

# The Killer Angels Study Guide

## The Killer Angels by Michael Shaara

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# Plot Summary

*The Killer Angels* is a novel about the battle at Gettysburg that turned the tide of the Civil War and that many credit with the defeat of the South. Although a fictional account, the novel follows the movements of many of the historical figures who were present those three fateful days in the summer of 1863. This novel gives new insight into the battle, giving it a human face filled with the conflicting emotions that must have warred within each of the historic generals who fought so bravely at Gettysburg. It is a groundbreaking novel that should be required reading for anyone who wants to truly understand the complex war between the states that was the American Civil War.

A spy makes his way to Longstreet's camp from Gettysburg where he has been watching the movements of the Union troops. Lee's army is blind because Jeb Stuart has gone joyriding instead of scouting the Union troops as he was supposed to do. Now with the information from the spy, Longstreet convinces Lee to bring his troops together and converge on Gettysburg. Lee believes that if the Union troops are really there, though he doubts they are, this could be the final battle of the war. There are only a few troops standing between them and Washington.

Buford has two divisions of cavalry with him in the small town of Gettysburg when Confederate troops begin to appear on the outskirts of town. Buford sends word to Reynolds, the closest infantry commander in the area, of the incoming enemy. Buford then scouts the town where he sits and finds the best ground to defend, preparing for battle. Soon Buford learns that Lee's entire army is headed his way. Buford is concerned that he cannot hold them alone and again sends word to Reynolds. The next day, a small division of Confederate troops begins to fire on Buford. Buford holds the line, but begins to consider falling back when Reynolds appears to save the day.

Lee has asked his soldiers not to engage until he arrives, but Heth has already picked a fight with the Union cavalry, wrongly taking them for militia. Heth is beat back. Lee sends in more troops and the Union retreats to a small hill, but Ewell, Lee's commander near the hill, refuses to take the hill, afraid that his position is not favorable. The day's fighting ends and Lee speaks with his generals, forming a plan for the next day's attack. Although Longstreet has expressed an opinion that they should flank the Union, move around the Union toward Washington, and dig in for the Union to attack them, Lee disagrees. Lee decides to attack straight on. Longstreet leads his men to the right and engages the Union in an attempt to take another hill, Little Round Top, but does not allow Hood to move to the extreme right where the Union is vulnerable, because of Lee's orders. Hood's Division takes heavy casualties, losing nearly half his men.

Longstreet visits Lee but does not have the heart to tell him that they were not victorious that day. Lee, however, insists they were. Lee plans to attack again the next day despite heavy losses. Lee wants to attack the center of the Union line, hoping the Union generals have sent most of their men out to the right and left where the Confederates attacked the day before. Longstreet argues that it will fail, as do several other generals. However, Lee is adamant. The attack fails and the Confederates are left devastated.



# Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 1, The Spy

## Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 1, The Spy Summary

*The Killer Angels* is a novel about the battle at Gettysburg that turned the tide of the Civil War and that many credit with the defeat of the South. Although a fictional account, the novel follows the movements of many of the historical figures who were present those three fateful days in the summer of 1863. This novel gives new insight into the battle, giving it a human face filled with the conflicting emotions that must have warred within each of the historic generals who fought so bravely at Gettysburg. It is a groundbreaking novel that should be required reading for anyone who wants to truly understand the complex war between the states that was the American Civil War.

A spy makes his way from the Union lines back toward Chambersburg where he knows the South has their headquarters. It is late and the spy knows he will have to cross the picket lines after dark, an idea that frightens him, but he knows the news he has is too important to wait until morning. The Army of the Potomac is moving closer and closer to the Southern lines. Soon they will converge on a small farming town named Gettysburg, only miles from the Southern lines. As the spy approaches Longstreet's camp, he hears a Southern voice and knows it is the first of the picket lines. Somehow, the spy convinces them he is not the enemy and manages to arrange for a guarded escort into Longstreet's camp.

Longstreet is awake in his tent, although it is late. Sorrel, Longstreet's aide, comes and tells him that the spy has returned. Longstreet is glad for the disruption because he has been thinking of his children who died this past summer. Longstreet invites the spy to join him for coffee. The spy tells Longstreet that seven Union corps are heading this way, including The First Corp, which has already arrived, and that John Reynolds is in charge. Sorrel does not believe the spy and suggests to Longstreet that if his story were true, they would have had word already. Longstreet too suggests that Stuart might have come back with news if this was true and the spy becomes angry at these doubts. The spy has heard news of Stuart and suggests that he is joyriding in the North rather than gathering information on the movements of the Union army.

Longstreet listens to the man's arguments and decides that he should take this news to Lee anyway, just to be safe. Longstreet thinks about what their next move should be and asks the spy about Hooker, the commander of the Army of the Potomac. The spy tells him he read in the newspaper that General Meade replaced Hooker. This surprises Longstreet because he had expected Reynolds would be the better choice. A few moments later, they arrive at Lee's camp. Lee comes out of his tent stiffly, still suffering bruises suffered when he fell off his horse. The spy tells Lee his story. Lee receives it politely and then sends the man off with his gratitude. However, once the spy is gone, Lee expresses his reservations to Longstreet. Lee does not trust spies. Lee insists that



if the Union army was on the move, Stuart would have sent news. However, Longstreet voices his opinion that Stuart is joyriding, just as the spy suggested earlier. Lee then agrees that they should begin to march in the morning toward Gettysburg in case the spy's news is accurate. Longstreet is pleased with this decision.

## **Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 1, The Spy Analysis**

This chapter takes place the night before the Confederate army began its march toward Gettysburg. It is the information obtained by the spy that leads to the march, news that might have caused a terrible surprise for the Confederates had it not come when it did. This chapter also sets up the scene for the reader. Stonewall Jackson,, one of the best generals on the Confederate side during the early part of the war, is dead. Jeb Stuart, the young cavalry general, is missing while he was supposed to be scouting the movements of the Union army. Then there is Longstreet, another brilliant general who is suffering the grief of having lost three of his children the summer before. Longstreet is a good commander, ahead of his time in warfare strategy, but he is second to Lee. Lee is an older man, with the frail body of an older man, who still holds on to the strategies of the generals who have come before him. This contrast between the two men sets up foreshadowing of possible conflict later in the novel as the two disagree on how to fight the battle that looms ahead.

It is clear that this novel is about the battle at Gettysburg; however, it is still clearly foreshadowed in this opening chapter. The Union army is beginning to gather around Gettysburg, forcing the Confederate army to either move together toward Gettysburg or to wait where they are and meet their attackers there. However, the Confederates are widely spread out; therefore, a surprise attack by the Union would find them vulnerable had this news about their movement not come when it did. Now Lee has made the choice to move toward Gettysburg, setting up for the reader one of the most important battles of the Civil War.



# Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 2, Chamberlain

## Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 2, Chamberlain Summary

His aide, Buster Kilrain, awakens Chamberlain early in the morning. Chamberlain has been suffering from heat exhaustion and is still not at peak condition. Kilrain shows great concern even as he wakes him to give him a message. Chamberlain has been sent over a hundred men who have been branded mutineers and told to either incorporate them into his regiment or shoot them. Chamberlain knows he cannot shoot fellow Maine soldiers; therefore, he finds himself searching for an alternative method of dealing with these men. On his way to meet these new men, Chamberlain runs into his brother who is also a part of his regiment. Tom joins Chamberlain as he inspects the new men. Chamberlain speaks to them calmly, offering them food before anything else when he learns they have not eaten in several days. Then Chamberlain agrees to listen to their grievances from their chosen spokesman. The man has clear grievances, but Chamberlain can do nothing at this time. While they speak, Chamberlain learns that the army will be moving soon. Chamberlain sends the man back to his group and assures him he will come speak to them soon. Then Chamberlain speaks to Kilrain, explaining that, since he has been demoted to a private due to a fight, he cannot keep him at headquarters unless he wants to remain. Kilrain agrees to remain at Chamberlain's side. Thomas returns and talks to Chamberlain about the men, unable to help Chamberlain come to a decision about what to do. Finally, Chamberlain returns to the men and tells them he cannot do anything to help their grievances right now, but he does not intend to shoot a single one despite his orders. Chamberlain tells them he must take them along, under guard if necessary, but when he can, he will see about their troubles. Chamberlain finishes his speech and then gives the order to move out. A little later, Chamberlain receives the news that all but six of the mutineers have agreed to join the regiment without argue.

## Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 2, Chamberlain Analysis

This chapter gives the reader insight into the Union side of the army. Things are not well on this side. The men are clearly not happy with the war. Thus far, the Confederacy has been winning most of the battles, making the Union soldiers tired and discouraged. More than a hundred men from a Maine regiment have been branded mutineers and sent to Chamberlain's regiment because he is also from Maine. Chamberlain has orders to shoot these men. Chamberlain listens to their problems and learns they are tired and sick, in need of food and supplies, and are simply ready to go home. Chamberlain has sympathy for them because they are from his home state, is well aware that he cannot



shoot them as he has been ordered, but knows that he still needs them to either join him or come along at gun point, another thing that does not sit well with Chamberlain. However, after a speech from Chamberlain, all but six of them men agree to join the regiment, suggesting that not only is Chamberlain a fine speaker, but that these soldiers are trustworthy, honorable people despite their exhaustion.

The most important element to this chapter is Chamberlain and his character. Anyone who knows anything about history knows that Chamberlain proved himself quite heroic during the Civil War, joining the war effort despite having a good job and his employers refusing to allow him the time away from work to join the war. However, this chapter shows a more personal side to Chamberlain; although fictional, it is based on some of his writings and those of the men in his regiment, providing what could be a realistic picture of a real hero. Chamberlain was kind, considerate, and willing to do just about anything for his men. This is clear in this chapter, foreshadowing a time later in the novel when Chamberlain will again show his more heroic side.

Also important in this chapter is the introduction of two other characters, Kilrain and Thomas. Kilrain is a lifelong soldier whose temper problem has kept him from a much higher rank than his current rank of private. Kilrain is a true soldier and therefore invaluable to Chamberlain who is new to the military, a man of education and not practical experience. Thomas is Chamberlain's brother. Like Chamberlain, Thomas is a learned man who comes to this war as though it is a game to be played, facing the dangers of war with an unrealistic view. Thomas is important to this story because he is Chamberlain's brother, so Chamberlain will spend a great deal of the novel speaking to and worrying over his brother. This foreshadows a later point in the novel in which this need to protect his brother will be significant in Chamberlain's story line.





# Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 3, Buford

## Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 3, Buford Summary

Buford watches the Confederate troops enter the area around Gettysburg from the west. Buford inspects the ground around Gettysburg and finds the two small hills to the south of town to be the best ground to defend. From there he can watch the Rebel's making their way into the area without obstruction, and there is a stone wall behind which the Union men could fight. The Rebel army turns while Buford watches and Buford realizes they must have orders not to engage yet. Buford knows this must mean that the rest of Lee's army must be coming. Buford is a little nervous about this because he only has two corps with him at the moment. Buford rides back into Gettysburg and sends word to Reynolds before sending one of his men to scout for the Confederate army. The Rebels were investigating the hills too. Buford again is afraid he does not have enough men to hold off a Confederate attack.

Buford continues to investigate the land around Gettysburg, being more and more convinced that the hill is the best place to defend. Buford continues to be convinced that help will not come on time, however. Buford envisions himself fighting Lee's entire army on his own. While still investigating the town, Buford meets an attractive woman who has remained behind despite the invading troops. One of Buford's aides, Sergeant Corse, teases him about the lady and suggests he join her for dinner. Buford refuses. Corse suggests that he might go join the lady himself. Buford settles in the cemetery and has his meal so that his men can also eat. Buford watches the men, remembering how he and most of these same men held off Longstreet for six hours at Thorofare Gap without any help. Buford is afraid the same will happen here in Gettysburg. After dark, Buford gets word that the scouts are back, and confirms that Lee's entire army is headed toward them. Buford knows that Lee is hoping to get around him and march into Washington. Buford sends another message to Reynolds, more confident than ever that they have good ground here in Gettysburg to defend. Buford gives orders for the guns to be placed along the Cashtown road.

Corse returns, embittered by the news that the pretty woman in town is married to an undertaker. Word arrives from Reynolds. Reynolds tells Buford to hold his ground and that he will arrive as soon as possible in the morning to back him up. Buford gives orders to his men who are excited at the idea of a fight and confident that they can hold the ground. Buford worries, however, because they had better ground to hold in Thorofare Gap.



## Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 3, Buford Analysis

Buford is a Union soldier in command of two divisions. Buford and his men are the first Union soldiers to arrive at Gettysburg. Buford can see the Confederate army coming his way and he finds himself preparing for a battle by exploring the small town in search of good ground for he and his men to make a stand against the invading South. Buford knows immediately that it is not simply a stray group of rebels, that it is Lee's entire army coming toward them despite the fact that he does not have confirmation of this until late that night. Buford has experience fighting against the Rebel army before, having stood alone for six hours against Longstreet at Thorofare Gap without backup. Buford does not want to face that situation again, so he sends word to the closest Union commander who happens to be Reynolds—the same Reynolds that Longstreet learned in a previous chapter was offered the command of the entire Army of the Potomac and turned it down.

This chapter not only introduces Buford, who is clearly a good commander for having been able to hold off Longstreet for so long, but who also has a good eye for defensible land as he has already chosen the best place to defend before he has confirmation that it is Lee's entire army headed in his direction. This chapter also presents foreshadowing in several different ways. First, Buford's quick assumptions and planning prepare the reader for a battle that will surely take place very soon. Second, Buford's constant concern that he cannot hold off the Confederate army on his own foreshadows the possibility that he might be faced with exactly this situation. Finally, Buford's constant messages to Reynolds not only emphasize Buford's concerns at being left alone to battle Lee's army, but also foreshadow Reynolds' arrival to the battle. Clearly the reader is aware there will be a battle since this novel is based on true, historic fact, but questions still remain as to who will be there to fight it on the first day, the sum of the foreshadowing presented in this chapter.



# Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 4, Longstreet

## Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 4, Longstreet Summary

Longstreet's men are teaching Fremantle, an Englishman come to observe the American Civil War, how to play poker. Longstreet watches rather than play as he might have done in the past. Longstreet is bothered by the news the spy has brought and by the silence of Jeb Stuart. Major G. Moxley Sorrel, Longstreet's chief of staff, joins him with the news that Lee has retired for the night, satisfied that the entire army should reach Gettysburg by the following evening. There is still no word from Stuart, but some of General Hill's troops have confirmed there are Union cavalry in Gettysburg. However, Hill did not believe his own man, believing him to be an excitable type and untrustworthy. Lee, too, does not believe the news.

Sorrel goes to join the poker game and Fremantle joins Longstreet. Fremantle has heard that Longstreet is a good poker player and wants to ask his advice on technique. Longstreet gives it freely, surprising Fremantle with his approach. When Fremantle returns to the game, Longstreet begins to think about the possibility of England coming to the aid of the South. Longstreet does not believe it will happen. Moments later, General George Pickett enters the camp. Pickett brings with him his brigade commanders, Armistead, Garnett, and Kemper. Longstreet greets them all fondly. They have all served in the army together for many years. Garnett climbs off his horse gingerly, favoring a leg. Longstreet watches him, aware of his personal crises. Garnett retreated during a battle in which he was under the command of Stonewall Jackson. Jackson accused Garnett of cowardice, but before Garnett could defend himself, Jackson died. Now Garnett lives under a shadow of suspicion. A group of men gather and Longstreet introduces Fremantle to his friends.

After the introductions, Pickett removes himself from the group and takes Longstreet aside. Pickett complains that he and his men have missed most of the major battles thus far and Lee has assigned them to the back of the march. Pickett is eager to see fighting and wants to know if Longstreet can move them up in line. Longstreet says he cannot, but suggests there is a possibility that the army will have to turn around if the Union flanks them and then Pickett will be first in line. Pickett is satisfied with this news and goes off to join the poker game. Armistead then joins Longstreet and asks what he might know about an old friend of theirs, Win Hancock, a general with the Union army. Armistead expresses a desire to see Win should they come close enough for it to be possible, since Longstreet has told him it is possible Hancock will be at Gettysburg as well. Longstreet tells him it might be possible. They talk about Lee then, how the men have made him into some kind of God because of his successes thus far. Armistead comments on how Lee is always on the offensive and wonders if this is the best



strategy now that they are on unfamiliar ground. Longstreet says that Lee has promised to attempt to be on the defensive now, but Armistead is not sure Lee will stick to this promise. A fight has broken out between Kemper and Fremantle, so Pickett decides it is time to leave. Longstreet gives him some last-minute advice about the march in the morning and watches them go. The spy returns after midnight and confirms the sighting of cavalry in Gettysburg. It is raining at dawn as the first shots ring out.

## **Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 4, Longstreet Analysis**

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce some of the major characters on the Confederate side of the conflict. The first is one that has already been partially introduced, Longstreet. Longstreet is a soldier who has been in the military the majority of his adult life. Longstreet has recently lost his children to a fever and is still suffering the grief of this experience. This is evidenced by his reluctance to join the poker game even though it is often suggested in this chapter that he would have done so in the past. This chapter also shows some of Longstreet's concern over Lee's handling of the coming battle, his fear that Lee is not taking reports of Union cavalry in Gettysburg seriously, and his concern over Lee's habit of taking to offensive in battle and its possible repercussions in this situation where they do not have enough information about the size of the Union forces they will be facing and knowledge of the land they will be fighting on. This foreshadows a later time in the novel in which Longstreet and Lee will find themselves conflicting over battle decisions.

The second person of importance introduced in this chapter is Fremantle. Fremantle is an Englishman sent to observe the war for the Queen of England. Fremantle is a minor character in this novel, but his importance is foreshadowed by the idea that he might be able to bring the English army in to support the Confederacy if his observations are favorable. This brings a new twist to the war that many readers may have not been aware of and it foreshadows the results of Fremantle's visit after the battle at Gettysburg.

Finally, this chapter introduces General Pickett, Armistead, and Garnett. These characters are important for several reasons. Pickett's importance stems from his eagerness to be a large part of the looming battle. Pickett is anxious to be at the front of the line because he and his men have seen little battle since the beginning of the war. This foreshadows the battle at Gettysburg in which Pickett and his men will see battle, and the possible outcomes of this battle. Armistead proves to be an important character because he introduces a small element of the human side of the war, exploring the theme of war and its effect on the men fighting that war. Armistead is good friends with a Union commander, Win Hancock. Armistead would greatly love to see his friend and, for this reason, is pleased to learn he will be at Gettysburg. However, Armistead has always sworn he would not raise arms against his friend, which leaves him in a unique and difficult position. Finally, Garnett is important to this story because of his back story, that of having been accused of cowardice by a beloved general, Stonewall Jackson. Not only does this touch on the theme of pride as Garnett fights to clear his name, but it also

foreshadows a time when Garnett will have a chance to prove himself courageous during the battle at Gettysburg and its possible ominous outcome. Lastly, the battle itself is foreshadowed as Longstreet receives confirmation of Union cavalry in Gettysburg and the first shots of the battle begin to ring out in Gettysburg.



# Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 1 Lee,

## Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 1 Lee, Summary

The troops are already on the move when Lee emerges from his tent. Lee has recently been diagnosed with heart problems and spends a moment testing the pain in his chest. Lee decides it is not bad today. One of Lee's aides, Taylor, greets him and announces that there has been no word from Stuart yet. Taylor, who also does not trust spies, suggests this is because there is nothing to report. Lee agrees. Taylor also tells Lee that General Hill's men will be going into Gettysburg that morning. There is a shoe factory there and Hill intends to requisition some new boots for his men. General Ewell also expects to be there by noon. Lee reminds Taylor that he wants no fighting until the army is concentrated and Taylor assures him that Hill is aware of this.

Taylor informs Lee that some local women are there to see him, complaining that they have taken all their food and their horses. Lee orders the return of several horses that are no use to the army anyway in order to appease them. Lee then requests that Longstreet join him for the morning ride. Lee then learns that one of his men, Dorsey Pender, has gotten a letter from his wife accusing him of committing a sin by moving the battle front into enemy territory. Pender has taken the letter badly. Lee promises to talk to Pender even as he remembers the oath he once took to defend this land at all costs as a member of the military of the United States. Lee feels a small amount of guilt at the idea of taking arms against this land.

Longstreet joins Lee. They talk about Fremantle and the possibility of England joining their cause; an idea they both know is remote. Lee talks about the soldiers' disease that is affecting the ranks, caused by the men eating too many cherries off the trees. Lee then turns to the subject that is bothering him. Lee is concerned that if he should fall ill or wounded, there will be no one suitable to take his place. Longstreet is Lee's first choice, but he is concerned that Longstreet has a habit of moving too far forward on the battlefield. Lee makes Longstreet promise he will not put himself in a position to become wounded. Longstreet agrees and then asks about word from Stuart. Upon learning there still has been no word, Longstreet suggests that Lee court martial Stuart when he returns. Lee tells him he feels a reproach from him would be sufficient and Longstreet agrees. Longstreet then asks what Lee thinks about the spy's report regarding the Union cavalry in Gettysburg. Lee does not believe the report. However, as they move further down the road they begin to hear artillery in the distance. Lee rides further ahead to learn the news.



## Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 1 Lee, Analysis

This chapter begins with a deeper look at Lee. First, the reader learns that Lee has health problems, something that deeply concerns him. Then the reader learns that Lee does not believe the reports of Union cavalry in Gettysburg. The reader must wonder why Lee is moving his army if he does not believe. However, Lee is moving the army and, as the reader is aware, faces a large army waiting for him in Gettysburg. Then Lee is faced with several administrative tasks, including calming one soldier whose wife believes that he is committing a mortal sin by invading the North. This opens an interesting question for Lee, who must now face the fact that he will be fighting on the very soil he once swore to protect when he was a respected member of the United States Military. This is a quandary that many of the commanders in the Confederate army had to face during this war, again touching on the theme of war and its effect on the emotional as well as physical well being of its participants.

Due to Lee's ill health, he must face the idea of his own mortality. This question leads him to request that Longstreet not put himself in mortal danger so that he can be in a position to take Lee's place should the worst happen. This is important because it shows the reader the importance that Lee placed on Longstreet as a friend and as a commander and possible replacement. This also puts into focus the position that Longstreet has in the chain of command and foreshadows a time when his position of authority will be important during the battle of Gettysburg. Longstreet and Lee also speak of Stuart. Longstreet wants Stuart court-martialed for not fulfilling his duties. Stuart has left Lee's entire army blind with only the word of an untrustworthy spy to guide them. However, Lee does not want to court martial him, foreshadowing a time when this decision will have to be made and the protest Lee might expect should he chose not to court martial Stuart. Finally, earlier in the chapter, Lee gave the order that the battle not begin until the whole army has arrived. However, they soon hear artillery, suggesting the battle has begun without them. This foreshadows the next chapter in which this battle is described.





# Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 2, Buford

## Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 2, Buford Summary

Just before dawn, Buford wakes his troops minutes before the first shots ring out. The first attack is short, with the Confederates testing the Union to see if they will fight or run. The Confederates hit Buford's line again and back away before reforming, aware that this is serious now. Buford watches for a few minutes from the cupola in the seminary before sending word to Reynolds about the beginning attack. The confederates are hitting Buford with only a single brigade. This pleases Buford since he is dug in and feels that he can securely fight off a single brigade. The Confederates still do not have a cannon firing and the Union casualties are light so far. However, Buford gets word that Heth is on his way with nearly ten thousand men. Buford orders Gamble to have Devin lengthen his line so that when Heth hits them he will hit two brigades instead of one. Buford hopes this will hold the Confederates off until Reynolds can arrive with his infantry.

Buford is concerned that his men cannot hold off Heth until Reynolds comes. Buford sends a squad out on the road to watch for the approach of more Confederate troops with orders to report directly to him. Buford then returns to the seminary, climbing into the cupola to watch. Soon the big attack begins and Gamble falls. Buford takes command. There is a break on the left, but some young officers patch it. Again, on the right, there is another break, but it is repulsed by the time Buford arrives. The Confederates pull back to reform. Buford considers pulling out, but when he climbs the cupola one more time to survey the damage, he sees Reynolds coming up the road. At first Buford does not see any troops behind Reynolds. However, the First corps and the Eleventh appear behind them. Buford tells Reynolds what has taken place and gives command to Reynolds. Reynolds rides his horse down to the front lines and positions his men. Devin complains about being pulled out, but Buford cannot do anything about it. The Confederates see the movement and begin to shell the town. Reynolds orders all remaining civilians to stay inside their homes.

Reynolds rides his horse toward the front lines after complimenting Buford on his work thus far. Moments later, Buford sees Reynolds' horse running without a rider. Buford finds Reynolds with his aides, shot in the head, dead. The Union line continues to hold without a commander. Buford withdraws his cavalry as ordered and rides out to assist the squad he sent to watch the roads.





## Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 2, Buford Analysis

The first day of fighting begins at Gettysburg as the Confederates, under Heth, begin to hit Buford's cavalry. True to Buford's concerns, after a few small attacks, Heth attacks his men with more power than Buford has. Buford takes command of the line after one of his commanders goes down, and fears that they will lose the line due to the overwhelming number of the enemy. However, just as Buford considers withdrawing his men, Reynolds arrives, as foreshadowed by the many messages Buford has sent Reynolds in both this and a previous chapter. However, the joy does not last long as a Confederate bullet almost immediately shoots down Reynolds. Reynolds is dead, but his men continue to fight anyway, holding the line while Buford follows his orders and withdraws his cavalry.

