

Shane Notes Chps 9-10

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Chapter 9

Shane's fight with Chris brings about another quiet period in which Fletcher and his men lie low. Bob notices that his father is every bit as wary as Shane and that the two of them always work together, where they can keep an eye on one another. The four of them take weekly trips into town to get supplies and run errands. One particular Saturday on the way into town, Marian is to meet with Bob's teacher regarding Bob's behavior problems—Bob cannot bear to be locked in a schoolroom all day when the wilderness and activities such as fishing beckon. Marian asks Bob to accompany her to talk to the teacher, but on the way he looks into the saloon and sees Shane talking to the bartender. Bob notices that a bunch of Fletcher's men are outside of the saloon, getting ready to enter. Bob tries to tell Shane about it and tries to get him to leave but Shane says, "Bobby boy, would you have me run away?" and then he tells Bob to leave. Bob cannot bear to and stays to watch.

The bartender tells them that if they are going to fight in his bar, they cannot use guns, and they must pay for any damage they cause. Shane and the men agree. One of them approaches Shane and tells him that they are going to force him to leave and that he cannot get away with hurting Chris. Shane begins fighting with one of them, and the other four jump him. Shane roughs up the first man pretty good and holds his own against the others, weathering their blow and fighting back fiercely. Finally, one of them lands a kick right to Shane's head which stops him long enough for them to team up against him and hold him, preparing to give him a beating he will never forget.

Before they get a chance, Joe is there, irate and ready to fight. He surprises one of the men, and then Joe and Shane fight together. Marian and Bob watch, even though Joe asks her to wait in the wagon. Shane eventually ends up killing Fletcher's right hand man—the man who began the fight that day.

Chapter 10

The bar is quiet and still. Shane, though standing straight and proud, is bloody and beaten. Joe lifts him like a baby and carries him out to the wagon. Joe tells the bartender to put the damage on his bill. Several of the other townspeople offer to pay the bill as well, but Joe insists. They leave to go home, talking about the fight along the way.

Once home, Marian cleans and dresses Shane's wounds. Marian reveals her admiration for Shane and assures him that she knows he fought only because he had to. She then begins to cry, and Shane goes to her and puts his hand in her hair. When she is done crying Shane leaves, and Joe says to her, "Do you think I don't know, Marian? ... Don't fret yourself, Marian. I'm man enough to know a better when his trail meets mine. Whatever happens will be all right."

Analysis

The fight is the culmination of many months of animosity and jockeying for power. This time Shane cannot just walk away. He holds his own—he fights as the reader might imagine he would—quickly and powerfully, dominating the other men until they get him into a situation in which they are holding him down. Joe steps in, just in time. He perhaps even saves Shane's life, and the two men fight together. This is one of the only activities the two men had not previously done in tandem, and this time they battle Fletcher's men as a unit. Schaefer sets up this fight as a very clear good versus evil situation, and the other people in the bar interpret it that way as well. The image of Joe carrying Shane like a baby is one of the most memorable images of the book and is demonstrative of tenderness between the two.

Marian is affected strongly by the fight. She is on the one hand terribly proud of her men having fought so well and so bravely and only when necessary. She realizes that she is lucky. Her conversation with Joe after she stops crying is subtle but it indicates the effect Shane has on Marian. Joe acknowledges that he knows Marian loves Shane, and instead of being upset or jealous he simply admits that Shane is a better man, and it is understandable that she loves him. Shane and Joe have shared much throughout the book, and now it is clear that they share Marian's heart. The fact that this does not bother Joe shows how much he loves both Shane and

Marian. He cannot blame either of them for loving the other and would never think of asking either of them to set aside their feelings.

Marian's tears are cathartic. She cries not only because of the traumatic experience of watching the two men she loves most fight, but also because of the situation that has unfolded at home. Perhaps she feels guilty for loving Shane, or perhaps she wonders if she will have to choose between the men. Joe does not acknowledge that possibility overtly, but his comment that everything "will be all right" suggests that even if she were to leave him for Shane it would be okay. Perhaps Joe's belief that it will work out in the end reflects an inherent trust of Shane—even if Marian loves him and Shane loves her, Shane would never take Marian from Joe.

Joe and Shane both display great integrity in this chapter, both in the fight and in its aftermath. They protect each other and demonstrate complete trust in one another. They also both look out for Marian and Bob and are especially considerate of Marian's feelings. It is clear that by this point, the bond between the two men is intense and enormous, encompassing everything else in their lives—even Marian.