

The Socs

The Socs, (pronounced "soshes", as in "social"), are spoiled kids from well-to-do rich families. (Soc is often incorrectly pronounced "soch", and *even occasionally "sock"*.) *They have no reservations about "jumping" Greasers without provocation.*

Main characters who are Socs include:

Robert "Bob" Sheldon: He was revealed to have beat up Johnny before the events in the book. He was Cherry's boyfriend. According to Randy, though Bob was spoiled by his parents, he really just wanted them to say no to him every once in a while and set limits for him, instead of accepting the blame as bad parents and buying him off. Bob and his friends corner Johnny and Ponyboy at the park and try to kill them for talking to Cherry and Marcia. Johnny stabs and kills Bob in self defense.

Sherri "Cherry" Valance: Bob's girlfriend, whose nickname comes from her fiery red hair. She sympathizes with the greasers and becomes Ponyboy's friend. She becomes a spy for the greasers. For example, she tells them how the Socs are playing in the big rumble. She also, admits to Ponyboy that she could fall in love with Dallas and hoped to never see him again because of it. Though Cherry is appreciative of Johnny telling Dallas to leave her alone at the drive-in, she refuses to go see Johnny in the hospital because he killed Bob.

Randy Adderson: Bob's friend, who is tired of the fighting between the greasers and the Socs. He is the only person shown to voluntarily not participate in the rumble. When he visits Ponyboy at home, he tells Ponyboy that he is impressed with the younger boy's heroics and admits that he would have been too scared to do the same. But Ponyboy insists that he would have done the same thing.

The Greasers

While the Socs live carefree lives of privilege, the Greasers come from hard-knock backgrounds. They like to listen to the music of [Johnny Cash](#) and Elvis Presley and their attire usually consists of tight fitting t-shirts, leather jackets, and jeans. Many Greasers are engaged in criminal activities, which causes many people to incorrectly assume that all Greasers are juvenile delinquents.

[Ponyboy Michael Curtis](#), 14: The youngest of the Curtis brothers and main protagonist of the novel, he is a daydreamer, painter, and a bit of a bookworm. Ponyboy watches the sunsets from his backyard and wonders what it would be like to live in a world where there is no discrimination against the rich and the poor. First he thinks that only the greasers have problems, but later on then he realizes that the socs deal with many of the same problems they do. He realizes that some of the socs are tired of fighting just like they are, they too want to live in a fear free environment where you dont have to be worried about getting jumped every time you leave the house. A heavy smoker, Ponyboy is also a star on his school's track team and is best friends with Johnny Cade. Ponyboy is a deep analyzer, but sometimes overlooks the obvious. He is particularly attached to his hair and was upset when Johnny told him that he had to cut it when they were on the run. Ponyboy hates fighting, and the stereotypes put on people, such as "Greasers" and "Socs." He often wonders what life would be like were there are no Greasers or Socs; no labels, just people. He has a very close relationship with his second-oldest brother, Sodapop, who he feels is the only other person, besides Johnny, that he can confide in. His parents recently died in a car crash. So now his brother Darry takes care of them as a parent, Ponyboy feels that Darry is too hard on him and doesn't love him. But later he realizes that Darry only wants him to achieve the things he missed on.

[Johnny Cade](#), 16: "If you can picture a little dark puppy that has been kicked too many times and is lost in a crowd of strangers, you'll have Johnny," says Ponyboy. Johnny is a small and timid boy. His shy and nervous nature stems from years of abuse from his parents, and a recent jumping from a Soc, who is later revealed to be Bob Sheldon. Bob wore many large rings on his hand when he jumped Johnny, which scarred Johnny's face. Ever since then, Johnny never walks alone, and carries a six-inch switchblade in his back pocket. He looks up to Dallas Winston and is prone to instability and emotional oversensitivity. Although he never finished school, Johnny is very good at analyzing things that many other people do not understand. Johnny is the "gang's pet, everyone's kid brother," and relies on the Greasers for the love and affection he does not get at home.