This chapter is important because it is an eyewitness account of the first fighting of the battle at Gettysburg. The Confederates arrive and begin to test the Union soldiers to see if they are willing to fight or will be easily scared away. Clearly, Buford is there to fight since he has already chosen ground on which to do so and has dug his men in the day before. The Confederates figure this out and begin to take the fight seriously even though Lee has issued orders that there is to be no fighting until the entire army arrives. Not only does this explore the theme of war and the strategies within which men employ in order to win such wars, but it also plays with the theme of respect. It brings to the mind of the reader a lack of respect for Lee's orders and foreshadows a time later in the novel when Lee's orders will again be questioned and the result of these questions. Finally, with the death of Reynolds, this chapter takes away the fantasy element of the battle and again explores the theme of war as the reader begins to see that this is not a game, not a fictional creation, and that men do die in these battles. It makes the battle seem more realistic.



# Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 3, Lee

## Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 3, Lee Summary

Lee arrives outside of Gettysburg in the nearby town of Cashtown and finds a situation he does not like. Lee does not like the way his men are compacted; concerned about an attack from the suspected cavalry ahead that could wipe out the majority of his army. Lee attempts to not worry so much. Lee picks a nearby home for his headquarters and speaks to Hill, who is ill with the soldiers' disease, about the battle taking place ahead. Hill informs that Heth is ahead with orders not to force a major battle. Lee requests more information and Hill agrees to go look himself. Lee is concerned with their lack of information and decides to ride ahead himself. Lee sees Heth's Division where it has clearly been repulsed. Lee sends word to Ewell and Longstreet to request they come as quickly as possible. Heth finds Lee and tells him about the battle that morning, how he thought it was a few militia only to learn that it was dismounted cavalry. Heth had thought they were beat when suddenly infantry joined the fight. Lee then gets news the Rodes has arrived and engaged the Union's right flank and that Early is behind him. Lee does not want to give any further instructions, however, because he does not know how many Union troops are behind the number they know about. Heth wants to attack as well, but Lee hesitates until he gets the news that not only is Reynolds dead, but Early has arrived and is attacking. Lee gives Heth as well as Pender permission to attack.

Lee watches the battle from a distance in a grove of trees. Hill joins him and informs him that Heth has been hit in the head. Lee sends word to Early and Rodes asking for information. Soon Lee receives word from Early that the enemy is falling back. Pender sends word that the enemy is falling back. Lee mounts his horse to take a closer look. Lee sees that the Union soldiers are falling back to a high hill, digging in. Lee sees this as victory. Lee orders the artillery to fire on the hill. Lee sends word to Ewell to attempt to take the hill. Longstreet and his men arrive and Lee invites him to watch the battle beside him. Lee is optimistic about the battle. Longstreet suggests that Lee move the troops between the Union troops and Washington, forcing the Union to hit them. Lee does not agree, feeling that if they disengage they will lose the advantage. Longstreet argues that they can take the other hills behind the one the Union now occupies, on the right, but Lee again disagrees. Lee gets word from Ewell that he needs support from Hill on his right. Lee refuses support for a lack of troops. Then Lee sends for information on why the artillery is not firing on the hill. Longstreet tells Lee that he thinks they should not have attacked here and that they will be outnumbered by morning. Lee does not agree. Lee thanks Longstreet for his spy's report, sending him off to bring his troops further up. Lee then begins to wonder why Ewell still has not attacked.



## Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 3, Lee Analysis

Lee arrives in Cashtown, a town not far from Gettysburg, where he makes his headquarters and watches the bulk of the battle. Lee is unsure of his strategy because of a lack of information, but sends his men in just the same. Lee had not intended to attack now, without more knowledge, but Heth has forced his hand by attacking that morning. Now Lee is stuck and has decided they must continue their attack. The attack appears to go well and Lee is excited at the prospect of an early victory, especially when the Union troops appear to retreat under their attack. This again illuminates the theme of war and the strategies that must be employed in order for a battle to be successful. The reader here gets to see inside Lee's head as he makes decisions that will affect the lives of the men around him and will have a large effect on the overall outcome of the Civil War.

The most important part of this chapter is in its foreshadowing. The first item of foreshadowing is Lee's uncertainty in his battle strategy due to his lack of information. Stuart's disappearance has been mentioned numerous times throughout the first few chapters of the novel, but its effect has not been felt in its enormity until this chapter. Now the reader can see how devastating Stuart's selfish actions have affected the beginning and possibly the outcome of this battle. Second, the battle begins and the Confederates appear to have the upper hand as the Union troops begin to retreat toward Cemetery Hill. However, this retreat may not be what it appears. This sets up the battle on the second day as fighting continues to be concentrated around these hills. Third, there is the failure of Lee's men to fight when he tells them and not fight when he tells them. This sets up a possible failure of command that may be important later in the novel. When Longstreet arrives and offers his opinion of what Lee should do next, Lee fails to listen to him. This foreshadows two separate situations. First, it foreshadows a pattern of suggestions being ignored between Longstreet and Lee. Second, it foreshadows a situation in which Longstreet and Lee will come head to head on several command decisions during the battle, suggesting tension and possible failure between these two commanders. Finally, this situation also suggests that the battle may have ended differently if Lee had listened more closely to his advisers, especially Longstreet.



# **Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 4, Chamberlain**

## **Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 4, Chamberlain Summary**

Chamberlain and his regiment ride toward Gettysburg, finding the people friendly the closer to the battle they get. Chamberlain listens to his brother speak to one of the mutineers from the Second Maine while they wait, Tom explaining to the other man about the different bugle calls the regiment has, most of them written by their old brigade commander, Dan Butterfield. One is a lullaby once known as Butterfield's Lullaby before it was later renamed Taps. The other is a special bugle call especially for the brigade. Tom also tells the man how they missed out at Chancellorville because everyone was sick. Chamberlain listens to this conversation, missing his home in Maine and thinking about how protective he has always been of his brother. Chamberlain is afraid if his brother is injured in the war, he will never be able to face his family again.

Vincent, the brigade commander, comes back to review Chamberlain's regiment for a moment during the march. They come closer to Gettysburg and soon they get word of the fighting that has already taken place. The men come alive, charged with the idea of fighting. Soon they get word that General McClellan has taken command of the army. Chamberlain knows the news is not true, however, and that Meade is in charge. Chamberlain prayed for McClellan, however, because he was the only general he trusted. The Twentieth Maine reaches Gettysburg after midnight and sleeps on the side of the road without fires or tents.

## **Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 4, Chamberlain Analysis**

Chamberlain and his men make their way to Gettysburg to join the fighting. Tom, Chamberlain's brother, gives one of the men from the Second Maine some background on the Twentieth Maine, Chamberlain's command. This information is fascinating for the history buff, especially learning that Taps was originally intended as a lullaby, but of little importance to the overall plot except to give a more human look to Chamberlain's command. This chapter also briefly introduces Vincent, Chamberlain's commander who will order Chamberlain and his men to their fighting positions for the next day's fight, foreshadowing their part in that fight. The chapter also introduces McClellan, a beloved general much like Lee on the confederate side, but Chamberlain has little faith that McClellan is truly in charge, negating this information except to illustrate that the men have little knowledge of or respect, a theme of the novel, for Meade who is the commander of the Army of the Potomac.



# Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 5, Longstreet

## Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 5, Longstreet Summary

Longstreet rides through the day's battlefield alone, watching as the dead and wounded are collected in wagons. Longstreet knows that Lee will attack in the morning and is saddened by this fact, aware that it would be more to their advantage if Lee would force the Union to attack them. Longstreet can see how things are going to go, and is not happy with the picture, though he does not have the power to convince Lee of his vision. Longstreet thinks of his dead children and mourns them as he continues to ride. Fremantle joins him, telling Longstreet how he got to see part of the battle. Fremantle saw the battle as a victory and expects the same the next day. Fremantle asks Longstreet if he will tell him where to sit so that he can see the battle but still be safe. Longstreet says he will. Fremantle then comments on Lee, calling him an English general in his strategy and personal beliefs. They discuss Lee's merits as a gentleman, and discuss Jackson's merits and those of several of the other generals as well, with Fremantle declaring them all gentlemen. Longstreet tells Fremantle then his opinion that they should not fight the enemy face to face, to prove themselves all gentlemen, but in a trench style, hiding behind trees and in ditches. However, Fremantle is like the Southerners, more concerned with dignity than winning, thinking that Longstreet's ideas are a form of cowardice.

## Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 5, Longstreet Analysis

Longstreet is depressed because he believes Lee's decision to attack in the morning will be a mistake, foreshadowing a time when Longstreet will fight Lee on his decisions later in the novel. Then Longstreet speaks with Fremantle, discussing the behaviors and tactics of the other commanders in the Confederate army, including Lee, and how these behaviors reflect their status as gentlemen. When Longstreet begins to describe some of his ideas about battle tactics, Fremantle does not see the wisdom in his ideas, like later generals will, but sees Longstreet throwing out the very dignity that makes a man a gentleman. This not only foreshadows tension between Lee and Longstreet when Lee continues to disagree with Longstreet's ideas, but it also shows the depth of Longstreet's intelligence and his frustration at not being heard. The historian in this novel's reader must also wonder how Longstreet's ideas, which have since been proven useful in war tactics, might have changed the course of the war had Lee listened to him.



# Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 6, Lee

## Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 6, Lee Summary

Lee rides through town late that night and listens to the celebrations of the troops around him. Lee goes to Ewell's headquarters and wonders why he did not attack the hill as ordered, but does not ask. Lee receives instead a report on the condition of the troops and learns they are well. When Lee finally does ask why the hill was not taken, Early tells him that there were reports of Union troops to the North and they felt it was not practical. Lee asks if they can take the hill in the morning but Early feels that the hill has been well fortified and is not a good place to attack. Early suggests that the rest of the army attack on the other flank while his men rest. Early then suggests that Longstreet attack on the right and draw some of the Union troops to his position, making their attack on the hill possible. Lee asks them about Longstreet's suggestion to leave the town and move toward Washington, forcing the Union to attack them. Early and Ewell believe it would be a mistake and stick to their own suggestions. Trimble, a commander under Ewell, finds Lee and tells him that Ewell could have taken Cemetery Hill that day; that the hill behind it was not occupied as Ewell and Early stated, but that Ewell refused. Lee continued to question Trimble and learns that Ewell deferred his decision to Early, and that it was Early who did not want to attack.

Lee returns to his headquarters and deals with a few men waiting for him. Then Lee sends for Ewell. Ewell has decided that with Johnson's help he may be able to attack the hill. Ewell also apologizes for being too cautious that day. Lee tells him he will consider an attack on his flank and sends him off to sleep. Alone, Lee thinks about his son who has been injured and of the coming battle. Lee knows this battle will decide the war and wonders how it will end. Finally, Lee goes to sleep.

## Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 6, Lee Analysis

Lee is not happy that Ewell did not take Cemetery Hill that day and goes to find out why. Lee is a gentleman, however, and does not reproach Ewell. However, it is clear that Early has influenced Ewell and Ewell has allowed this to happen. When one of Ewell's men comes and confirms this for Lee, Lee sends for Ewell to discuss the situation once more. Ewell confesses that he believes that he can take the hill the next day and apologizes for his caution. This episode once again emphasizes the confusion between the leaders of the Confederacy during the battle at Gettysburg as foreshadowed in the previous chapter and further complicates the events of this day which opens the battle on a sour note, foreshadowing the eventual outcome of the battle.



When Lee tells Early and Ewell of Longstreet's thoughts toward abandoning the town, which the Confederates had won that day, and moving toward Washington in order to force the Union to attack them, Early scoffs at the idea, believing Longstreet's plan is stupid and without merit. Without agreeing openly, it is clear that Lee agrees to a certain degree as he agrees to consider Early's plan instead. This foreshadows more tension between Longstreet and Lee as a plan is formulated for the battle the following day. It also again shows how far ahead of his time Longstreet was and how archaic the other generals' warfare strategies were. Finally, in this chapter Lee thinks about the battle ahead and realizes that it is the great battle that will decide the entire war, foreshadowing the end of the battle. While Lee is thinking this, he is thinking that he and his troops will soon ride into Washington and offer a letter of victory to Lincoln. However, most readers know this is not to be the case, though it will later be argued that this battle did change the tide of the war and perhaps was a deciding factor in the victory or failure of the South.





