guess that's not possible.

The next couple days were spent around the house. My brothers didn’t go to work because they were worried about me. “Darry, Sodapop, I will be fine you should go to work and get a break from looking after me all day.”

“Oh, it’s okay I don’t mind,” Darry explained.

“Yeah, me neither Ponyboy. I want to make sure that you are all good before we go and leave you all by yourself.” Sodapop joined in.

“Well thanks, guys, but don’t need to worry about me!” I tried to explain that I would be fine, but they didn’t listen to me.

“Oh! And Ponyboy, there is no need to stress about this, but we just found out that the court date to decide whether you will stay with us or go to a boys home is on Monday. It’s nothing to worry about, though.” Darry quietly said.

“Oh-umm-ok. What day is it today?” I did not want to go to the boys home.

“It’s Thursday. It’s going to be fine, Okay Ponyboy.” I could tell Darry was trying to calm me down, but he seemed worried about it himself.

The weekend appeared to fly by. It always does when you have something that you don’t want to do on Monday. That “something” for me, was the court date. It was already today at eleven in the morning. Of course, all night I couldn’t sleep. I lay there staring at the ceiling. I was out of bed at five. I went out to the kitchen to find Darry sitting at the table drinking a cup of coffee. “Wow, you’re up early!” I said to him. Darry jumped and turned around to face me.

“Oh, Hey Ponyboy. You scared me. I didn’t think anyone else was up.” Darry said, his voice shaking a little bit.

“Oh Sorry. I couldn’t sleep.” I didn’t look like he had slept much either.

“Yeah I couldn’t sleep either. We have to be rested for the court. We don’t want to look tired. Is Sodapop still sleeping?”

“I think so. He was pretty sound asleep when I left. He will probably get up soon.”

“Yeah, he probably will, but let’s let him sleep for as long as possible,” Darry replied.

The morning past by really slow. The TV was never turned on. Darry and I just sat there in silence, the odd conversation happened. By seven-thirty Sodapop had woken up. The house didn’t get any louder. You could hear a pin drop it was so quiet. Darry made us all breakfast and Soda, and I did the dishes. After breakfast, we all went for a walk. The time still passing very slowly. We came home from our walk and watched a little TV while we got ready. “Make sure you boys put on your nicest clothes,” Darry called down the hall. “You have to look good. This is an important day.”

Soon it turned ten o’clock. It was time for us to head to the courthouse. Two-Bit was coming to pick us up in his car and give us a ride. There was a knock at the door.

“Are you all ready to go?” Two-Bit called through the door.

“Yeah come in!” Sodapop yelled back.

Two-Bit came through the door. “How is everyone doing today?”

“We are okay I guess,” I replied.

“Well, we better get a move on so we are not late,” Darry said as he walked out the door.

I didn't take very long to get to the courthouse. It was about a half an hour drive, but it flew by because I was dreading this day. We waited in the courtroom for the judge to show up. That took about twenty minutes. A few people came into the courtroom and sat down at the back. I recognized some of them, but most I didn't.

The judge called a few people to the stand to ask questions about Soda and I. The people were all saying good things, and they all talked about how we shouldn't be taken away from Darry. The judge listens to the people silently, not saying much.

All of the questionings took about an hour. The courtroom went silent while the judge was making his last final decisions. “From the information that I have heard today and my previous knowledge of this subject, I have decided to let Ponyboy and Sodapop Curtis stay with their older brother Darry Curtis.”

Darry, Sodapop and I all just looked at each other, then we all broke out into tears.

“I told you guys it was going to be Okay!” Darry said rather loud.

We left the courtroom and Two-Bit was waiting outside in the car. We all hoped in. “So how did it go?” Two-Bit asked cautiously. You could tell he didn't want to upset any of us.

“We get to stay!” I yelled at the top of my lungs.

“Really! That's great news!” Two-Bit replied.

On the way home I felt like I was on top of the world. All my worries were gone for that half an hour! I didn't have to worry anymore about Soda and I going to the boy's home. I can't imagine leaving Darry by himself! There was still one thing that was bothering me, though. It was the fact that Johnny was dead. I still couldn't get over it. And the worst part was, it wouldn't have gone into that burning church in the first place, he would still be here. We could still have our talks about the sunsets and all of the things I couldn't talk to the rest of the gang about. It really should be me that was dead. Johnny didn't deserve it. He always talks about how he wanted to die, but I don't think that he meant it. I wish that I could bring Johnny back, but I guess that's not possible.

Once we got back to our house, I just wanted to go to my room, but Darry and Soda were so happy that I couldn't be the one to rain on their parade with my sad feelings for Johnny. So I just sat on the couch and watched some TV with them. It felt real nice knowing that we weren't going to be torn apart by the court. The rest of the night was spent at home. A few of the others guys dropped in to hear what we learned from the court, but that was pretty much it.

