

se hinton that was then this is now

se hinton that was then this is now is a compelling exploration of the coming-of-age novel written by the acclaimed author S.E. Hinton. This work stands as a sequel to her earlier novel, "That Was Then, This Is Now," and continues to delve into the complexities of adolescence, identity, and the evolving nature of relationships. Known for her authentic portrayal of youth culture and emotional struggles, Hinton's storytelling captivates readers through relatable characters and vivid narratives. This article examines the background of the novel, its major themes, character development, and its impact on young adult literature. Additionally, the influence of S.E. Hinton's writing style and the cultural significance of "That Was Then, This Is Now" are analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of this literary work. Following this introduction, a detailed table of contents will guide readers through each key aspect of the novel and its place within the broader context of S.E. Hinton's oeuvre.

- Background and Publication History
- Plot Overview and Setting
- Main Characters and Their Development
- Themes and Motifs in the Novel
- S.E. Hinton's Writing Style and Influence
- Reception and Legacy

Background and Publication History

The novel "That Was Then, This Is Now" was originally published in 1971 and quickly established S.E. Hinton as a significant voice in young adult fiction. Hinton, who wrote the book as a teenager herself, captured the genuine emotions and challenges faced by adolescents in the early 1970s. The story is a follow-up to her debut novel, "The Outsiders," and explores similar themes of friendship, loyalty, and social division. Understanding the historical and cultural context of the publication helps readers appreciate the novel's authenticity and its role in shaping young adult literature.

Author's Background

S.E. Hinton, born Susan Eloise Hinton, began writing at a young age and published her first novel at just 17.

Her firsthand experience as a teenager living in Tulsa, Oklahoma, provided the foundation for her realistic portrayal of youth. The success of her initial works paved the way for "That Was Then, This Is Now," which further solidified her reputation as an influential author. Hinton's ability to channel adolescent perspectives with honesty and nuance has made her novels enduringly popular.

Publication and Editions

The novel was published by Viking Press and has since seen numerous editions, including paperback and special anniversary prints. Over the years, "That Was Then, This Is Now" has been included in school curricula and recommended reading lists, underscoring its educational value and cultural relevance. The book's continued availability ensures that new generations of readers can engage with its themes and characters.

Plot Overview and Setting

"That Was Then, This Is Now" is set in the same Tulsa neighborhood as "The Outsiders," providing a familiar backdrop of urban life for its characters. The plot revolves around two close friends, Bryon Douglas and Mark Jennings, as they navigate the trials of adolescence, including identity crises, family issues, and shifting loyalties. The story captures a transitional period in their lives, highlighting the tension between childhood innocence and adult responsibilities.

Key Plot Points

The narrative follows Bryon and Mark through events that test their friendship, values, and sense of self. Bryon, the more introspective character, begins to question the morality of their lifestyle and the consequences of their actions. Mark, on the other hand, struggles with his own past and the desire to maintain their bond. The story culminates in pivotal moments that force both characters to confront change and growth.

Setting and Atmosphere

The setting of Tulsa during the late 1960s and early 1970s is crucial in establishing the atmosphere of the novel. The urban environment, marked by socioeconomic disparities and cultural shifts, mirrors the internal conflicts of the characters. Hinton's descriptive writing brings to life the neighborhoods, hangouts, and social dynamics that shape the protagonists' experiences.

Main Characters and Their Development

The depth of character development is a hallmark of "That Was Then, This Is Now." The protagonists, Bryon and Mark, are portrayed with complexity, revealing their vulnerabilities and strengths. Their evolving relationship forms the emotional core of the novel, reflecting broader themes of friendship, trust, and change.

Bryon Douglas

Bryon serves as the novel's narrator and is characterized by his growing awareness of right and wrong. Throughout the story, he grapples with moral dilemmas and the consequences of his choices. Bryon's journey from carefree youth to a more reflective individual offers readers insight into the challenges of maturation.

Mark Jennings

Mark is Bryon's best friend and represents a more impulsive and rebellious side of adolescence. His background includes family struggles and involvement in questionable activities, which create tension between him and Bryon. Mark's character arc highlights themes of loyalty and the difficulty of personal change.