## **Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 7, Buford**

### **Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 7, Buford Summary**

At two in the morning, Buford returns to Cemetery Hill where the troops are digging in and others are still arriving. Buford rides to the small house where a headquarters has been set up, looking for someone to give him orders for his cavalry. Buford asks the men outside who is in charge and the men argue that either Howard or Hancock is in charge. Buford ignores the argument and goes inside. Buford knows that Howard was broken that morning on the right, just as he broke at Chancellorville. Hancock should be in charge, Buford knows, but Howard cannot be removed without an order from Meade. Buford talks to Gibbon, one of Hancock's commanders, and learns that most of the army has arrived. Buford wants to talk to someone in charge for orders so he can go rest. Buford walks toward a room where the generals are meeting, but Gibbon turns him back with the news that Howard has made a complaint against him. Howard claims that Buford should have supported him on the right rather than remove his cavalry as Reynolds commanded. Gibbon sends Buford outside and goes to get Hancock. Buford tells Hancock about his cavalry's part in the battle that morning. Hancock tells him to get himself refitted in case he is needed in the morning. While they talk, Meade arrives. Buford is pushed aside as Meade is escorted into headquarters.

### **Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 7, Buford Analysis**

This chapter illustrates the confusion and inequality of war. Buford, who picked the ground to defend and defended it alone until Reynolds was able to arrive, has been accused of leaving one of his fellow commanders without backup. Not only this, but Buford's role in the entire day's events been overlooked by his commanders, especially his choice of ground. Buford, who behaved very gallantly that day, is not getting the recognition he deserves. Buford is also being accused of something he could not have controlled by a general who has proven himself to be a coward in the past. Those readers who know a bit of history will know that Buford will never really get the recognition he deserved for this battle and that he will die before historians finally begin to recognize his contributions.





# Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 1, Fremantle

## Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 1, Fremantle Summary

Fremantle wakes much earlier than he would like, only roused by the prospect of watching a battle. Fremantle eats breakfast with the other foreigners in camp then takes a tour of the battlefield from the day before. Fremantle continues on to Lee's headquarters where the generals are discussing the strategy for the day. Fremantle watches the discussions with interest, thinking of the discussion he had with the commanders the night before about the possibility of England's help and the South coming under English rule once more. Fremantle stops Sorrel to get information. Sorrel informs him that there will most likely be no action for several more hours. Sorrel also tells them that Lee has sent out scouts in search of Stuart. Fremantle joins Longstreet where he is talking to General Hood. Hood is unhappy with Lee's decision regarding the battle, but Longstreet feels there is nothing he can do about it. They are both unhappy that Lee wants to begin without waiting for Pickett. Fremantle speaks with Longstreet for a few minutes, asking why he does not think the Union will attack them. Longstreet suggests that Meade has not gathered his entire army yet and would not attack before he had. Fremantle rejoins the other foreigners and they talk about other wars. Fremantle thinks about the Southerners, how English they all are and how much better it would be for them if they were to come under English rule again. Fremantle believes the Southerners act and live exactly like Englishmen, except for slavery, which will be done with soon anyway. Fremantle believes the South is only not part of England now in that it is not an English colony, at least not yet.

## Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 1, Fremantle Analysis

This chapter views the preparation for battle through the eyes of a visiting Englishman. The point in the chapter seems to be to show the naivety of the people involved in the war, especially those who were not active soldiers and were not in the middle of the battles. Fremantle is a soldier in England, but here he is simply an observer who treats the battle as though it is some sort of theater put on for his benefit. Not only this, but Fremantle seems to sum up the plight of the Southern people with the simple diagnoses that they are Englishmen stuck in the American experiment of democracy. Fremantle believes that the Southern people would be happier under English rule than to be free to live their lives as they please. Fremantle seems to misunderstand the whole reason the south is fighting in this war. This foreshadows several episodes over the next few chapters as commanders from both the North and the South struggle with their own

beliefs in regard to why the war is happening. The great debate is whether the war is about slavery. The next few chapters will explore this idea.



# Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 2, Chamberlain

## Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 2, Chamberlain Summary

Chamberlain's regiment sits in the middle of an open field. Chamberlain walks among them, gauging their preparedness for battle. Chamberlain believes them to be ready. Kilrain comes to Chamberlain and takes him to a black man he has found. The man is an escaped slave who has been shot. Chamberlain has never seen a black man outside of the South and the sight of this man causes him to have emotions he did not expect. Chamberlain is repulsed at the sight of this injured man. The black man does not speak English and is afraid of these men, unaware that they are attempting to help him. Chamberlain sends for the company surgeon to care for the man's wounds. Chamberlain walks away, remembering a conversation he once had with a Southern reverend who told him he could not possibly understand slavery until he lived it.

Chamberlain runs into his brother who tells him he has been talking to some Southern prisoners. The prisoners claim that the war is not about slavery. The prisoners told him it is about their rights. Chamberlain returns to the black man and learns that his wound is superficial. A woman in Gettysburg shot him when he asked for directions. Chamberlain orders the man be given some rations. The brigade is forming so the black man must be left behind. Chamberlain wishes him luck. Vincent comes to tell Chamberlain that they will not see action this morning, but will simply be on reserve. The regiment marches for a while before stopping in a field. Kilrain tells Chamberlain that the black man has followed them through the woods. Kilrain suggest they give him a rifle and allow him to fight with them. Chamberlain asks Kilrain what he thinks of blacks, and tells him a story of how a reverend and professor from the South came to visit his family shortly before the war. Chamberlain became angry at the reverend over the subject of blacks at which the reverend told him he did not have enough knowledge of blacks to pass judgment on slavery. Chamberlain became angrier and left the room. The professor followed him and asked what if he, Chamberlain, was the one who was wrong. Kilrain tells Chamberlain not to doubt himself; that he is doing what is right, what is just. Kilrain then asks what Chamberlain thinks will happen if the South wins the war. Chamberlain says America will be two countries, like France and Germany. Then they wait for something to happen.

## Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 2, Chamberlain Analysis

This chapter brings to the novel the debate over slavery that has been going on since long before the Civil War and continues today. Chamberlain is brought to a black man



who has been shot for asking directions from a white woman in Gettysburg. The man is a runaway slave who has not been in America long enough to know the language. Chamberlain looks on this injured man who has done nothing to hurt anyone and feels repulsed. Chamberlain has never seen a slave before and does not know how to feel about it. Chamberlain is a good man, however, and he struggles with his feelings of revulsion. Chamberlain remembers speaking with a Southern professor who asked if perhaps he was not the one who was wrong about slavery. These Southern visitors tried to convince Chamberlain that blacks are not human the way that whites are. Chamberlain refused to believe this thought at the time, but seeing a black man for the first time he begins to doubt what he had thought to be true. Not only does this illuminate the debate of slavery, which could be another theme of the novel, but it also shows the depth of Chamberlain's intelligence and compassion. Chamberlain is a good man who wants to believe that all people are equal, even blacks. However, popular opinion and his own fear of someone different than himself, makes him question his beliefs.

This debate brings up the question of why the Civil War is being fought. Tom has spoken to some of the Southern prisoners and is amused to learn that they believe they are not fighting for slavery but for their rights. Tom has believed, as most Northerners believe, that the Civil War is about slavery. However, most Southerners would tell Tom that it is not about slavery but the right to live one's life as one wants. This illustrates the theme of pride. The Southerners believe that the North was attempting to tell them how to live their lives by attempting to force them to abolish slavery. The South survived on cotton and tobacco at the time, two products that required a lot of physical labor to plant and harvest. The South believed that by getting rid of the slaves, they would lose their work force. However, it goes deeper than this. The Southerners had deep traditions within their way of living that they felt were threatened by the North's attempts to tell them how to live. Their pride has caused the South to stand up against the North, not slavery alone.



# Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 3, Longstreet

## Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 3, Longstreet Summary

Longstreet studies the map that Lee has used to plan the day's strategy, unhappy with the ultimate decision. Lee asks to talk to Longstreet, wishing to have the agreement of all his commanders. Lee tells Longstreet that Ewell believes Cemetery Hill to be too deeply entrenched by the Union troops. Lee also says that he has told Ewell and Early of Longstreet's idea to move to the right and they are both opposed. Longstreet does not agree. Lee explains that he believes their best move is to attack before the Union troops become any more entrenched. Lee wants Longstreet to attack on the right with the First Corps. Lee then tells him he will attack en echelon to take Cemetery Hill in reverse. Hill will support him with Pender and Anderson. Longstreet insists on waiting another hour for Law to join him. Lee wants them to come up the Emmitsburg road, up Cemetery Ridge, and pass in front of Rocky Hill. Their objective will be to take the rear of the Union Army. Hood suggests that he be allowed to go around the rocky hills on the far right to take the Union wagon trains, but Lee refuses. Lee wants the troops concentrated on one area.

Longstreet has breakfast and speaks briefly to Heth, informing him that he will not fight that day, before he moves out. Captain Johnston, Lee's engineer, is to lead them into the area because he has scouted the Union positions. However, Johnston did not scout the roads and does not know how to get Longstreet there without being seen. It is important Longstreet is not seen because it could give the Union time to reposition their troops and their artillery. Again, Longstreet blames Stuart for this problem. The march begins around noon. Lee joins them for a while. Longstreet and Lee talk about their time fighting in Mexico as they ride in the heat of the day. Longstreet brought up the oath they had both sworn to protect this land, to not raise arms against it. Lee advises Longstreet not to think about that today. Lee tells him that it takes a special man to be a commander and that Longstreet is a good commander. Lee then says that he is an old man and he worries about his decisions now, and that he wants this war over. They are interrupted then by a message from Hood that tells them the Union is moving troops onto Little Round Top. Lee wishes Longstreet luck and rides off.

A little later, Johnston finds Longstreet and informs him that if they continue the way they are going, they will be visible by the Union troops. Longstreet rides with Johnston only to discover his prediction is true. Longstreet sends word to his troops that they are turning around and then scouts the new trail himself. Longstreet knows that this will slow things down and the idea of fighting en echelon is all but destroyed. Longstreet blames both Lee and Stuart for the mistake. When they finally arrive at their appointed location, they discover the Union troops have moved further right than expected.



Longstreet sends word to Lee and his other commanders. Hood responds by telling him there is nothing to his right. Hood wants to go around Big Round Top and attack from the rear. Longstreet says that is what he has been asking Lee himself for days, but it is not their orders. Hood is to attack as ordered. Hood again argues, saying that the Emmitsburg Road is too heavily defended. Hood again wants to move to the right. Again, Longstreet refuses to allow him. A third time Hood argues with Longstreet. Hood wants to take Big Round Top and mount his artillery on it. Longstreet says he cannot because he would have to cut down trees and there was not enough time. Longstreet orders him to take Little Round Top. Hood argues that it is not advisable because of the boulders that sit on it. Longstreet orders it anyway. Longstreet returns to where McLaws waits. McLaws is ready to attack, but Longstreet has been ordered to fight en echelon, so he waits. Finally, Longstreet orders the advance.

## **Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 3, Longstreet Analysis**

The difference between Longstreet, Early, and Ewell becomes clear almost immediately in this chapter. Longstreet is not happy with the day's strategy and he makes it clear from the beginning of the chapter. However, unlike Early and Ewell, Longstreet refuses to continue to argue with Lee. Longstreet is a good soldier who knows it is his place to do as he is told. This comes out of not only his own character, but also respect for Lee, illustrating the theme of respect. Longstreet knows that Lee is doing the best he can; therefore, he does not feel he should argue with him anymore. Lee stresses this when he joins Longstreet on the march and talks to him of their time in the United States Military before the war and of what it takes to be a good commander. Lee makes it clear that he considers Longstreet his successor and that he respects his ideas, even if he does not always listen to them. This gives insight into Lee's character as well, showing the reader a more humane side of war, another theme of the novel, as Lee struggles with his decisions during this battle.

Hood, on the other hand, has no trouble arguing with his commanding officer. Three times Hood insists that he be allowed to attack on the far right, the same argument Longstreet has made to Lee since arriving at Gettysburg. However, again Longstreet respects Lee too much to change his orders. Longstreet refuses to allow Hood to change his line of attack even though Longstreet himself can see that it would be the better strategy.

Once more Stuart's absence is felt on the battlefield. Longstreet is forced to turn his troops almost completely around in order to get to his appointed battle site because Lee has not had the area scouted properly and Longstreet's troops will be visible if he continues on the path he originally chose. This change causes Longstreet to begin his fight later than planned, causing the battle strategy that was supposed to happen en echelon to be delayed for many of the commanders behind Longstreet. The effect of this event is not felt in this chapter, however the possibility of an effect is foreshadowed for a later chapter.



# Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 4, Chamberlain

## Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 4, Chamberlain Summary

Chamberlain and Kilrain can hear fighting to their right. Word comes shortly that Vincent wants Chamberlain to form his men. They are to move up Little Round Top and take the left flank. Chamberlain advises Tom to stay out of danger, to keep away from him. Chamberlain does not want his brother hurt, nor does he want to worry about him. Vincent tells Chamberlain that Sickles was supposed to cover the ground where they stand, but he did not like it so he moved his Corps forward, probably the same Corps that faced McLaws. Vincent says that the Rebels are fighting Sickles, and will probably get around him soon and be up this hill. Vincent wants Chamberlain to hold the left flank, to be the extreme left flank, and that he is not to retreat under any circumstances.

