

Shane Notes Chps 3 - 4. Source: sparknotes.com

Chapter 3

Bob watches his father and Shane work away at the stump. Marian comes out of the house in a hat she has fashioned after the styles Shane has described to her. Frustrated that they pay more attention to the stump than they do to her, she rounds them up for dinner. Later, she comments to Bob that something strange took hold of the two men, and she is not quite sure what it was. She comments that "there's something splendid in the battle they're giving that old monster." Marian alters her hat back to the way it was, saying that she is proud to be on Joe Starrett's farm. She brings Shane and Joe biscuits, and they pause to devour them before resuming work at the stump.

Joe begins cutting at the roots, and they are able to heave the stump up a few inches. They work and work, cutting at the roots underneath and shoving against the stump with their shoulders. Marian and Bob watch in amazement, and Marian suggests hooking up the team of horses to the stump to finish pulling it out. Joe says he wants to finish it with "manpower," and they do.

Watching the men work at the stump makes Marian forget about the apple pie she is making, and, when she retrieves it, it is burned. Terribly upset, she goes about making another pie and refuses any help at all, only stopping to rest or smile when it is baked to perfection and eaten.

Chapter 4

Bob wakes up late and immediately worries that he has missed Shane's departure. Shane assures him that he would not forget him and leave without seeing him again. Shane gets up to leave, and Joe asks him to sit back down. Joe then asks him if he is running away from anything. Shane says no, and then Joe tells him that the work at the farm is too much for one man and that he would like to hire Shane to stay for a while. Shane says, "I never figured to be a farmer, Starrett. I would have laughed at the notion a few days ago. All the same, you've hired yourself a hand." Later when Joe and Marian are talking about it, Marian makes a comment that Shane is not a farmer and is not much like Joe, but Joe says Shane is his kind of man. Shane adjusts to working on the farm quite well, although he remains quiet and keeps to himself about personal matters.

Shane takes Joe's spot at the dinner table. This troubles Marian and Bob, but Joe does not say anything about it. The reason for the switch is not apparent until one night during dinner someone comes to the door. Then Bob realizes Shane is sitting where he can see the door and see anyone who comes calling at the house. Shane is always alert, always watching and listening. The townspeople who all regard Joe as their leader find Shane to be an enigma and are not sure what to make of him.

It takes Bob a while to realize the most interesting thing about Shane—for all this watching out for people, he does not carry a gun. Once in Shane's room, Bob saw his gun—a Colt with ivory plates and the hammer filed to a sharp point. Bob asks his father why Shane keeps his gun hidden away, and Joe says he does not know and will never ask because he trusts that Shane has a good reason for it. At the end of their conversation Bob's father cautions Bob not to grow to care for Shane too much. When Bob asks why, Joe says it is because Shane will be moving on, but Bob suspects there is something more.

Analysis

The two men fall to working to cut out that stump as if they have worked together their whole lives. It is symbolic that Shane helps uproot the stump Joe has been working on for some time, and this act represents a new period of time or the turning of a new leaf. It also demonstrates intimacy between the two men. Bob and Marian realize how important this act is as well, and they watch it captivated. Marian, shut out of this event, tries to draw their attention away from the stump a couple of times—by coming outside wearing her newly altered hat and by baking the apple pie. She wants attention from both men and strives to impress them particularly with her cooking. Burning the pie is upsetting and embarrassing to her—while the men work on the farm, cooking is her counterpart in terms of familial responsibility. For a creation in the kitchen to be a failure is more than just a burned crust—it is symbolic of her inability to handle her responsibilities.

Shane's agreement to stay and work on the farm is hardly a surprise after the incident of the stump. The taking down of the stump is a symbolic, solidifying gesture and, in some ways, his work toward its removal is when Shane virtually agrees to stay and work. Shane also becomes protector of the house, sitting in such a way as to see people who approach. From this gesture it is clear that he is running from something or someone and is always wary. The gun is another indicator that there is something slightly amiss. Bob describes the gun as

beautiful and deadly and cannot figure out why Shane does not wear it with him, particularly if he is in any danger.

Joe's trust in Shane, especially in regards to the gun, shows the kind of understanding that takes years to develop. Nothing about Shane seems to surprise Joe—it is as if the two men understand each other completely. Their bond might trouble Marian who has reservations about Shane staying with them and who also attempts to interrupt the men working on the stump. She brings biscuits out for the men to eat, she shows them her new hat, and she bakes an apple pie. She demands attention from both of them when it feels as if they are devoting all of their attention to each other. Because of their quick and thorough bond it is possible that Marian is jealous of both of them and of their union. She has an affinity for Shane, although she is still a bit wary about him and for perhaps the first time her husband is close with another person. The bond between Shane and Joe is one that Marian simply cannot relate with or share. Bob cannot relate to it either, but he wants to. His hero, up until meeting Shane, is his father. Now he has two heroes who have a relationship that he can only admire from afar and only grasp in a vague sense because he understands how special both men are and how special the two men's bond is.