Supporting Characters

The novel features several supporting characters who contribute to the narrative's richness, including:

- M&M – a friend who provides comic relief and perspective.
- Angela – Bryon's love interest, who influences his decisions.
- Charlie – Mark's older brother, whose criminal activities impact the story.

Themes and Motifs in the Novel

"That Was Then, This Is Now" explores numerous themes that resonate with young adult readers and literary critics alike. S.E. Hinton addresses topics such as friendship, identity, change, and the consequences of choices. The novel's motifs further enrich its narrative by symbolizing the characters' internal and external conflicts.

Friendship and Loyalty

The complex friendship between Bryon and Mark is central to the novel's emotional impact. Their loyalty is tested by differing values and life paths, illustrating how relationships evolve over time. Hinton examines the balance between supporting friends and recognizing when to distance oneself for personal growth.

Coming of Age and Identity

The theme of coming of age is pervasive throughout the novel, as the characters confront questions about who they are and who they want to become. The transition from adolescence to adulthood involves challenges that force Bryon and Mark to rethink their beliefs and actions.

Consequences and Morality

The narrative underscores the importance of understanding the consequences of one's decisions. Bryon's moral awakening contrasts with Mark's struggle to escape his past, highlighting different responses to ethical dilemmas. This theme encourages readers to consider accountability and personal responsibility.

Motifs and Symbolism

Several motifs recur in the story, including:

- The use of physical violence as a metaphor for internal conflict.
- The symbolism of time, reflected in the novel's title, representing change and the passage from past to present.
- The representation of family dynamics as a foundation for character behavior.

S.E. Hinton's Writing Style and Influence

S.E. Hinton's distinctive writing style contributes significantly to the novel's enduring appeal. Her straightforward prose, authentic dialogue, and vivid characterizations create an immersive reading experience. Hinton's influence extends beyond her novels, shaping the young adult genre and inspiring countless writers.

Writing Style Characteristics

Hinton employs concise and direct language that captures the voice of adolescent characters realistically. Her use of first-person narration provides intimate access to Bryon's thoughts and feelings, enhancing emotional engagement. Additionally, Hinton balances gritty realism with moments of tenderness, making her stories both relatable and impactful.

Impact on Young Adult Literature

"That Was Then, This Is Now" helped define the young adult genre by addressing complex social issues and emotional experiences without condescension. Hinton's work opened the door for more honest and diverse representations of teenage life in literature. Her influence persists in contemporary young adult fiction, where themes of identity and morality remain central.

Reception and Legacy

The novel received critical acclaim upon release and has maintained a respected position in literary circles. Educators and readers alike have praised its candid depiction of adolescence and the moral questions it raises. The legacy of "That Was Then, This Is Now" is evident in its continued presence in classrooms and its adaptation into other media.

Critical Reception

Reviewers have highlighted Hinton's skill in portraying realistic characters and situations. The novel's exploration of difficult topics such as violence, drug use, and family dysfunction has been noted for its sensitivity and depth. Critics commend the book for encouraging thoughtful discussion among young readers.

Adaptations and Cultural Significance

The story was adapted into a film in the early 1980s, expanding its reach to a broader audience. The cultural significance of the novel lies in its honest examination of youth struggles and its role in shaping the portrayal of teenagers in popular culture. "That Was Then, This Is Now" remains a touchstone for understanding the complexities of growing up.

Key Factors Contributing to the Novel's Endurance

1. Relatable and well-developed characters.
2. Authentic depiction of adolescent issues.
3. Timeless themes of friendship, change, and morality.
4. Engaging narrative style and emotional depth.
5. Educational value and inclusion in school curricula.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is S.E. Hinton, the author of 'That Was Then, This Is Now'?

S.E. Hinton is an American writer known for her young adult novels, including 'That Was Then, This Is Now.' She gained fame for her realistic portrayal of teenage life and struggles.

What is the main theme of 'That Was Then, This Is Now' by S.E. Hinton?