Chamberlain's men dig in. Chamberlain looks around and gets the lay of the land. To the right there is a larger hill. Chamberlain imagines that if the South got artillery up there it could be deadly for him and his men. However, there is no time to think of such things. Chamberlain sends Company B to their extreme left and has them dig in there in case the Confederates attempt to flank them. Chamberlain stands on a boulder to look at the fighting below him. One of Chamberlain's men asks about the remaining prisoners from the Second Maine. Chamberlain asks them to fight or to sit and watch, but they will not be guarded. Three men join. Chamberlain checks the line one more time.

The Confederates make their way up the hill, screaming the Rebel Yell. The regiment beside Chamberlain's takes the brunt of this first attack. Chamberlain orders his brother to stay by his side, out of the way. Kilrain is nearby with a carbine. Company B on the left is wiped out. Another attack comes, Chamberlain sees several men die, including one of the Second Maine who only just agreed to join the fight. Kilrain is shot in the armpit. Chamberlain climbs on a boulder, is hit in the foot, and falls off. Chamberlain climbs back on, sees the Confederates coming to his left, and gets knocked off the boulder again. Chamberlain calls for his commanders, tells them to make a line like a swinging door to protect the left flank. Chamberlain sends word to the 83rd to move left with him. Chamberlain goes to check on Kilrain and finds him apologetic. Tom comes back and says the 83rd cannot move. Chamberlain sends him to give word to strengthen their center.

Chamberlain attempts to send word for more ammunition and learns that Vincent is dead along with two other commanders. Chamberlain sends word to conserve ammunition. Chamberlain sees a hole in the line and sends Tom, the only available soldier, to plug it. Tom goes willingly. Chamberlain worries about his brother, but finds he has deeper considerations. They are almost out of ammunition. Chamberlain orders his





troops to fix bayonets. The regiment charges downhill, taking the Confederates by surprise. An officer charges up the hill and Chamberlain charges him with a saber. The officer shoots at Chamberlain, but his gun is empty. The Confederates surrender and the regiment takes more than five hundred prisoners. Tom returns unhurt. Chamberlain goes to check on Kilrain and learns he has been shot twice in the armpit. Kilrain apologizes and asks for whiskey. Chamberlain promises to look for some. Chamberlain shares a drink with one of his men and then meets with the commanders of the other regiments. Chamberlain asks Colonel Rice, the man now in charge of the brigade, for more ammunition. Rain sends Chamberlain and his men to Big Round Top and promises to send supplies.

## **Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 4, Chamberlain Analysis**

This chapter describes the other side of the battle that began in the last chapter. Chamberlain has been moved to the top of Little Round Top, the same hill that Hood said could not be taken because of the boulders. This area that Chamberlain is facing is looked down on by the same hill, Big Round Top, that Hood wanted to put his artillery on, the same artillery that Chamberlain fears in this chapter. This is one of the ironic twists of this novel, a little twenty-twenty hindsight, in which the author points out a mistake on the Confederate side that could have changed the tide of the battle. Had Hood been allowed to put his artillery on Big Round Top as he requested, he could have taken out Chamberlain and his regiment, effectively stopping Chamberlain from winning the fight.

This chapter is about a true, historic event, seen through the eyes of the man there. While the thoughts of the character of Chamberlain are all basically fiction, the actions are not. Chamberlain was quite heroic this day, eventually winning the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions. Chamberlain has again proven himself a good, strong man, who steps up when he is called upon. This chapter is as much a study in Chamberlain's character elements as it is an historic study of an important victory at the battle at Gettysburg.

Important to the plot here are the injuries that Kilrain has sustained. Kilrain is Chamberlain's best advisor, a career soldier who knows more about being a soldier than Chamberlain can ever hope to learn. Chamberlain depends on Kilrain for his advice; therefore, his injuries will cause Chamberlain grief in later chapters, foreshadowing a struggle for Chamberlain. Also important here is Chamberlain's decision to send his brother in to plug the line. Chamberlain has sworn to protect his brother at all cost, but when there is a need for another body, Chamberlain does not hesitate to send in his brother, proving he is a commander before all else. Again, this goes to Chamberlain's character, his heroism, and his belief that the battle is the most important thing. However, when the battle is over, regret will set in, foreshadowing moments later in the story in which Chamberlain second-guesses his actions on Little Round Top.





# Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 5, Longstreet

## Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 5, Longstreet Summary

Longstreet goes to the hospital to visit Hood where he is having his injured hand and arm treated. Hood sees Longstreet and tells him they should have gone right. Longstreet lies to Hood and tells him there were few casualties and that they took the rocks, Devil's Den. Longstreet leaves, inspecting the battlefield. Barksdale is dead, Semmes too. Longstreet sends Goree out to scout the right flank, hoping to avoid another countermarch in the morning. Goree tells Longstreet that Hood's officers blame Longstreet for their loss that day. They cannot blame Lee so they blame Longstreet. Sorrel comes and tells Longstreet that the casualty numbers are high, highest in Hood's division. Sorrel believes that Hood suffered more than fifty percent losses. Longstreet sends him to get a more exact figure. Another man, Fairfax arrives and tells Longstreet that Pickett has arrived. In fact, Pickett arrived during the fighting but Lee would not allow him to join. Longstreet is not happy with this news, as the added men could have made a difference.

Longstreet rides to Lee's headquarters where he finds civilians come to check on loved ones. Stuart is back as well. Longstreet is not happy at the sight of him, believing it is too late for his help. Lee comes out to meet Longstreet. Lee then greets Stuart like a long lost child, clearly happy to have him back. Longstreet and Lee move into the house. Lee is tired. Lee tells Longstreet that he believes the day's battle has been a Confederate victory. Longstreet does not agree, but he does not tell Lee this. Lee believes that a better coordinated fight the next day will open the door to Washington. Longstreet suggests that he be allowed to go right tomorrow, but Lee refuses to answer. Longstreet leaves then, and is approached by another officer, Marshall. Marshall and several other generals believe Stuart should be court-martialed, but Lee refuses. Longstreet agrees and agrees to talk to Lee, but does not believe it will do any good.

Longstreet rides back toward his camp and is joined by Fremantle. They discuss the day's fighting. Longstreet regrets not talking more forcefully with Lee. Fremantle tells him that he might write about what he has seen and about Lee's military tactics. Fremantle then suggests that Lee is devious. Longstreet refuses to allow that, defending Lee despite what happened that day. Then Longstreet suggests that Lee puts little thought into his strategy. Longstreet regrets his words. Longstreet returns to his own camp, thinking on how all the generals in charge so far have been archaic in their methods, not like him with his new, bright ideas. However, Longstreet cannot continue to fight those under whose command he worked. Longstreet sits alone while his men sit around the fire and tell stories. Armistead joins him. Someone sings an old Irish song and brings a tear to almost everyone's eye. Then Pickett begins to tell another story and



the mood lightens once more. Armistead asks about Hancock again, hoping to see him if it were at all possible. Longstreet agrees. Armistead then tells Longstreet how he sent Mrs. Hancock a package to be opened at the time of his death, since she was a widow with no family. Finally, Armistead convinces Longstreet to join the men around the fire.

## **Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 5, Longstreet Analysis**

In the aftermath of the fighting, Longstreet can see what a poor decision it was not to go to the right flank. Hood is badly injured and he will lose the use of his arm. Hood's company is down almost fifty percent. Now the North has control of both the hills Hood wanted to take. Longstreet goes to Lee's headquarters and finds, ironically, that Stuart has returned, too late to be of any good. Lee greets Stuart with the affection of a father for his son. This too is ironic since it is Lee's orders that Stuart ignored to go on his joyride in the first place. Also ironic is that almost all the other commanders have ignored Lee's orders to one degree or another, except Longstreet, and it is Longstreet's refusal to do this that has caused the most damage.

Longstreet talks to Lee and learns that Lee believes the fighting that day to have been successful even though Longstreet knows it was the opposite. Touching on the theme of respect once more, Longstreet refuses to contradict Lee. However, Longstreet cannot stop himself from criticizing Lee's commanding style when he talks to Fremantle later, realizing how he truly feels about Lee for the first time. However, still under the theme of respect, Longstreet refuses to indulge in these feelings, aware that Lee is his commander and there is nothing he can do about his warfare style.

The other generals come to Longstreet and ask him to see to it that Stuart is court-martialed, but they all know that this will not happen. Lee does not want this, and again with the theme of respect, the men are too respectful of Lee to argue with him face to face, including to a certain extent, Longstreet. Finally, Longstreet is stuck in a world of frustration as he realizes that his ideas are far too advanced for the people around him and he will never convince any of them to listen to him. The battle will be lost and Longstreet knows there is nothing he can do.

Finally, Armistead brings up Hancock again, his friend on the other side. Armistead talks about his old friend and remembers his oath to never raise arms against him. However, it is likely he will have to do that the next day, foreshadowing the final fight of the battle at Gettysburg. Armistead also tells Longstreet how he has sent Hancock's wife a package to be opened at the time of his death. Armistead does not say what is in it. This foreshadows Armistead's part in the next day's fight and the possible outcome.



# Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 6, Lee

## Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 6, Lee Summary

Lee works all night. Finally, he wants to be alone and has his aide send everyone away. Lee wanders outside to check on his horse. Lee thinks about the vow he has broken against the United States Military and of the day he chose to resign his commission in order to join the Confederacy. Lee believed it would be impossible to raise arms against his family and friends, but he lost a lot with his decision. Now he wants the war to end and he is faced with two choices. Give up land already won and move to higher ground or stand and fight. As Lee considers his options, Stuart joins him. Lee tells Stuart that the generals want him court-martialed. Lee chastises him for his actions and tells him he should never do it again. Lee feels bad about having to speak harshly to one of his favorite men, but he believes he has done the right thing. A court martial would have been devastating for Stuart, but this way he remains active and at Lee's disposal. Stuart takes the scolding like a child, but accepts Lee's words.

Lee returns to the fence where he sits beside his horse and continues to think on his choices. Venable joins him and tells him that Ewell is not in command of his regiment. Ewell could not get his men in position that day and Rodes never attacked. Lee gives Venable orders to have Ewell ready to attack at first light. Lee is again alone to think over his choices. Finally, it comes clear what he must do. Lee believes that the Union troops will move their men to the left where Longstreet and his men attacked today. Lee thinks then that the middle will be unprotected, vulnerable. Lee decides that is where they must attack, with all their forces concentrated in one place. Lee sleeps with his horse.

## Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 6, Lee Analysis

It has come time for Lee to make a final decision about Stuart's punishment. Lee decides to chastise the man rather than court martial him. Although the punishment does not seem to fit the crime, the emotion with which Lee delivers the scolding and how Stuart takes the scolding seems to be fitting after all. Stuart is a Southern gentleman who is not used to being rebuffed; therefore, he takes the scolding like a child. Lee feels bad, but thinks that it is the best thing to do because he needs Stuart to be available, not tied up in a court martial court. Despite the thoughts of the other generals, Lee respects Stuart's talents too much, touching on the theme of respect, while Stuart has too much pride, another theme, to put himself in this position again.



Lee then focuses on his choices regarding the next day's fight. Ewell has proved himself an unreliable and poor commander, leaving Lee with a weak side in his fight. Therefore, Lee decides he must put his strength in the middle and attack with everything he has. Lee hopes that the center of the Northern line will be weak with the majority of the troops moved to support the left flank that Longstreet has spent that day fighting and the right where Ewell and Early should have fought. This once again goes against Longstreet's idea; once again bringing to issue the possibility that had Lee listened to Longstreet the fight might have turned out differently. However, it does not matter. Lee has made his decision, foreshadowing the next day's fight.



# Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 1, Chamberlain

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 1, Chamberlain Summary

Chamberlain sits in a tree and watches the movements of both the Union and Confederate armies below him. Chamberlain and his men are still entrenched on Big Round Top, awaiting orders. Tom brings him some coffee. Tom joins him in the tree and talks about how most of the men the day before did not use the bayonets, but simply rushed at the Confederates, enough to scare them into surrender. Tom then compliments his brother on his bravery the day before. Then Chamberlain sends Tom to have another runner picked and sent to him so he can once more ask about their rations.

Chamberlain climbs out of the tree and walks among the men. Many of them are hungry because their rations ran out a day before. Several of the men are sick or injured, but most are ready to return to the fight. A courier from Rice comes and tells Chamberlain that he is relieved. Fisher will take over and Chamberlain is to fall back. The man leads them down to a spot in the center of the line. A quiet place, the courier tells him.

