

Johnny cade

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Johnny Cade, the sympathetic and lovable character from the classical realistic fiction novel "The Outsiders" by renowned author S. E. Hinton is one of the most complex and confusing characters in the novel. Johnny is a very special character because he is so different in so many ways to the other protagonists in this novel. He himself who is both quiet and passive is forced to take refuge with the violent and active gang of the greasers by his abusive family. Throughout the novel he is the main catalysis of most of the major events in the novel, through his small acts of courage, he leads both himself and Ponyboy into a whirlwind of adventure including murder, death and heroism making him one of the most loved character of the novel. One of the many things that make Johnny so special is how universal his character is. Like the story of Harry Potter, Johnny's story can also be related to by almost anyone whether it is through his adventures, lessons learned, history or character. His character has become a universal symbol for innocence, peace, fear, abuse and distinction. Johnny Cade is a weak and vulnerable sixteen-year-old boy in a gang that is defined by their sense of toughness and invincibility. He comes from an extremely abusive home and needs the greaser gang just as much as they needed him. He needs them for protection and a sense of purpose. While the gang needs him because Johnny gives them a sense of purpose and justification of their violence without Johnny, the gang would be next to nothing. Johnny has big black eyes, a tanned face, jet-black hair with grease in it and has a slight build. Due to his father constantly beating him and his mother who always ignores him the greasers are always looking out for Johnny and trying to protect him. Dally who is the leader of the greasers especially watches out for Johnny, in

return he hero worships Dally. Throughout the novel Johnny changes at various times. First a usually mild and quiet Johnny murders Bob and then takes control of the situation proven by when he told Ponyboy to go to Dally knowing he will get them out of trouble and when he goes out and gets supplies. Later on he changes in his relationship with Ponyboy, during their five-day stay in Windrixville they both grow extremely close, even closer than they were before. As the story begins, Johnny is revealed as a shy and frightened boy belonging to a gang of greasers. Later on in the story, Johnny who is normally shy and quiet stands up to Dally, the most stereotypical gangster in the book, and tells him to stop harassing two Socs girls, Cherry and Marcia. Johnny's help with Dally pleases both of the girls and they walk with the greasers. On the way to Cherry and Marcia's home they encounter the girls boyfriends they take back the girls and leaves the Ponyboy and Johnny to walk home. The interaction between them and the female greasers creates a motive for the Socs to attack. Ultimately, Johnny's small act of courage leads to murder, heroic rescues and death. He goes out in peace by stating that he would gladly die for the lives of little children. In the beginning, Johnny is revealed as a shy, fearful, vulnerable and quite character. As the book progresses, Johnny is revealed to possess a tragic past with abuse and violence that has help shape the character we all know and love. " ' I can't take much more.' Johnny spoke my own feelings. ' I'll kill myself or something'." Pg. 47 P. 8. That would have been first time many of the readers may consider that Johnny may be suicidal. Before this moment in the book, Johnny is both shown as hurt, hopeless and depressed but never quite suicidal. Just before this moment in the book, Johnny and Ponyboy

meet with Marica and Cherry's boyfriends whom left them to walk back home alone. The importance of the location of the quote is quite significant. When Johnny said, " I can't take much more. " PG. 47 P. 8 He is referring to him being a greaser and not being accepted by society, and that life is messed up enough without society rejecting him on top of what his parents to him. Right after his words are spoken, he comforts himself by telling himself that, " There's gotta be someplace without greasers or socs just people, " PG. 48 P. 1 this shows that all he is really looking for is a middle ground where everyone is accepted without having to belong to anyone or any group, without fighting or hate proving all he is really looking for is peace and balance in his life. Throughout Johnny's life he manages to, however unintentionally that everyone is the same. They are not greasers and socs, they are just people. That is johnny's belief; the middle ground he speaks of does exist, however not in the form that he speaks of. The middle ground exists only for a single person and can only be found if it is needed. The middle ground is really the point where a person can just step away from all of the gangs, mentally not physically for no matter how far physically you go from a place with gangs and groups, you will always know inside that you're a part of one side or another. As long as Johnny belongs to a gang, there will always be conflict within him. As the novel progresses, Johnny's character develops the most compared with the other characters in the book. After saving the children from the burning church in Windrixville, Johnny suffers from third degree burn. He is healing in the hospital but most already know that he will not make it through alive. " I'm scared stiff. I used to talk about killing myself... I don't want to die now. It ain't long enough.

