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Discussion Leader: The Outsiders Chapter 9-12

**A.** Point: Ponyboy was going through a tough time as both his friends, Johnny and Dally, died. He was doing terribly in school, he did not eat as much, his memory and balance was a problem, he fought with Darry again, and he almost turned to violence to help him with his problems.

* Question: Why has Ponyboy decide to do his English paper on his life experiences from the past month as a Greaser and how has writing the English paper change Ponyboy?
* Answer: Ponyboy has changed as he has matured and realized that his past helped him become who he is. He was emotionally able to tell his story and tell other people his story, starting with his English teacher. He realized after reading Johnny’s letter that he is not the only one going through problems, but so are many other boys who were “…living on the wrong side of the cities…” (179). I think Johnny’s letter pushed Ponyboy to write about his life experiences and help others stay “gold” or innocent even if Ponyboy couldn’t stay innocent. I feel Ponyboy has recuperated from the two awful things that have happened and looked past those terrible things to be able to write his English paper.
* Textual Evidence: “And I decided I could tell people, beginning with my English teacher. I wondered for a long time… how to start writing about something important to me” (180). I could picture hundreds and hundreds of boys living on the wrong side of the cities…There should be some help, someone should tell them before it was too late” (179).

**B.** Point: After Johnny died at the hospital, Dally went spinning out of control. He robbed a grocery store and had an unloaded gun pointing at the cops. With the result, Dally was shot and died.

* Question: How has Dally become so attached to Johnny and why was Johnny the only thing Dally loved?
* Answer: I feel Dally became so attached to Johnny because Dally saw the opposite of himself in Johnny and tried to behave because he did not want Johnny to end up like him. Dally has seen Johnny’s innocence and did not want Johnny to ruin it as quickly as he did. Dally protected and cared for him. Johnny was the opposite of Dally in that Johnny was innocent and quiet while Dally was cold and caused trouble. The thing they did have in common was that both their parents treated them badly and did not care about them. Johnny looked up to Dally as a hero, a person who can overcome his problems with his parents and one who can live without the support of his parents. Johnny wanted someone to appreciate him. “Dally was proud of him” (148), of Johnny, because Johnny was a hero himself. Dally felt needed, felt like he had a purpose to be in the world. As Johnny died, Dally feels that he is not needed, since the only thing he loved left.
* Textual Evidence: “Johnny’s eyes glowed. Dally was proud of him. That was all Johnny had ever wanted” (148). “And then I knew. Johnny was the only thing Dally loved. And now Johnny was gone.