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 1, Chamberlain Analysis

There are two important elements in this chapter. The first is the need for supplies for Chamberlain's men. Chamberlain's men need not only ammunition, but they also need food. Chamberlain attempts to get these for his men, but before he can, his regiment is relieved. This foreshadows a point in a later chapter in which Chamberlain will have to again go in search of supplies for his men. The second important element is the fact that Chamberlain's regiment is being moved to a place that is supposed to be cushy compared to their present assignment. They are moving to the center of the line. Ironically enough, this is exactly where Lee has decided to concentrate his attack this morning.



# Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 2, Longstreet

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 2, Longstreet Summary

Goree returns with the news that the road to the right is still open, but the Union cavalry is closing in on Longstreet's flank. Lee joins Longstreet and takes Longstreet for a ride. Longstreet attempts to tell Lee about the scouts and what they have found, but Lee tells him he plans to hit the enemy in the center. Longstreet is incredulous that Lee would expect Hood's Corp to attack the same hill they could not take the day before with fewer men. Lee will not listen to Longstreet's argument and tells him to make a frontal assault. They get word that Ewell is engaged, that he was attacked by the Union troops. They ride the line and Wofford comes out to greet them. Wofford too does not believe he can repeat the frontal assault of the day before, but again Lee argues with him. It is Lee's belief that the added men from Pickett and Stuart's company should make a difference in the day's fighting.

They continue to ride the line, receiving news on Ewell's fight, learning that Johnson has been forced back. Finally, Lee pulls Longstreet aside and tells him to leave Hood and McLaws on the right flank and take Heth and Pender's divisions and attack in the center. Longstreet argues that Hill should lead the assault, but Lee wants Longstreet to do it. Longstreet tells Lee the assault will fail, but Lee will not listen. Lee has replaced several of the wounded officers from the day before with new officers, confident it will not matter to the men once the fight begins. Longstreet accepts his orders and prepares for battle. Longstreet sets up his line, speaking with the artillery officer and several of his other generals. They are all excited at the prospect of a fight, the two new leaders happy for their new assignments and Pickett simply happy to see a fight. Longstreet speaks to Lee one last time and then joins his men in the wait before the battle begins, knowing the charge will fail but unable to leave his men just the same.

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 2, Longstreet Analysis

Longstreet hears Lee's plans, which go completely against what he has advised, and does not agree. Longstreet has disagreed with Lee before, but this time he voices his disagreement loud and clear. Longstreet knows this attack in the center of the Union lines will fail. Longstreet is not alone. Other generals voice the same opinion, but Lee does not listen because he has already made up his mind and believes his plan is the best. This tension has been foreshadowed in several of the earlier chapters. However, once again Longstreet backs down, touching again on the theme of respect, as he refuses to disrespect his commanding officer despite the knowledge that Lee is sending he and his men to their deaths. Foreshadowed here are the next few chapters in which the battle takes place and the expecting outcome is revealed. This is a climactic chapter between the two main generals, a one last chance for Longstreet to change the

outcome of the battle and yet fails to do so. Now all the reader can do is sit back and watch history unfold in the following pages of the novel.



# Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 3, Chamberlain

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 3, Chamberlain Summary

Chamberlain and his regiment march through the morning to their new position in the center of the line. Chamberlain learns the results of the fighting the day before and learns of the attacks that had begun that morning, nearly causing the Union troops to retreat. Meade had wanted the troops to withdraw the night before, but his council did not agree with him. Hancock convinced them all that the Confederates would come again. They arrive at their destination and the courier points Chamberlain to Meade's headquarters. Once his men are settled, Chamberlain is ordered to meet with General Sykes. When Chamberlain reaches the headquarters he finds most of the generals standing around, many eating fried chicken while Chamberlain's men are going hungry. Chamberlain talks to Sykes and receives praise for his work the day before. Sykes then tells him to rest because he would not be needed that day. Chamberlain hesitates before he leaves, thinking of his men going hungry. A lieutenant who wants to know if he can help stops Chamberlain. Chamberlain asks for some food for himself because he is losing blood from a wound on his foot and is feeling ill. The man brings him three pieces of chicken. Chamberlain eats one and takes the rest back to his men.

Tom comes and tells Chamberlain he has been to the hospital to visit the wounded. Kilrain has died. Chamberlain is deeply saddened by this news. Before he can react, however, cannon fire and gunshots ring out around them. Chamberlain rolls down into the dirt, making sure his brother is near by. There is confusion, with men and horses running around. Suddenly it is quiet, with no movement, and then artillery begins to shake the ground. Chamberlain stays down, confused by all the noise, and then suddenly sees Hancock ride toward them on his horse. Chamberlain knows he should form his regiment, should move into action, but he cannot. Chamberlain goes to sleep.

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 3, Chamberlain Analysis

This chapter illustrates the surprise with which the Union army met Lee's attack on the final day of fighting. Meade had wanted to pull the army out of Gettysburg, assuming that since the Confederates had taken a hard enough beating the day before that they would not attack again. Hancock, who is friends with several of the Confederate generals, knew better and talked him out of it. Then Chamberlain is told that he will not be in the fighting that day, although the reader already knows that Lee intends to hit the Union lines exactly where Chamberlain has been reassigned. The Union believes the exact opposite of everything Lee has decided to do; therefore, they are unprepared for the attack. Chamberlain himself is more concerned with getting food for his men and repairing his damaged foot than preparing for battle. His men do not even have ammunition. However, the attack comes and Hancock rides right into the middle of it,





fulfilling the foreshadowing from a previous chapter in which Armistead worried about having to face his friend on the battlefield. Now he will, as Armistead is among the troops set to attack with Longstreet. Foreshadowed now is the rest of the battle and its outcome.



# Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 4, Armistead

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 4, Armistead Summary

Armistead watches the battle begin. The troops are out in an open field shortly after one, with little protection in the knee-high grass. Armistead walks among them, but feels there is nothing he can do to help them. Armistead finds Pickett writing a letter and gives him a ring to send to his wife. Pickett is excited by the battle, emotional. Armistead returns to his men, thinking of his wife. Armistead thinks too of Hancock on the other side of the line. Garnett rides by on his horse. Garnett's leg is injured and he is unable to walk. Armistead tells him to get off his horse, but Garnett refuses. If he got off the horse, he would not be able to keep up with his men. However, if he stays on the horse Armistead knows he will be a perfect target for the Union artillery. Garnett moves on and Pickett comes to give Armistead some final orders. Among these orders is for all commanders to leave their horses. Armistead begs Pickett to make Garnett get off his horse, but Pickett understands Garnett's reasons and refuses. Moments later, word reaches them that Alexander has forced the Union off the cemetery. Longstreet orders the troops to engage. Armistead calls his brigade and the order to move out reaches them. The division forms, with Garnett in front, Kemper to the right and Armistead in the back. Armistead goes to Garnett and asks him a final time to get off the horse. Garnett again refuses.

Confusion explodes as Armistead marches into battle with his men. Kemper and Garnett's troops slow down as they reach the fight. Men fall quickly, filling the field. Armistead sees a break in the line to the right. Garnett comes back and asks Armistead for help. Armistead watches Kemper move his men double time, but soon his line falls apart. Pettigrew's men are running, broken on the left. Kemper is down. Armistead is wounded in the leg, and then sees Garnett's horse come toward him, riderless. Armistead attempts to rally the men around him one more time, jumps a stone wall, and is hit again. Armistead sits down and soon a Union officer meets him. Armistead realizes the fight is done. Armistead asks about Hancock and learns he has been wounded. Armistead grieves for his friend, afraid for his wife losing them both on the same day. Armistead dies.

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 4, Armistead Analysis

This is the final battle of Gettysburg seen through the eyes of Armistead, a general in the Confederate army. At first, there is excitement on the field as the men anticipate their part in the battle. Armistead is weary, being a soldier who has seen this kind of fight before and knows what to expect. Pickett is excited, however, like a child at Disneyland, because this will be his first major battle thus far. They all expect to be victorious. This touches on the theme of war, the emotions it creates in men, and the



strategies employed to fight the battles. This is the true reality of war: the death and destruction it causes, despite the high emotions that brings man to this point.

Important here are the characters involved, especially Armistead and Garnett. Garnett has been accused of cowardice by Stonewall Jackson, a well-respected general who died before Garnett could clear his name. Garnett goes into the battle with an injury to his leg that prevents him from being able to walk beside his men. Garnett refuses to stay out of the fight, however, despite the fact that being on the horse makes him a target to the enemy guns. This illuminates the theme of pride in a unique way. Garnett dies on his horse because he has too much pride to allow anyone to believe him a coward; despite the fact that those who know him know he is not a coward. Then there is Armistead. Armistead is a widow with little to lose in this battle. Armistead is weary, however, aware of what could happen in this fight. Armistead does his best to fight the battle; despite knowing his good friend is on the other side. Armistead fights until he is wounded, and then thinks of his friend before himself. Armistead is a good man who is more concerned with the emotions of his friend's wife than his own life. It is a sad illustration of the horrors of war, again illuminating the theme of war.



# Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 5, Longstreet

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 5, Longstreet Summary

Longstreet sits on a rail fence and watches the survivors of the battle struggle back toward the Confederate lines. Pickett's aide comes and asks for support, but Longstreet has none to give. Longstreet gives the order for Pickett to fall back. Lee rides up and tells Longstreet that they shall rest and try again another day. Lee watches the survivors and tells them it is his fault. They disagree. Pickett joins them. Lee orders him to reform his division, but Pickett tells him he has no division. They are all gone. Longstreet calls for his horse and rides the lines. Goree asks for orders, and Longstreet directs the guns, and tells the men to pull back. The Union troops have pulled back and the fighting ends. Longstreet still expects Meade to come for them and waits with a rifle in his hands. However, it grows dark. Longstreet sits alone in the silence and thinks about all the men who have died that day, and of his friends. Lee comes to him and they sit alone. Lee wants to withdraw, but he needs Longstreet's help. Longstreet is in a sort of shock at first, and is unable to respond. Longstreet finally agrees to help. However, Longstreet confesses that he no longer feels there is a reason to keep fighting, that the war is essentially over for the South. Longstreet no longer believes they can win because he no longer believes there is a reason to fight.

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 5, Longstreet Analysis

Longstreet is in shock over the overwhelming defeat of his troops. Lee admits he is the one responsible, but the men will not accept this over their respect for him, again touching on the theme of respect. Longstreet does not blame anyone at this point, too shocked at the deaths of his friends to blame anyone. However, later in life Longstreet will openly blame Lee. Yet, there is no point in blame at this time. The battle is over and it is time for the Confederates to retreat and regroup. Longstreet agrees to help but voices his opinion that the war is already lost, that he no longer has a reason to fight. The reason for the war has been hotly debated among the soldier who fought and among people ever since. Longstreet went into the war believing he was fighting for pride, another theme to the novel, and for the right to live his life as he pleased. However, this battle has shown Longstreet that pride no longer means anything. Longstreet has lost his vision, lost his drive, and knows that the war is lost. Longstreet will later try to resign for these reasons and stays out of respect and loyalty to Lee. However, he will never change his opinion that the war was lost for the South at Gettysburg.



# Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 6, Chamberlain

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 6, Chamberlain Summary

Chamberlain sits and watches the battlefield after the fight is over, shocked at the destruction and death that lies before him. Tom joins Chamberlain and they talk about the battle. Tom admires the gall of the Rebels for fighting uphill as they did. Tom wants to know why the Confederates fight to protect slavery, and yet the prisoners never talk about slavery. Tom figures it all boils down to slaves no matter how the Confederates attempt to disguise it. Chamberlain agrees. Tom wonders if they will attack again. Chamberlain says they will, but not here. It begins to rain.

## Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 6, Chamberlain Analysis

This chapter is simply an attempt to understand the point to the fighting. Why did all those men have to die? Is it because of slavery? Is it for pride? The reasons seem vague in the face of all this death, the one time when the reasons seem to be the most important. Tom thinks that it must be about the slaves, no matter what the Confederates say, and Chamberlain agrees. Pride, a theme of the novel, is one of the most obvious answers as well, pride on the side of the Confederates who do not want to be told how to live their lives, and pride on the side of the Union who do not want to believe they are wrong in their beliefs that all men are created equal, white, black, or yellow. The author leaves the discussion unfinished for the reader to come to one's own conclusions.



# Characters

## Robert Edward Lee

Robert E. Lee is the leader of the Confederate army as they approach Gettysburg. Lee is an older man who has recently been diagnosed with heart problems, an idea that frightens him regarding his chances of surviving the war and returning to his family. Lee was once a general in the Union army and has lost his home because of choosing not to raise arms against his family and friends. Lee is torn between his vows to the army he once fought with and his loyalty to the home and family he cherishes. Lee does not consider the slaves the sole reason for this war and did not own slaves himself before the war. However, Lee does not believe the black man can be considered an equal with whites. Lee believes the war is about a way of life and he is willing to sacrifice his own life to protect it. Lee has had great success in his part of the war thus far and is currently holding a letter in his belongings to be presented to Lincoln on the day the Confederate army walks into Washington.

