

TWO-BIT. Don't touch her, Dallas.

(CHERRY is coming on L, half in a trance.)

DALLAS. What's this? You're comin' on same as Johnnycake.

CHERRY *(exhausted. Speaking with difficulty)*. How is Johnny?

DALLAS. We wouldn't know about that.

CHERRY. Would you know about Ponyboy?

DALLAS *(casually)*. The police think he may be headed southwest somewhere.

CHERRY *(worn out)*. It's necessary to jerk me around? *(As DALLAS shrugs, hitting back.)* At least we all know about Bob.

TWO-BIT *(quietly)*. Yeah.

DALLAS. Too bad about that.

CHERRY. Yeah. He's dead. Too bad.

DARRY. Would you wanta come in?

CHERRY. The reason I came over — the whole mess — maybe it's my fault.

DALLAS. So what about it?

CHERRY. Maybe I could help.

DALLAS *(incredulous)*. You?

TWO-BIT *(amused at DALLAS)*. Come on, Dallas —

DALLAS *(coming on to CHERRY)*. Maybe we could go over to the Dingo. I'll buy you a Coke — and we can talk about this 'n' that.

CHERRY *(it's too much)*. Pony and Johnny need someone who can testify and you want to make out at the Dingo. *(She's going.)* Sorry — I have to get out of here.

DARRY. No, please — wait.

CHERRY. For what?

DARRY. It took a lot of nerve for you to come here this morning.

CHERRY. Yes, it did.

DALLAS. Any message for the juvenile delinquents?

CHERRY *(pause. Then with decision)*. Yes — tell them I said hi. *(She's off L. DALLAS starts to follow her.)*

DARRY. Dallas!

DALLAS *(looks back to DARRY)*. I only wanta talk to her. *(As DALLAS stares at him.)* Clear up about this testifying. *(Reasoning.)* Hey — don't worry.

DARRY. Talk nice, Dallas. You hear me?

DALLAS *(as he goes)*. I always talk nice.

SODAPOP *(puzzled by CHERRY's remark)*. Tell them I said hi? *(DARRY, SODAPOP and TWO-BIT are going off into the living area and the light is dimming off.)*

TWO-BIT. I heard they went to Texas.

DARRY *(to SODAPOP)*. Your kid brother's so smart — why can't he locate a telephone?

(Light comes up DR revealing PONYBOY, seated, leaning back against the old boards.)

(To the Audience)

PONYBOY. I'd been in church before. *(Looks about with apprehension.)* But this falling-down old place gave me a creepy feeling. What do you call it? Premonition? *(There's a long low whistle ending with a high note. Recognizing it with relief.)* That's our signal.

(JOHNNY hurries in with a sack of supplies.)

JOHNNY. Nobody paid any attention at the store. We're loaded up. *(He's starting to unpack.)* A week's supply of

Start

baloney, two loaves of bread, a box of matches, candy bars, candy bars —
 PONYBOY. What else? More candy bars, and — (*He brings out a paperback book.*) Whee! (*Thrilled.*) *Gone With the Wind!* How'd you know I always wanted to read that book?

JOHNNY. I remember you sayin' something about it once. I thought maybe you could read it out loud and help kill time or something.

PONYBOY. Thanks. (*There's a pause as they BOTH consider.*)

JOHNNY. We're in big trouble.

PONYBOY. I'm still tired — and a little spooky. Things been happening so fast. Man, I'm tired.

JOHNNY. Last night. (*It's too much to remember.*) Was it last night?

PONYBOY (*nods*). Last night we were walkin' Cherry and Marcia over to Two-Bit's. Last night we were layin' in the lot, lookin' up at the stars —
 JOHNNY (*bitterly*). Last night I killed that Bob. He couldn't of been over seventeen or eighteen, and I killed him. (*Leans back. Half a whisper.*) I'm real tired, too.

PONYBOY (*front*). The next few days were the longest. We passed time playing poker and reading *Gone With the Wind*. Johnny was especially stuck on the Southern gentlemen.

JOHNNY. I bet they were cool ol' guys — ridin' into sure death because they were gallant. They remind me of Dallas.

PONYBOY. Dallas ain't got any more manners than I do. And you saw how he treated those girls at the Nightly Double.

JOHNNY. Yeah, but one night I saw Dallas gettin' picked up by the fuzz, and he kept real cool. They were gettin' him for somethin' Two-Bit did. And Dallas knew it. But he took the sentence without battin' an eye or even denying it. That's gallant.

PONYBOY. He's your hero now? Go back to sleep. (*JOHNNY sighs and leans back. PONYBOY continues, front.*) Dawn the next morning — all the lower valley was covered with mist. The clouds changed from gray to pink, and the mist was touched with gold. There was a silent moment when everything held its breath — then the sun rose.