Dallas "Dally" Winston, 17: The tough guy of the group, Dallas is considered extremely dangerous. He grew up on the streets of New York and was arrested at the age of 10. Although he is not muscular, even Darry Curtis is afraid to fight him. Dallas is the opposite of Johnny; he is prone to react rashly and violently, even to his friends, and avoids showing emotion as much as possible. He does, however, have a soft spot for Johnny, and is very protective of the younger boy. Ponyboy on Dallas: "He had an elfish face, with high cheekbones and a pointed chin, small, sharp animal teeth, and ears like a lynx. His hair was almost white it was so blonde, and he didn't like haircuts, or hair oil either, so it fell over his forehead in wisps and kicked out the back in tufts and curled behind his ears and along the nape of his neck. His eyes were blue, blazing ice, cold with a hatred of the world."

Sodapop Patrick Curtis, 16: The middle Curtis brother, he is described as extremely good looking and is an undefeated fighter, though he is not the runner his brothers are. Sodapop is very carefree, preferring to play around rather than do any work. He isolates himself and smokes only when he's upset; otherwise, he is social and hyperactive. Although he is generally very optimistic, when reality hits him, it hits him hard enough to sink him into an extremely deep funk. Sodapop is always sticking up for Ponyboy around Darry and tells Ponyboy things he tells no one else. Sodapop is the only person who can tease Darry and get away with it. Towards the end of the novel Soda is stricken with grief as he finds that his once true love Sandy, has gotten pregnant from another man. While Soda offers to still take her in she refuses by simply rejecting the letter he writes to her by unopening it and mailing it back from Florida where she moves to live with her grandmother, in order to raise the baby. "I guess she didn't love him, like he thought she did." Darry to Ponyboy after Soda runs away.

Darrel "Darry" Shayne Curtis, Jr., 20: The eldest of the Curtis boys, Darry is tall, broad-shouldered, and muscular. Darry is occasionally perceived as cold and uncaring, as a result of assuming the role of parental figure after the death of his parents, in order to keep the family together. Ponyboy had believed that Darry did not love him, yet later realizes otherwise when Darry cried for him, since Darry did not cry at the death of their parents. Because of his build, Darry is often referred to as "Superman" or "Muscles." One time Steve calls him all brawn and no brains. For this, Darry nearly shatters Steve's jaw. He roofs houses for a living. He is Ponyboy's opposite; he is as logical as Ponyboy is imaginative. He is attentive to Ponyboy's grades, though not upset about Sodapop dropping out of high school. Darry is very bitter about the fact that he never went to college, even though he had been offered an athletic scholarship. Even though Darry is associated with the Greasers, he keeps his hair cut short. Ponyboy notes that Darry is very Soc-like and too "smart" to be a Greaser, and the only reason that Darry was not a Soc was because he would not turn his back on his brothers or the gang.

Keith "Two-Bit" Mathews, 18 and a half: He has been known as "Two-Bit" for so long that even his teachers have forgotten that his real name is Keith. Two-Bit is the joker of the gang, always smiling and cracking jokes. Like Sodapop, he lives for action and fun. Though nearly 19 years old, Two-Bit is still a junior in high school because he finds school "entertaining." With his long sideburns and deep grey eyes, Two-Bit is known as both a shoplifter and a ladies' man, though he is not perceived to be as good-looking as Sodapop. He loves fighting, his black-handled [switchblade](#), blondes, and flirting. He flirts with Marcia, even though he knows that she is the girlfriend of a Soc.

Steve Randle, 17: He has thick greasy hair that he combs back "in complicated swirls." Steve is tall, lean, cocky, and arrogant, though smart and skilled at driving. He is the only one of the gang who does not care much for Ponyboy. Steve has been Sodapop's best friend since grade school; the two even work at the same gas station. Steve and Sodapop often bicker and get into wrestling/arm-wrestling matches to vent their excessive energy. Steve does not think before he speaks and sometimes says hurtful things to his friends, even if he does not mean what he says. On one occasion, he called Darry "All Brawn No Brains," which infuriated Darry so much that he punched Steve in his jaw and nearly shattered it. He does not like it when Sodapop takes Ponyboy with them to places.

Tim Shepard, 18: He is a friend and associate of the main characters. Tim runs his own gang, the Shepard gang. They have rumbled the Curtis' and their friends in the past. They show up at the rumble to beat the Socs. Tim is described as having dark, curly hair and blue eyes. A tramp slashed him with a broken pop bottle, so he has a scar from his temple to his chin. He dishes out harsh discipline to his gang. He's had his nose broken twice (a third time during the rumble). He and Dallas are "two of a kind".