In the days leading up to Gettysburg, Lee feels overconfident, unaware that the Union army is gathering just miles from his camp. Lee has put his faith in the scouting abilities of J.E.B. Stuart and does not trust the spy that Longstreet has arranged. When the spy announces that Union forces are nearby in Gettysburg, Lee does not originally take the man's word to heart. However, Lee does order a march and is surprised to find the spy was correct. Lee orders his men into battle and after the first and second day feels that the Confederacy is winning and that there is no reason to be cautious or to doubt their eventual success despite Longstreet's concerns. On the final day of the battle, Lee orders his troops to hit the Union in the middle of their lines, expecting that the Union will have expected them to hit on the outside edges, thus catching them by surprise. However, the Union surprises the Confederacy by overwhelming their forces and ending the battle with overwhelming losses on the Confederate side.

Lee attempts to resign the month following the battle at Gettysburg, but his resignation is not accepted. Lee continues to fight the war, though he refrains from using the tactics he employed at Gettysburg. At the end of the war, Lee encourages the Confederates to lay down their arms and accept the results of the war. Lee later asks Congress for a pardon but never receives one. Lee dies of heart disease in 1870, the most beloved General in the history of American war.

## James Longstreet

Longstreet is a lieutenant general beneath Lee in the Confederate army. The winter before Gettysburg, Longstreet and his wife have lost three of their children within a week of one another of a fever. Longstreet has withdrawn in his grief, no longer willing to join his men for poker as he once had. Longstreet is Lee's right hand. Longstreet has invented a theory of warfare, but none of the gentlemen around him will listen to his



ideas. Longstreet speaks his mind anyway. Before the battle at Gettysburg, during J.E.B. Stuart's absence, Longstreet sends out a spy as the Confederate army leaves their familiar south and begins to move north into Pennsylvania. When the spy comes back with word that the Union army is only a few miles away, Longstreet wants to move immediately and engage. However, Lee hesitates, not trusting the spy and wanting to wait for Stuart, a man he trusts.

When the Confederates arrive outside Gettysburg and begin to engage the Union, Longstreet has many ideas on how the battle should be fought, and suggests that his men move to flank the Union's right side, but Lee will not listen. Longstreet finds himself marching through a patch of land that has not been surveyed, a fact that forces him to engage in a countermarch in order to move into position without being seen. After the second day's battle, Longstreet knows the Confederates are not winning, but he does not have the heart to tell Lee, just as he does not have the heart to insist that Lee court martial Stuart upon his return. Lee issues his order for the third day's battle, and Longstreet again disagrees but is unable to convince Lee to change his mind. This failure results in the loss of the battle.

Longstreet attempts to quit the following winter due to the fact that he no longer believes the South can win the war, but Lee convinces him to stay. Longstreet remains Lee's right hand man, despite being wounded in the Wilderness in 1864, until the end of the war. After the war, Longstreet becomes a Republican to help Grant rebuild the South and he blames Lee publicly for the loss at Gettysburg, two things that cause Longstreet to lose his social standing in the South. However, Longstreet's theories on warfare were ahead of his time and were continued to be used long after his death in 1904.

## Lewis Armistead

Armistead is a Brigadier General in command of one of George Pickett's brigades. Armistead is a widower who has been in the army most of his life. Armistead is one of several Confederate commanders who are torn by his love for his family and friends in the South and the vow he took to never raise arms against the army with which he has fought most of his career. Armistead is great friends with one of the generals on the Union side of the conflict, Winfield Scott Hancock, and has hoped to not have to face his friend on the battlefield. However, when Armistead arrives at Gettysburg he is made aware that Hancock is also present on the other side of the line and on the third day, Armistead and his men will face Hancock and his men.

Before the battle on the third day, Armistead speaks with Longstreet about the possibility of seeing Hancock when the battle is done. However, during the battle on the third day, Union forces overwhelm Armistead's command and Armistead is wounded. While lying on the ground Armistead speaks with a Union soldier, and learns that Hancock too has been wounded. Armistead has arranged for a package to be sent to Hancock's wife at the time of his death and is concerned that Mrs. Hancock will receive two such packages after this battle. However, although Armistead does not survive his wounds, Hancock does.



## **J.E.B Stuart**

Stuart is a lieutenant general in the Confederate army. Stuart is young, ambitious, a man who loves to see his name in the papers. Stuart can ride circles around the Union army without their knowledge and is very daring, willing to do things others might not be. In the weeks prior to the battle at Gettysburg, it is Stuart's assignment to keep Lee informed about the movements of the Union army. In the hours before the battle, the Union is forming lines just miles from the Confederates without Lee being any the wiser. Stuart has disappeared without leaving word for Lee. Longstreet has hired a spy to check out the situation and it is this spy, rather than Stuart, who informs Longstreet and Lee of the close location of the Union army.

While Lee and the Confederates battle with the Union at Gettysburg, Stuart is off doing his own thing. On the second day of the battle, Stuart finally returns to the Confederate camp to report to Lee, too late to be of any real use. Most of the generals under Lee want Stuart court martial for his failure to report on the movements of the Union army and perhaps giving Lee a better idea of what they were up against in order to better prepare for the battle. Lee disagrees. Lee sees great potential in Stuart and is afraid a court martial will break his spirit. Lee simply admonishes Stuart for his behavior and makes him promise it will not happen again.

## **Richard Brooke Garnett**

Garnett is a brigadier general in charge of the second of Pickett's brigades. Garnett was second in command in Jackson's Stonewall Brigade and made the mistake of pulling his men out of an impossible position at Kernstown, an action that Jackson saw as cowardice and demanded his court martial. However, Jackson died before the court martial could be convened. Garnett lives with the brand of coward afterward, unable to clear his name without disparaging Jackson, who was greatly loved among his men and fellow commanders. Garnett goes into Gettysburg determined to prove his courage. On the second day of the battle, Garnett is wounded in the leg. Rather than be seen as a coward, Garnett refuses to step down the following day. Garnett charges on horseback into battle along with his men on the third day of the battle and is quickly shot down from his horse, killed within minutes of the beginning of the battle.

## **Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain**

Chamberlain is a young colonel in the Union army. Chamberlain was a professor at Bowdoin University in Maine. Chamberlain took a leave of absence under the pretence of traveling to Europe on sabbatical, and instead joins the army to fulfill a lifelong dream of becoming a soldier. Chamberlain is a gentle person, a well-educated man. Chamberlain's regiment was at Fredericksburg where they suffered many losses, including their commander. Chamberlain takes command of the regiment just a week before Gettysburg with his brother Thomas as his aid.





At Gettysburg, Chamberlain's regiment is ordered to the left flank of the Union army on Little Round Top. Chamberlain's regiment begins to take heavy casualties and they quickly run low on ammunition. Chamberlain orders his men to bayonets and to charge down the hill. The Confederates are taken by surprise and many surrender, allowing Chamberlain and his men to take more than five hundred prisoners. Later Chamberlain is awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery. Chamberlain also continues to fight in the war, becoming wounded more than six times, and is one of the officers chosen by Grant to accept the Southern surrender at Appomattox. Chamberlain orders his troops to attention and to salute the Southern troops, startling the entire world. Chamberlain is elected president of Bowdoin University in 1876, after serving four terms as governor of Maine, where he loses many political friends due to his decision to not back the impeachment of Andrew Johnson.

## **John Buford**

Buford is a major general with the Union army who is a man with a good eye for good ground. At Thorofare Gap, Buford held again Longstreet for more than six hours, waiting for help that never arrived. Buford is assigned a desk job after this until he is once again assigned two brigades of cavalry and ordered to follow Lee's army. Buford is the first into Gettysburg with his eye to the hills around the little town, aware that these are the best areas for a battle. Buford is never recognized for his decision to take the hills around Gettysburg and perhaps winning the battle for the Union by this choice. Buford was weakened by his battle wounds and dies of pneumonia the following December.

## **George Gordon Meade**

Meade is a Major General in the Union army. Meade takes control of the Army two days before the battle due to the fact that Reynolds has turned down the honor because he would rather be in the field. Meade has not had time to review his troops before the battle; a battle he had hoped would take place miles away from Gettysburg. No decision Meade makes during the battle will be terribly important except perhaps his final decision. Meade continues to command the army of the Potomac until the surrender of Lee at Appomattox. However, Grant often overshadows Meade.

## **Arthur Fremantle**

Arthur Fremantle is an English man who has come to America to watch the Confederates battle against the Union for the Queen with the hope that he might convince the English government to aid the Confederates. Fremantle is attached to Longstreet's regiment, and often entertains Longstreet and his men with his theories on the war and their battle techniques. Fremantle also likes to speak with the Southern men about their beliefs regarding slavery. Fremantle spends three months with the Confederacy before returning to England where he writes a book on his experiences,



published three months before the end of the war, predicting the South will be victorious.

## Kilrain

Kilrain is a soldier in Chamberlain's regiment, an aid who is well versed in the ways of war because he has been a soldier for many years, and has been a great help in advising Chamberlain in battle strategy, especially when it comes to things that have little to do with the military handbook and the more logical world that Chamberlain is more accustomed to. During the second day of the battle at Gettysburg, this invaluable aid to Chamberlain is wounded in the armpit twice during the early parts of the battle. Chamberlain is lost without his valuable aid, but still manages to make a heroic decision to send his men charging toward the Confederate soldiers with only bayonets. Later Chamberlain makes sure Kilrain is cared for by the medics. It is not until the next day that Chamberlain has learned that Kilrain has died, apologizing for his failure on his deathbed.



# Objects/Places

## Cherries

The cherry trees are in bloom as the Confederates begin their march into Gettysburg. Many of the men eat these cherries on their march and pay the price later.

## Bayonets

Bayonets are long knives that attach to the barrel of a rifle. Chamberlain orders his men to use their bayonets on the second day of battle at Gettysburg when they begin to run low on ammunition.

## The Seminary

There is a seminary in the middle of Gettysburg with a tall cupola. Buford uses this cupola to watch the approach of the Confederate soldiers on the first day of the battle.

## 'Kathleen Mavourneen'

'Kathleen Mavourneen' is a sad Irish ballad that someone in Longstreet's camp sings the night before the third day of the battle at Gettysburg.

## Letters

Many of the men enjoy letters from home in the hours before the battle at Gettysburg begins or reconvenes.

## Armistead's Package for Mrs. Hancock

Armistead arranges for a package to be delivered to Mrs. Hancock in the event of his death. Inside the package is Armistead's Bible.

## Little Round Top

Little Round Top is the shorter of the two hills in Gettysburg where Chamberlain and his regiment hold the left-most flank and fend off the Confederate attack on the second day of the battle.



## **Cemetery Hill**

Cemetery Hill is a tall hill in Gettysburg toward which the Union troops retreat on the first day of fighting. Ewell is ordered to attack these troops and take the hill, but fails to do so.

## **Gettysburg**

Gettysburg is a small town in Pennsylvania surrounded by farmland on one side and small hills on the other. This is where the battle of Gettysburg takes place—a devastating loss to the Confederacy that many point to as the turning point of the Civil War.

## **Cashtown**

Cashtown is a town a few miles west of Gettysburg where the Confederate army begins their approach to Gettysburg.



# Social Sensitivity

As Shaara presents it in *The Killer Angels*, the ultimate social disruption of civil war encompasses a broad spectrum of moral issues, from the individual's struggle to maintain his integrity to the dismemberment of a nation. For Shaara, slavery is only one factor that contributed to the Civil War; he briefly shows a Northern unit rescuing a wounded fugitive slave, but he treats the episode as an illustration of the flash point of the war, not as an end in itself. Slavery in *The Killer Angels* is peripheral to Shaara's analysis of the war's central cause, which he sees as a fundamental clash between two radically different concepts of society.

Shaara builds his view of the battle, and by extension, his reading of the entire Civil War, around a paradox: at Gettysburg in June of 1863, the Army of Northern Virginia, unified by culture, tongue, and creed, and commanded by the charismatic Robert E. Lee, "the most beloved man in either army," nonetheless begins to break its heart at Gettysburg and shatter, while the Army of the Potomac, dissimilar in temper, voice, and backgrounds, led fumblingly by a succession of undistinguished Northern generals held in check by Washington policies, begins to find itself at last.