JOHNNY. Golly — (*PONYBOY is startled by JOHNNY's voice.*) That's sure pretty.

PONYBOY. Wouldn't it be cool to be able to paint that sky? (*JOHNNY's standing to see, as is PONYBOY.*)

JOHNNY. Too bad it can't stay like that.

PONYBOY (*this triggers a memory for PONYBOY. He's, quoting*). "Nothing gold can stay."

JOHNNY. What?

PONYBOY. A poem I read once. I was remembering it. (*As he recalls it.*)

Nature's first green is gold

Her hardest hue to hold

Her early leaf's a flower;

But only so: an hour —

(*Embarrassed.*)

It goes on.

JOHNNY (*wanting him to continue*). Well, you go on. PONYBOY. Then leaf subsides to leaf

So Eden sank to grief

So dawn goes down to day

(*He lets out a breath.*)

Nothing gold can stay.

JOHNNY. Where'd you learn that?

PONYBOY. Robert Frost wrote it. (*Bothered.*) He meant more to it than I'm gettin' though.

JOHNNY. How come you remember it?

PONYBOY. Because I keep tryin' to figure it out. I never quite got what he meant by it.

JOHNNY. I never noticed colors and clouds and stuff till you started reminding me about them. It seems like they were never there before.

PONYBOY. I couldn't tell the others about stuff like that. I couldn't even remember the poem around them. They don't dig. Just you, and Sodapop sometimes — and maybe Cherry Valance.

JOHNNY (*with a pleased sigh*). I guess we're different.

PONYBOY. Shoot, maybe *they* are. (*Front again.*) I was so tired of baloney, I got sick lookin' at it. We'd eaten all the candy bars, and I was dying for a Pepsi. By that time, I'd read up to Sherman's siege of Atlanta, and I owed Johnny a hundred and fifty bucks from poker games. (*Amused at himself.*) I was beginning to think I'd always lived in a church, or maybe during the Civil War — or both. (*There's a low whistle signal ending with the sudden high note.*)

JOHNNY. Pony — hear it? (*The whistle is repeated.*)

PONYBOY (*tense*). Who d'ya think?

(*DALLAS is crossing to them.*)

DALLAS. Glory — look at the church mice.

JOHNNY. Hey, Dallas!

DALLAS. Little Johnnycake and — Ponyboy.

PONYBOY (*smiling*). Never thought I'd be so glad to see Dallas Winston.

JOHNNY. What's happening?

PONYBOY. How's Sodapop? Are the fuzz after us? Is Darry all right? Do the boys know where we are?

DALLAS. Hold it. I can't answer everything at once. You want to eat first? I skipped breakfast and I'm about starving.

JOHNNY (*indignant*). You're starving?

PONYBOY. If you'd like some baloney —

DALLAS. No thanks. The fuzz won't be lookin' for you around here. They think you lit out the other direction. I got Buck's T-bird parked down the road. (*Looks at them.*) Ain't you been eatin' anything?

JOHNNY. What gives you that idea?

DALLAS. You both look terrible. The cops think you're in Texas.

PONYBOY. Why Texas?

DALLAS. They know me. I get hauled in for everything that happens on our turf. I let drop you were headed somewhere else. (*Wicked smile.*) They beat it outa me.

JOHNNY (*to PONYBOY*). Like I told ya — gallant.

DALLAS. Do y'all want somethin' to eat or not?

PONYBOY. Believe it!

JOHNNY. Be good to get in a car again. (*DALLAS and*

JOHNNY are facing front as though sitting in the front seat of a car. PONYBOY stands just to the side of them.)

PONYBOY. Dallas always did like to drive fast as if he

didn't care whether he got where he was goin' or not.

We came down the red dirt road so fast Johnny and I

got a little green. Then we stopped at a Dairy Queen.

(*There's a wood table and a bench on L. now with fast food on it. JOHNNY and DALLAS are seated first. As PONYBOY comes up to the table, he takes a Pepsi off of it.*)

PONYBOY (*with satisfaction*). First thing I got was a Pepsi. Then we started gorging. (*He joins them.*)

JOHNNY. I'm gonna start next on banana splits—(*Bad thoughts are coming back to PONYBOY, and he pushes the food in front of him away.*)

PONYBOY. I guess it's time you tell us what's goin' on. (*They ALL get serious.*)

DALLAS (*leans forward. Strong low voice*). The Socs and us are having all-out warfare all over the city. That kid you killed had plenty of friends and all over town it's Soc against grease. We can't walk alone at all. I started carrying a heater.

PONYBOY. Dallas! You kill people with heaters!

DALLAS. Ya kill 'em with switchblades, too, don't ya, kid?

JOHNNY (*miserable*). Please, Dallas—

PONYBOY (*worried*). If you walk around with a gun—

DALLAS. Don't worry. My heater ain't loaded. I ain't aimin' to get picked up for murder—(*Cheerfully.*) But it sure does help a bluff.