Sixteen years ain't long enough. I wouldn't mind it so much if there wasn't so much stuff I ain't done yet and so many things I ain't seen. It's not fair. You know what? That time we were in Windrixville was the only time I've been away from our neighborhood. " P. G. 121 P. 12 This quote was taken from when Ponyboy visits Johnny in the hospital. Just before this quote, Johnny was talking to Ponyboy about how he will never be able to walk again if he lived through this and how that would be a death sentence to him because of how only the gang is caring for him. Directly after this quote was spoken, Ponyboy reassures him that he, " Ain't gonna die, " P. G. 122 P. 2 while knowing that Johnny has only the slightest chance at living. This quote reveals not only how much Johnny has changed in the book but a little more about his past. This quote reveals how Johnny has never been anywhere other than Windrixville and his home neighborhood, this reveals how early on the abuse or neglect from his family started. To have not gone anywhere out of the neighborhood suggests that the neglect may have started as early as a couple years after his birth for parents so seem to enjoy bring their child to different places at a early age. More importantly this quote reveals how Johnny's character changes in throughout the book. Before, Johnny always talks about suicide because he was so irrational and he did not really think about it. Now he has the time and a reason to think it through further than he has ever done. He now realizes how many things he has not done in life and is now regretting ever thinking about suicide. Throughout the book, Johnny shows various signs of bi-polar disorder such as depression, hopelessness and thought of suicide. This may be the start of a recovery for Johnny because he finally states why he really wants to live. The final

product of the Johnny is something truly special. As one of the last things that Johnny ever tells Ponyboy, Johnny states, “ It’s worth it. It’s worth saving those kids. Their lives are worth more than mine, they have more to live for.

" PG 178 P. 3 This quote illustrates how much he has changed since the second quote, not only does he not fear death he believes that his death was a great deal less important than that of the children that he saved.

Throughout the novel, Johnny’s character is slowly revealed to the reader, the last piece of the puzzle was given to the reader in that quote. He was still willing to freely give away his life for the lives of the children of strangers, revealing that he, despite having almost every right to hate the world is still willing to forgive it and save the handful of children forfeiting his own life in the process. He ends up dead but probably happier than he has ever been in his life, to have finally found the balance between greasers and socs, not away from all of it but existing while knowing that both greasers and socs are the same things. Johnny himself is a major part of the theme of dysfunctional families, despite what he has been through in his short life, he manages to find the right way through the road of life, his death along with Dally’s bring conclusion to this theme. Throughout the novel Johnny craves the care and concern of his parents, he shows people like Ponyboy how lucky it is for him to have two brothers who care about him. The fact that he craves their attention is proven in two instances, firstly when Dally visits Johnny and Ponyboy in the church in Windrixville, Johnny explicitly asked Dally if his folks had asked about him. Secondly, when Johnny is bedridden in the hospital he asks whether or not his parents asked about him. Later as Johnny is about to die, he rejects the visit that his mother was going to pay him, finally realizing

that they do not care and only treats him as an inconvenience. Throughout the novel Johnny has been my favorite character, despite his untimely death. His character will remain one of the most important ones ever. Since the beginning of the novel, he was a shy boy with little or no self-esteem relying on others for morale support and a reason. The major turning point of this character was really the fire in Windrixville or the murder of Bob. The murder of Bob lead to Johnny taking responsibility and starts to rely more on him self than others. On the other hand the fire in Windrixville changed him in a way that forced him to think about death and how much he really missed in life and how everything looks different to a man who can smell and feel death coming. The change in this character was the most obviously positive one in the novel; his character has changed a great deal throughout the book. Throughout the novel he has been identified as a greaser however, by the books end everyone who knew him or read about him will remember him not as a greaser but a hero.