The main theme of 'That Was Then, This Is Now' is the transition from adolescence to adulthood, focusing on friendship, identity, and the challenges of growing up.

When was 'That Was Then, This Is Now' published?

'That Was Then, This Is Now' was published in 1971.

Is 'That Was Then, This Is Now' connected to any other S.E. Hinton books?

Yes, 'That Was Then, This Is Now' is loosely connected to Hinton's earlier novel 'The Outsiders,' sharing some characters and exploring similar themes.

What is the plot of 'That Was Then, This Is Now'?

The novel follows two best friends, Bryon and Mark, as they navigate the hardships of teenage life, including family issues, loyalty, and moral dilemmas, ultimately leading to a change in their relationship.

Has 'That Was Then, This Is Now' been adapted into a movie?

Yes, 'That Was Then, This Is Now' was adapted into a film in 1985, starring Emilio Estevez and Craig Sheffer.

What age group is 'That Was Then, This Is Now' suitable for?

The novel is targeted toward young adults and is suitable for readers aged 12 and up due to its mature themes and realistic depiction of teenage challenges.

What makes S.E. Hinton's writing style in 'That Was Then, This Is Now' unique?

S.E. Hinton's writing style is straightforward and authentic, capturing the voice and emotions of teenagers in a relatable and compelling way, which has made her books enduring classics in young adult literature.

Additional Resources

1. *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

This classic novel follows Ponyboy Curtis and his struggles as a member of the Greasers, a working-class gang, in a society divided by class and violence. The story explores themes of friendship, loyalty, and the search for identity. It is widely regarded as one of the pioneering works of young adult fiction.

2. *That Was Then, This Is Now* by S.E. Hinton

Set in the same universe as *The Outsiders*, this novel centers on the changing friendship between two boys, Bryon and Mark, as they navigate the challenges of adolescence in a tough neighborhood. The story delves into the complexities of growing up, family dynamics, and personal growth. It highlights how people can grow apart even when they share a common past.

3. *Rumble Fish* by S.E. Hinton

This novel focuses on Rusty-James, a young boy trying to live up to the legacy of his older brother, the Motorcycle Boy. The book explores themes of identity, violence, and the struggle to escape a troubled environment. Its poetic style and deep emotional insight have made it a favorite among readers.

4. *Tex* by S.E. Hinton

Tex follows the story of a teenage boy living in a rural area who must take responsibility for his younger brother when their father is absent. The novel explores themes of family, loyalty, and the transition from childhood to adulthood. It provides a poignant look at the challenges of growing up in a difficult environment.

5. *Taming the Star Runner* by S.E. Hinton

This story centers on Travis, a rebellious teenager sent to live with his uncle on a ranch, where he learns

to channel his energy into training a wild horse known as the Star Runner. The novel touches on themes of redemption, self-discovery, and the bond between humans and animals. It reflects Hinton's growth as a writer and her exploration of new settings.

6. *Hawkes Harbor* by S.E. Hinton

A departure from her usual young adult novels, *Hawkes Harbor* is a dark, supernatural tale about Jamie Sommers, a man who returns to his coastal hometown to confront his mysterious past. The book blends elements of gothic horror and psychological suspense, showcasing Hinton's versatility as an author.

7. *Big David, Little David* by S.E. Hinton

This novel tells the story of two boys, one large and one small, who form an unlikely friendship that challenges their perceptions of strength and vulnerability. It addresses themes of courage, acceptance, and the power of friendship in overcoming adversity. The book offers a fresh perspective on the struggles of adolescence.

8. *The Puppy Sister* by S.E. Hinton

A heartwarming story about a young girl who wishes her new puppy could become her sister. The novel explores themes of family, love, and the imaginative world of children. It is a gentle and delightful read that appeals to younger audiences.

9. *Some of Tim's Stories* by S.E. Hinton

This collection of short stories captures various moments in the lives of teenagers and young adults, dealing with themes such as identity, conflict, and personal growth. The stories offer insight into Hinton's recurring motifs and her talent for portraying realistic characters. It is an essential read for fans who want to explore more of her work beyond her novels.

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