

The Outsiders Chapter 2: *2015 Editions*

Dylan was waiting for Joshua and I at the street light. We walked towards the mall, crowded with middle school girls on their iPhones and parents with their annoying kids. We got a lot of looks in the lobby, dressed with our pants sagging and our hair all greasy. I distracted the man at the counter as Dylan and Joshua snuck into the dark theater, then followed behind them after spitting some nonsense about a little boy hurt in the arcade. We could pay for it, the tickets not costing much, but Dylan hated doing things the legal way. The theater was mostly empty, except for two girls in the front. I watched Dylan climb some of the chairs and settle in the row behind the girls.

I could only see them by the light radiating off the screen, but I could tell they were prettier than the girls I was used to. They weren't wearing ripped black skinny jeans and cheap black crop tops like the girls I know, these girls were classier. I watched as Dylan put his dirty sneaker clad feet on the red head's chair.

"Get your dirty feet off my chair will you" the red head girl said, grabbing her phone out of her pocket and pretending to text someone to avoid us. With the screen lighting up her face, I could tell I recognized from Instagram, her being pretty popular. "You going to make me? Huh who are you texting?", Dylan said keeping his feet on the poor girls chair. She turned around and glared at Dylan. "Please just leave us alone", she said firmly. "What's with the tone huh? The guy at Starbucks spell your name wrong?", Dylan chuckled. "Leave them alone Dylan", Joshua said quietly. With a loud sigh Dylan dropped his feet from the chair and stood by the aisle, "I'm going to get a soda, do you want a soda, strawberry shortcake?", He asked the red head. "Get lost hood", she mumbled under her breath. Dylan strolled off cursing quietly.

The girl turned around and looked at me, “are you going to try and hit on us now?”. I shook my head quickly, “no of course not”. She smiled widely, “you don’t look like it, at least you wore a belt” she giggled referring to the placement of Dylan jeans. “I’m Cherry, by the way”, she said tucking her red hair behind her ears, “and this is my friend Madison”, she motioned towards the chocolate brown haired girl next to her. “I’m Pony and this is Joshua”, I replied. “How about you sit next to us”, Cherry said smiling. Joshua and I walked over to sit next to the girls. I smiled internally, excited to tell the rest of the gang about how we landed two good girls, not like the girls in our hood. We turned to watch the movie, something about high school kids and cliques, pretty cheesy I’ll admit, but I didn’t mind too much. It was right when the main character’s enemy sabotaged the girls sweet sixteen when Cherry asked me to get some popcorn with her. We stood up quietly and waited in the line for the butter drenched popcorn.

“You’re friend Joshua, that poor guy, he’s been beat up before hasn’t he”, Cherry asked sweetly as she fiddled with her chocker. “Yeah, it was the private school kids, they beat him up a couple months ago”, I said. I looked around and noticed a couple of private school boys in polo’s and khakis staring at me like I was some kind of sewage rat. I told Cherry the story about how Joshua was by the private school and got beat up. “Pony were not all like that”, she said sadly. “Sure”, I scoffed. “Come one that’s like saying all public school boys are like Dylan”, she argued. I guess she was right. “I bet you think us private kids have perfect lives, trust me we don’t. We have problems just as bad as you and your friends. No one has it easy”, she finished. It was so weird to talk to a wealthy kid about our differences, I guess I never thought about what they have to go through. We got our popcorn and went back into the dark room. The rest of the movie I

didn't worry about all the stereotypes, I just enjoyed sitting with these girls. Even if they have their own problems. It just was hard to believe that the kids that have all the nice cars and iPhone 6 pluses had so many issues. If having good grades and nice shoes was my biggest worry I'd be lucky.

1975: *The Epilogue*

“Pony will you hurry up we have to go!” Soda shouted from the other room. I finished tying my shoes and grabbed my coat before heading outside. We were going to see Darry in the loony house today. Darry had been drafted to Vietnam almost two years ago, and after a year of being in the hospital he was home for a while, but just a couple nights ago he had another one of those bad nightmares and they took him back in for a couple days. I climbed in the car next to Soda and waited as Soda started the car.

“I called the doctor this morning and they said Darry was pretty shook up, said he probably doesn’t remember some of the stuff we told him and we’ll have to tell him the things that happened while he was gone again”, Soda said in a soft voice.

“I don’t mind telling him about my book again”, I said chuckling.

“Great, that story again,” Soda said sarcastically, but I know he didn’t mean it. Soda had been supportive through the whole process. He was there when my english teacher showed my theme to his publisher friend, when the first copy of the novel was printed, to when the first book was sold. Darry was too traumatized to really appreciate the book much.

We spent the rest of the way in silence, hoping that Darry wasn’t too shook up this time and could talk like a normal person and not like some crazy homeless women.

The car stopped in front of the building and we made our way to the door. The place was just as depressing as the last time we were here, the paint peeling and the flowers in the vases wilting and dried up.

“Hi boys”, the woman at the counter wearing pink bell bottoms smiled as we walked in, recognizing us from our other visits. “You boys can go right in, Darry’s in room 214”. We walked silently down the dark hallway and opened the door.

“Darry!” Soda said smiling as he made his way towards Darry’s bed.

“Soda, what’s up kid”, Darry said still not looking up from his bed.

“I’m here with Pony, Dar, we came to see you” Soda said slowly. Darry finally looked up from the sheets, he looked okay, not nearly as bad as when he first came back. His eyes were wide open, like he was afraid to close them.

“You gave us quite a scare there Dar that other night”, I said moving to sit in the chair beside his bed.

“I’m sorry kid, I just” he cringed like the thought hurt to think about, “I just was having those flash backs again”, Darry said sadly. We were silent for a couple moments.

“Pony’s book sold over 1,000 copies Darry, isn’t that great!”, Soda said, trying to lighten the mood.

Darry smiled at me, “good going kid”. It felt so good to have Darry be proud of me, even if he’s a little out of it.

“Two-bit got a job you know, at some hardware store or something, probably going to get his own place sometime soon,” I brought up.

“About time”, Darry mumbled. More silence filled the room.

“I’ve decided to back to school for a little bit, try to make something with my life you know”, Soda said shyly. I had been trying to him to go back to school for a while, but when Darry was gone it finally pushed Soda to do it.

Darry nodded before he dropped his head to the pillow and looked up at the ceiling. I could see Soda getting frustrated at the corner of my eye. “Darry, I know I got no place to say this, but it’s about time you go back to your normal routine. I know it can’t be easy, but you’re a strong guy Darry, you shouldn’t let this break you”, Soda said finally. We had been walking on eggshells with Darry ever since he was home, not wanting to trigger him. This made Darry sit up from the pillow,

“I can’t go back to everything normal Soda! Not after the things I’ve seen! I made friends back there, friends that I watched die, that I had to put in bags and send them back to there moms to be buried god dammit!”, Darry yelled, the vein in his neck popping out. The room was dead silent.

“I’m sorry, I shouldn't have said anything”, Soda murmured guiltily.

“I’m sorry I snapped, it’s just this whole thing you know, so god damn unfair”, Darry said with a long sigh. I look down at my lap, I couldn’t imagine what it was like for Darry. “I’m happy you guy’s came though” Darry finally said, “I’m happy I have you two”.

Comfortable silence fell over us and we just sat there for I’m not sure how long. Maybe things are crazy, but we’ve been through tough things before, we’ll do it again.