PONYBOY. All-out warfare all over the city?

DALLAS. Just one more day. (*Deciding to tell them.*)

We're having it out. Once and for all. Us and the Socs. Tomorrow night. The vacant lot.

JOHNNY. Tomorrow night!

DALLAS. You guys'll miss it. (*Leaning forward.*) We got hold of the president of their social club and had a war council. So here's the deal. No weapons. If we run—

things go on as usual. If they run—they stay outa our territory, but good! Out! (*Determined.*) I don't care how many Socs show up—they're gonna run.

JOHNNY. Suppose they bring chains?

DALLAS. Hey, I didn't tell you. We got us a spy. (*As they*

BOTH look at him.) That good-lookin' broad I tried to

pick up that night you killed the Soc. The redhead.

Cherry what's-her-name.

PONYBOY and JOHNNY (*together*). Cherry!

JOHNNY. The Soc?

DALLAS. Man, next time I want a broad, I'll pick up my own kind.

PONYBOY. We were gettin' that same advice from the Socs.

DALLAS (*incredulous*). Cherry the Soc helpin' us!

PONYBOY (*defensively*). She isn't Cherry the Soc. She's—

DALLAS (*not getting this*). Anyway—she said if Johnny

comes to trial she'll testify that the Socs were drunk

and looking for a fight—and you only fought back in

self-defense. How about that?

JOHNNY. That would really help.

DALLAS (*a grim laugh*). Then I suggested we go for a

ride in Buck's T-bird. She said, "No, thank you." Then

very polite—she told me where to go. (*Indignant.*)

What'd I do wrong?

PONYBOY. Maybe you shoulda tried a little conversa-

tion before makin' your move.

DALLAS (*that's stupid*). Conversation! (*Looking about.*)

This place is out of it. What do they do for kicks in the

country, play checkers?

JOHNNY (*has been deciding*). We're goin' back and turn

ourselves in.

DALLAS (looks at JOHNNY, then at the sky, then back at JOHNNY). What?

JOHNNY. We're goin' back an' turn ourselves in. I got a good chance of bein' let off easy. I ain't got no record. Both Ponyboy and Cherry can testify it was self-defense.

DALLAS. Once they get their hands on you -

JOHNNY. I can't stay in that church the rest of my life.

DALLAS. When they take you in you'll find out - greasers get it worse than anyone.

JOHNNY. We won't tell that you helped us, and we'll give you what's left of the money -

DALLAS. You sure you want to go back?

JOHNNY (nods). It ain't fair for Ponyboy to have to stay up in the church with Darry and Soda worrying about him all the time -

PONYBOY. Darry don't -

JOHNNY. Yes, he does. (To DALLAS.) I don't guess - (Swallows, trying not to look eager.) I don't guess my parents are worried about me or anything?

DALLAS (matter-of-fact voice). The boys are worried. Two-Bit was for going to Texas to look for you.

JOHNNY (doggedly). My parents, did they ask about me? DALLAS. No, they didn't. (In pain for his friend.) Johnny, what do they matter? (Passionately.) Shoot, my old man don't give a hang whether I'm in jail, or dead in a car wreck or drunk in the gutter. (Trying to make JOHNNY believe it.) That don't bother me none.

PONYBOY. Let's go back to the church. I left a book there. (They're leaving the table.)

DALLAS. Get in the car. (Growling to JOHNNY.) If you'd turned yourself in five days ago, it'd saved a lot of trouble. C'mon.

JOHNNY (as they start R). I was scared. I still am. (The THREE of them are lined up as though in the front seat of a car with DALLAS driving.)

DALLAS. I ain't mad at you, Johnny. I just don't want you to get hurt. You don't know what a few months in jail can do to you.

JOHNNY (touched. Realizing). Like it happened to you. (Off R there's a red glow.)

DALLAS (concentrating on the driving). You get mean. (Sounds of PEOPLE calling to each other in the distance.)

PONYBOY. We got to the top of the hill, and Dallas slammed on the brakes. We couldn't believe what was happening.

DALLAS (staring off). Glory - the church is on fire.

PONYBOY (apparently getting out of the car). Let's go.

DALLAS (irritated). What for? Get back in the car.

JOHNNY. People over there -

DALLAS. It's not our problem.

(JOHNNY and PONYBOY are going R, as a man, JERRY, enters with some young CHILDREN, if available.)

DALLAS. If you don't get back in the car - (But they're going. DALLAS's furious but he follows them.) PONYBOY (to JERRY). What's going on? (Sounds of a fire are beginning.)

JERRY. We don't know. We're having a school outing, and suddenly the place is burning. Kids with matches! PONYBOY (to JOHNNY). Our matches. (The roar and crackling is getting louder and the red is more intense.)

end 3 person scene