

“Broken Chain”

Study Guide

1. Make a list of all the INTERNAL conflicts that Alfonso experiences.
2. Make a list of all the EXTERNAL conflicts that Alfonso experiences.
3. What type of father did Alfonso have? Provide examples from the story.
4. How do we know that Alfonso wasn't happy with his appearance?
5. How does the family's economic status contribute to Alfonso's self-loathing?
6. How did Alfonso's kindness towards the boy in the barbed wire get rewarded?
7. Explain how Alfonso acted around Sandra. Provide specific examples.
8. What kind of brother was Ernie?
9. What sort of things did Alfonso try to do to impress Sandra?
10. Critique the ending of the story.

Things to consider: “he liked what he saw until he smiled and realized for the first time that his teeth were crooked, like a pair of wrecked cars” (simile), spend hours trying to fix his teeth, vanity, “his gleamed like a handful of dimes, while Ernie's looked dirty” (simile), “Cuts” and “Butch”, wanted to say something clever, but..., brotherly jealousy, “but Alfonso knew Raul, a paperboy with dollar signs in his eyes” (idiom), “the chain lay in his hand like a dead snake” (simile), “the chain snapped in another place and hit him when it popped up, slicing his hand like a snake's fang” (simile), stalking her?, “heavier than he thought”, , subplot (Ernie and Frostie's girls, tension between Alfonso and Ernie, parallel episodes (sit-ups, pushing teeth, fixes hair, cleans his bicycle), angry at himself (biting his lip, hitting himself, and calling himself stupid), Ernie's pity for his brother, “she placed her hand over his, and it felt like love” - cheesy?