

12/12/21

Dear Ms. Hinton,

I am writing you this letter to let you know how much I enjoyed reading your book, *The Outsiders*. The themes represented in your story touched me on a deep level and truly impacted my life because like these characters, I often felt uncertainty in my home life.

I am only 14 years old, but know too well what it feels like to lose a parent, not knowing where I'm going to sleep at night, and the pain of physical abuse and violence. Reading about the experiences of Ponyboy, Sodapop, Darry, Dally, and the other greasers, made me feel really sad. When I was younger I wasn't able to make sense of what I was seeing and feeling and I was consumed with hopelessness, much like how Dally must have felt when he pointed the empty gun at the police knowing that they were going to kill him. Dally made a choice that day, to give up. I have chosen to do the opposite. Seeing that life can be so cruel that a person would rather die than live made me realize that I want to persevere, despite how hard things have been.

My childhood innocence was stolen from me from people who should have been protecting me. I can relate to Johnny's situation; we both had an unstable home environment with parents who fought constantly and would throw us out of the house unexpectedly in the middle of the night. This created tremendous fear in me, and I had to learn how to survive on my own and take care of myself. Additionally, I had to care for my twin sister who has special needs, and my very sick mom, similarly to how Darry had to take care of his younger brothers. I stopped being a child much sooner than I wanted to.

I see many similarities between the characters in *The Outsiders* and myself. I get good grades, play sports, and I'm sensitive just like Ponyboy, so I relate to him the most. While reading your book it was interesting to see how the feelings of the boys paralleled my own. This heightened an awareness in me that helped me to feel as if I wasn't alone. I was comforted knowing that there were others who struggled with the emotional challenges that I did.

Reading *The Outsiders* gave me a window into other people's experiences that were similar to mine. The impact was profound in changing my perspective on the world around me. My hope is that I will learn from these experiences and be a better parent and role model to my own children someday.

Sincerely,

Blake Wolfe