I had been staying home from school last few weeks so I could recover. And today I didn't go either because of the court case. I had probably missed a lot of work! Darry says I have to go back tomorrow, though. I didn't want to go. People were going to ask me how I am doing and what happened with Johnny. I didn't want to deal with all of those questions, but Darry says I have to, so I guess I will be going.

I ran into Cherry at school today. "Hey, Johnny. I know that this must be hard for you to be here. How are you doing?" She asked.

"I guess I am doing alright. Not the best I have ever been, though." I was trying to be polite, but I didn't feel like talking.

She kept telling me how sorry she was about Johnny, and wished she could make me feel better, but it was just making it worse. I know that she was just trying to help. I just needed some space, though.

The day was almost over. Just one more class till I could leave the place I didn't want to be right now. That class was English. We were always reading something or writing about it. My teacher came to talk to me about what I had missed. "Hey, Johnny you just lost the work time for that essay I was having you write before this whole incident happened. There is no rush to get it done. Just work on it when you have the time."

"Okay. I will try and get that done fairly soon." I replied

"That sounds great! Thanks, Johnny." She then turned around and left.

I had totally forgotten about that essay she was having us write. I hadn't gotten that much of a start on it before I left. I hadn't even got my topic chosen. I just sat there thinking about what to write about until the last bell of the day rang. Cherry came and found me before I left. "Hey, Johnny, Randy and some of the other Socs want to talk to you later tonight. Will that work for you?"

I felt a little bit sceptical about this. What did they want? Why just me? "Okay. Did you happen to get a reason?" I answered, trying not to sound scared.

"No Johnny, they didn't tell me why, but it's nothing bad. Don't worry." She said trying to make me feel better.

"Okay. What time and where?" I wanted just to go home tonight and do nothing.

"They said six-thirty at the restaurant," Cherry replied.

"Okay. I better get going before my brothers start to wonder where I am." I rushed away quickly.

"See you later Ponyboy," she yelled down the almost empty hallway.

I walked home as quickly as I could. I didn't want them worrying about me. After a fairly quick walk home, I came through the front door. "Hey, I'm home!" I called.

"Hey, Pony. How was your day?" Darry asked meeting me at the door.

"Oh, it was alright I guess. I talked to Cherry today, and she told me that some of the Socs want to talk to me at the restaurant tonight at six-thirty." I had this feeling Darry wasn't going to like this very much.

"Now why do they want to do that?" Darry asked in a harsh tone.

"She didn't say, but she did say that it was nothing bad. Darry, I want to talk to them." I could tell Darry didn't want me to.

"I don't know. This sounds like a setup to me." He started to look mad.

"Oh just let him go Darry. He will be fine." Soda piped up.

"Okay fine. You can go, but we have to come with you." Darry still didn't seem too convinced.

"Thanks, Darry!" I exclaimed.

It was soon six-fifteen so we all set off walking to the restaurant. I was about a ten-minute walk, so we ended up getting there at just the same time as the blue mustang came rolling up. All of the boys got out and came over to us. Randy spoke first "Hey Pony, can I talk to you?"

"Yeah," I said following him to his car.

"So Ponyboy just listen to me for a second. The rest of the Socs and I have been talking, and we think that it is time we end the fights. There are too many people being killed by it, and

we are tired of it. We understand that it is hard to lose someone the way you lost Johnny. So if you agree with this, we think it is time for this to be over.”

I was not expecting to hear that from Randy. “Yes. It is causing too many deaths and injuries that are entirely avoidable. I think that it is a very great idea to stop the fights and just be normal people for once.”

“So it’s settled I guess. The fights are over.” He said reaching his hand out to shake mine. I reached out and shook his. With that, I got out of the car and walked over to my brothers. “Do you want to go in and grab a bite to eat?” I asked nodding my head towards the doors.

“Yes, please. I am starving!” Soda replied walking to the doors.

We went and sat at in the corner booth of the restaurant and waited for a waiter to serve us. I told them both about what Randy and I had talked about. They both were a little shocked to hear this, but they thought it was a fantastic idea. We all ordered our food and ate it down relatively quickly once it had arrived.

After finishing our meals, we walked back home. I went to my room to work on that essay and Soda, and Darry started calling all of the greasers to tell them the news. I was having a very hard time deciding what to write about. Then I remembered my teacher telling me to write about something I was passionate about.

That’s when it came to me. I will write about how fighting does more harm than good. That’s a topic I knew very well and cared about a lot. I laid down on my floor, grabbed my paper and pencil and began to write. “The Outsiders.”