

Reading Journal Samples:

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton

July 10, 2003

Pages 1-35

The story begins strong. It tells how the main character, Ponyboy, feels about life in his neighborhood. Right from the beginning, I can tell that his life is not an easy one. The setting reminds me more of New York than of Oklahoma. The way the place is described it seems like Oklahoma, but once it starts talking about the gangs, I picture New York.

The characters seem so different, yet so similar. Take Dally; he seems misunderstood. The fact that he is so unlike the others gives him a sense of individuality. My favorite character is Two-Bit because of the way he lightens the mood of all those around him. He is the opposite of Dally. Two-Bit is wise-cracking and funny while Dally is meaner and tougher. Two-Bit's life is not as hard a life as the rest; he has a home and a mother that loves him. The character I admire most has to be Johnny. Johnny is quiet and shy. He comes from an abusive home. Johnny is the pet of the gang. To me, it seems like he just wants to be accepted because he isn't accepted in his family. Johnny must be stronger than everyone believes because of what he has gone through at home.

I totally see why people like this book though. It has real characters and has a lot of action from the beginning.

Into the River

11/18/12

I'm really enjoying my reading of *Into The River*. We are just moving through the first hundred pages, and wow! Lots of cool stuff happening right now. Jake, the main character, has just moved to a new house by the river in a very rural area. Coming from Boise, a pretty large city, it's a shock.

Though I've never really lived in the city, I can really see why Jake feels the way he does. I don't need to live around entertainment to miss it. My house is way out in the country and, without a reliable internet connection, I often feel as though I'm missing out on the world around me. I wouldn't deal with it by lashing out like Jake does, but I can understand why someone in his situation would do with it.

I don't know that I like the way George Wade, the author, portrays the parents. They aren't realistic enough, I guess. Maybe it's because Jake's a little older than me (he's a senior; I'm a junior), but I can't see his parents leaving him alone in a house for that long, especially after he breaks a window the first week.

The outdoor scenes are really cool and true to nature. There's a stream by Jake's house that's really similar to one I live by. Seeing the description and having my own picture in my head made all the scenes where Jack goes down to the river—to reflect or vent or just yell—that much more realistic. I've certainly gone out behind the house and skipped some rocks against the water a few times. Again, maybe not as extreme as something Jake would pull, but still very similar.

Overall, though, I really enjoy this book so far. I can't wait to read more. I hate to go so far ahead, but I may have to spend a few hours with it tonight. I want to make sure I have some well thought-out points for our next class discussion.

If possible, I'd also like to bring up the argument about Jake being easy to write from last class back up. Not because I'm mad about it, of course, but because I think it doesn't do the author justice. If you haven't taken it from what I've said so far, I think it's a very, very good book. One worth defending, for sure!