

## Shane Notes Chps 7 & 8

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### Chapter 7

The account of what happened between Shane and Chris spreads all over the valley in a day. Joe and Shane worry that the fight gives Fletcher an advantage. Fletcher and his boys ride slowly past Joe's farm, making comments about smelling pigs even though there are none on the farm. They are sarcastic and rude to Joe, and eventually it takes a toll on him and makes him edgy and irritated. The other farmers start resenting Shane's connection to Joe, and bit- by-bit their opinion of Joe begins to decline. Shane does not care what anyone thinks of him, but Shane does care what they think about Joe. The other farmers are starting to lose patience with being harangued and harassed by Fletcher, and they blame Joe.

One night the men are discussing it and voicing their beliefs that they cannot take the behavior from Fletcher much longer. During the conversation they hear the fast clop of a horse and realize that Shane has left. Joe tells them that all they can do is wait and see what happens. Twenty minutes later Shane comes back and says, "Your pigs are dead and buried," and Shane says that Chris will not be bothering anyone for a while. One of the homesteaders who witnessed what happened tells them the story: Shane went back to the bar and ordered two bottles of soda. He gave one to Chris and invited him to have a drink. Chris threw the bottle at Shane, and Shane lunged forward and grabbed him by the shirt, lifting him up and slapping him across the face. Chris charged at Shane, but Shane avoided him and punched him in the face. Again and again Shane kept dodging Chris, landing a hard blow after each rush. The fight ended when Shane broke Chris's arm. Shane then proceeded to clean up Chris's face and asked some of the people in the bar to take care of him. Upon hearing the story, Marian tells Joe that he has made a bad mistake. When Joe points out that Chris is okay, Marian says that it is not Chris she is worried about—she's worried about Shane.

## Chapter 8

Shane begins to spend more time alone than he did before, wandering around the farm. Bob asks Shane if Shane could teach him how to beat a man like he did to Chris, and, instead of answering, Shane goes on a rant about how he gave Chris a chance and about how "a man can keep his self respect without having to cram it down another man's throat."

One afternoon a little while later, Joe hears his mother talking to Shane about whether Shane is worrying about what will eventually happen with Fletcher. She says that she thinks Shane never anticipated that the situation would get this bad and that now Shane worries about what will happen if the fighting continues. Shane affirms her thoughts, and Marian says that she predicts Shane is thinking about moving on soon, and he affirms that too. She begs him to stay, telling him that Joe needs him. Shane asks if she needs him too, and Marian tells him yes. She goes on to say that Joe cannot deal with Fletcher alone, and that they might lose the farm if Shane does not stay to help. Shane tells her that she will not lose the farm, and he asks her not to worry about it.

### Analysis

Shane is troubled not just because the situation has escalated, but because it is clear that he must resort to doing something he does not want to do and does not believe is right to alleviate it. He refrained from fighting or violence during the first confrontation and in so doing made the situation worse and more frustrating for everyone else. Shane does not want to fight and probably would not choose to if he did not have to live with the fact that his actions, or rather his inactions, caused the homesteaders, particularly Joe, hardship. He knows they cannot afford having Fletcher believe that they fear him or any of his cronies. The quick and matter-of-fact way in which Shane takes care of the situation and beats Chris up reveals that he could have disposed of Chris the first time but tried to handle the situation the "right" way. When Shane returns from the bar he does not tell anyone what transpired there. He does not brag or announce that he beat up one of Fletcher's men. Schaefer makes a statement here about what makes a man or a hero is the hesitation in bragging about what he does and the reluctance to quickly use one's

power to hurt or beat someone else. Shane acts as if he lost the fight and that he is changed, for the worse.

Marian picks up on this change in Shane and worries about him. She knows that somehow he has compromised something fundamental inside him, and even though he did it willingly and for the benefit of Joe and the other farmers, she knows that he has lost something. The conversation she has with him is the kind of conversation he does not have with Joe, either because the men tend not to speak with each other or because they assume the other knows how he feels. Marian's insights into how Shane feels about the situation reveal that she knows him well also and is very in tune to his feelings. Shane realizes this, and he knows that her perceptiveness and concern for him demonstrate how much she cares. He asks her to voice it, however. Shane does not ask for much, but here he wants Marian to tell him that she needs him, and in a shared moment of tension the two realize how much they need and care for one another. This conversation and feeling is not indicative of infidelity, however. Shane and Marian love one another, Shane and Joe love one another, and Joe and Marian love one another; no set of feelings diminishes any other. Whether or not Shane would have left had Marian not asked him to stay is unclear, but by the end of the chapter he is resolved to stay for her, for Joe, and for the farm.