Stonewall Jackson had died at Chancellorsville that May, and James Longstreet is newly second-in-command to Lee. Shaara chose Longstreet, stubborn, gifted, grieving for his dead children, to pose the moral questions the South can no longer avoid asking, the ones its mode of life could never answer. In the complex relationship between Longstreet and Lee, whom Longstreet loves more than he could love a father, Shaara explores the sanctity of a soldier's oath, for the Southern officers, trained by Lee at West Point, were forced to choose between their nation and their home and now are invading the land they had once sworn to defend. Shaara also probes the mystery of leadership in the context of military theory. In the face of the new defensive warfare Lee's pride prevents Longstreet from implementing, Lee's outmoded Napoleonic tactics prove heartbreakingly futile in the three-day battle at Gettysburg, against military technology a half-century beyond Waterloo; but the Southern soldiers can never love Longstreet, who weeps as he passes on Lee's orders for Pickett's charge, as they do Lee, whose honor leads them up the slope to dusty death.

Through his principal Northern protagonist, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, also an historical figure, Shaara pits young, risk-filled democracy's idealistic faith in the dignity of man against "the curse of nobility" the Southerners had brought from Europe.

In the end, as Shaara sees it, the North must prevail, not by superior leadership or even by the luck of the battlefield, but because their cause is just: "the American," Chamberlain believes, "fights for mankind, for freedom; for the people, not the land."

## Techniques

Shaara's mastery of the short story may have contributed to the unusual format he used in *The Killer Angels*. He divided the novel into four major sections, one each to the three days of the battle and the first to June 29, 1863, as the armies groped their way through southern Pennsylvania, encountering one another at Gettysburg by mistake.

Each section is comprised of many self-contained units, each told from the perspective of one of Shaara's major figures, alternating between North and South. Although some readers feel dislocated by these rapid shifts in perspective, Shaara achieves a powerful cinematic effect, undeniably conveying the dizzying reality of a battlefield engaging one-hundred- and-fifty-thousand men in an area more than five miles long.



# Themes

## Themes

The price of that freedom for Shaara is Gettysburg's eternal lesson, and he framed it in the most painful and glorious terms art can offer, the ancient mode of tragedy. Before the Civil War Lawrence Chamberlain had been a professor of rhetoric at Bowdoin College, and after Gettysburg he became the North's most decorated soldier.

Shaara gave Chamberlain his last words on the meaning of Gettysburg, when the night of July 3 was finally approaching and Chamberlain looked out at "the gray floor of hell" which he knew then had seen "one of the great moments in history." His "professor's mind" acknowledges Pickett's Charge as "the most beautiful thing he had ever seen," because Chamberlain — and Shaara and his readers — see that that "unspeakable beauty" was born when human pity and terror were purged in the crucible of Gettysburg: "So this is tragedy . . . great doors open to black eternity."

Lesser themes embodied in a host of personal tragedies also crowd *The Killer Angels*, a title that implicitly conveys the Elizabethan concept of man's precarious position between divinity and the beasts. Nearly every one of Shaara's descriptive passages bears out Sherman's laconic summation, "War is hell," not only for the horrors of a nineteenth-century battlefield, but most of all, perhaps, for the fatal ambivalence of the concept of honor. Shaara shows that the Southern aristocracy often flung away their lives and forswore their oaths out of hubris, enduring psychological conflicts far more bitter than the ones they faced at Little Round Top or in the center of the Union line, where their former brothers in arms awaited them; the South's tragedy here lies in the flawed beauty of the act, and Shaara never allows it to escape from view.

## War

One obvious theme about this novel because it covers one major battle of the American Civil War is war itself. War is defined as an armed conflict between countries or groups that includes killing and destruction. The civil war is a war between two different parts of the country, the North and the South, each believing in their right to live as they chose and to enforce the rules of the country. This novel is about one particular battle in this war. By the opening of the novel, the war has already gone on for many months with the South apparently winning the battles by overwhelming success. The South has been so successful that Lee goes into the battle of Gettysburg with a letter in his possession meant to ask the president of the United States for his surrender.

War is a complicated situation that brings out deep emotions in all participants, civilians, and soldiers alike. To understand the emotion of this novel, one must understand the effect the war has had on the people thus far. It was believed by the people in the North that the South would quickly be quickly silenced, and that the war would last as long as



it would take to fight a single battle. However, this proved untrue as the South fought harder than anyone anticipated. Many career soldiers who had fought in the United States military before this war had chosen to fight alongside their family and friends in the South, including Lee and many of his generals. This decision not only crippled the North by causing them to fight without the military genius of these men, but this also placed these men in the unique position of having to fight against the army they vowed to never raise arms against. The generals on both sides of the conflict are fighting against men they have known and loved most of their military career, all to support a cause that many of them find confusing and unclear. It is an emotional atmosphere that has created not only a war on the battlefield, but one in the hearts of most of the men doing the actual fighting.

## Pride

Pride is another theme of this novel. Pride appears to be the author's main theory on the cause of the war. The South has been told that slavery is wrong and should be abolished. The South sees this as the North's way of telling them how to live their lives. The Southern way of life is a tradition that goes back to the days when the first settlers came to America. The Southern way of life is about honor and chivalry, about social standing and outward appearances. The South's main industry is cotton and tobacco; therefore, they are dependent not only on the slaves but the North for such things as machinery and clothing. Therefore, when the North tells the South they must give up the slaves, the South sees this as the North attempting to make the South completely dependent on the North and they resist partly out of a sense of survival and partly out of misplaced pride, not willing to be told how to live their lives.

Pride also comes into this story later, after the opening of the novel. Pride keeps Chamberlain from calling a retreat during the second day of battle when his men are being wounded left and right and they are running low on ammunition. Chamberlain wants to retreat but he knows that his regiment is the left-most flank of the Union army and his pride will not allow him to fail at his orders. Pride also causes Garnett to go into battle on the third day of the battle on a horse even though he has been told that he will be an easy target on the horse. Garnett has been accused of cowardice by one of the most respected generals in the Confederate army and does not intend to ever do anything that can prove to the men around him that he is indeed a coward. Garnett dies for his pride.

Pride is an inability to admit one is wrong. This definition also comes into play on the night before the third day of battle when Lee refuses to believe that the Confederates are losing this most important battle of the war. Lee announces to Longstreet that they are winning. Longstreet fails to correct Lee. Lee then decides that the Union army will be thin in the middle of their lines and that it is there they should attack at full force. It is this decision that loses the battle for the Confederacy, a fact that Lee does not fail to recognize. Pride only gets a man so far and then he must realize what his actions have caused and react to that truth. Lee does just that. Therefore, pride has gotten the Confederates into this mess and it is pride that has caused the loss of this battle,





leading to the loss of the war, but pride is no longer an issue in the aftermath when the truth is difficult to ignore.

## Respect

Respect is a major theme of this novel. Respect is the root cause of the loss of the battle as the author presents it to his readers. Longstreet recognizes almost from the beginning of the battle of Gettysburg that Lee is making wrong choices, but, although he argues with Lee, Longstreet finds it difficult to fully express his opinion to Lee due to his own respect of the older general and the respect of the men surrounding them. Lee respects Longstreet's opinion, listening to his ideas before the battles, but disregarding them. Longstreet recognizes that Lee is in charge, therefore he does not contradict him, but it is suggested that had Lee listened to Longstreet on several occasions, the battle would have gone quite differently.

Longstreet's respect of Lee also stops him from convincing Lee to court martial Stuart when he returns from his reconnaissance mission, having failed in his assignment to keep Lee updated on the movements of the Union army. Longstreet and many other officers believe that Stuart deserves a court martial for his actions because if Stuart had done as he was told, the Confederate army would have been better informed as to the location and number of the Union army they would face at Gettysburg. However, Stuart did not return until the night of the second day of fighting at Gettysburg, and any information he might have had was no longer relevant or necessary. Lee refused to court martial Stuart, instead only admonishing him like an errant child, believing Stuart would be of best use if allowed to stay in the field.

Respect also enters this novel on the Union side of the conflict, in the respect that Chamberlain has for his aid, Kilrain, trusting him with the more difficult aspects of leadership of a regiment, as well as the respect offered between the other officers of the Union side. There is also great respect between the Confederate officers and those on the Union side, especially since many of these officers served together in the United States military before the Civil War began. Everyone on both sides has friends on the other side, friends they care deeply for and are remorseful to fight against in this conflict despite the depth of their own beliefs. There is also great respect for many of the soldiers for the vow they have taken not to raise arms against their own country, a vow that many of the men fighting on the side of the Confederacy find difficult to reconcile with their current positions in the enemy army. War is an emotional conflict as well as a physical one and many emotions have an effect on the actions of the men in charge, especially pride.



# Style

## Point of View

The point of view of this novel is third person, with the narrator shifting from chapter to chapter. Each chapter is entitled with the name of the person who will be the narrator within the text. For example, Chapter 2 of Part Two is headed Chamberlain, narrated by a Union colonel preparing to battle the Confederate soldiers on a hill called Little Round Top. Each chapter shows a unique point of view of different aspects of the battle at Gettysburg. These points of view include not only portions of the various battles, but the planning of the battles and the actions of the men before and after each battle, including the emotional remembrances of old friends and family left behind.

The point of view of this novel works not only because it is well organized, but because the shifting point of view allows the reader to see things that the reader might not have been allowed to see and acknowledge should the book have been told through only one point of view; for example, that of Lee. If Lee had been the sole narrator of the book the reader would not have been allowed to see the battle from the Union's point of view, nor would the reader have seen any part of the actual battles since Lee was stationed in a central headquarters and not on the battlefield for most of the battle. On the other hand, if Chamberlain had been the sole narrator, the reader will have seen part of the battle on the second day and the third day, as well as get a good grasp of the Union's side of the battle. However, the reader would not have been given the deep insight into the Southern side of the battle. The author's choice to switch points of view from the various soldiers on either side of the battle gives the reader a clear and unique view of all sides of the battle, from the actual fighting to the emotional effect of the fighting. This point of view is powerful and gives the novel an impact it might not have had otherwise.

## Setting

The novel is about the battle of Gettysburg during the Civil War; therefore, the setting of the novel is the small town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in 1863. It is a small town from which most of the civilians have fled in view of the approaching armies. There are private homes scattered throughout the town as well as a church, a seminary, and a cemetery. In the seminary there is a tower from which one of the union officers, Buford, watches the beginning of the battle and makes the decision to make a stand on the high points of the town, Little and Big Round Tops. The Union officers set up a headquarters and a hospital in a few of the small homes in the area while Lee, on the other side of the conflict, chooses a small farm for his own headquarters. The area is surrounded by farmer's fields and orchards, the weather wildly hot with scattered showers, making the men miserable as they make their stands out in the largely uncomfortable weather.

The setting of this novel is important because of its historical effect on American history. The novel is about the battle at Gettysburg, a battle that turned the tide of the Civil War



and more than likely is the root cause of the Northern defeat of the South. This battle has been studied exhaustively since the day it ended, giving this novel an even larger importance because the battle was such an integral event in American history. Therefore, it is not the physical setting of the town of Gettysburg that is important to this novel, but the historic aspect of it seen through the eyes of the men who were there, giving readers a deeper look at history that they cannot get out history books.

## Language and Meaning

The language in this novel is simple English. The language has a tendency to change slightly between narrators, having within it a more educated tone when Chamberlain and other highly educated men are the narrators and more of a chivalric tone when Southern officers are the narrators. The language used is educated, minus any slang that modern times might have lent the narration, keeping the dialogue and the majority of the exposition authentic to the time without making it clunky or difficult to read.

The novel is written primarily in long paragraphs of exposition with small breaks of dialogue used to illustrate a scene. Most of the exposition, rather than being descriptions of the setting or the battles, contain the thoughts of the narrating character, his reactions to what is going on around him. During many of the battle scenes the writer, rather than give long, confusing descriptions of the action, tells the reader how the narrator is reacting to the action around him, often not describing the action except what the narrator can see or feel. In one such chapter, the writer has Chamberlain watching as a soldier comes running toward him. Instead of describing the soldier or how Chamberlain plans to kill him, the writer simply shows the soldier fall, as Chamberlain himself is somewhat surprised that he has shot the soldier. This takes the reader right into the narration and makes the reader feel as though the narrator is the reader himself. The reader is inside the action in a way that mere description could not achieve.

## Structure

The novel is divided into four days, beginning the night before the first day of fighting at Gettysburg and ending on the final day of fighting. Within each section, there are four to seven chapters, each named for the character narrating the chapter, each showing a particular portion of each day from his own unique point of view. At the beginning of the novel, there is a short description of both armies and their leaders. At the end of the novel, there is a short explanation of what has happened to each of the important characters at the end of the battle and, for most, the end of their lives.

The novel has only one major plot, the battle of Gettysburg. However, many minor plots follow the stories of several of the main characters. For example, one minor storyline is the interaction between Lee and Longstreet and Longstreet's deep-seated belief that he knows better than Lee how to manage the battle and that Lee is the main reason why the battle failed. Another story line is that of Chamberlain and the relationships between

he and Kilrain and he and his brother, Thomas. Many of the minor storylines serve to enrich the main story of the battle, filling the reader's desire for a more human look at the battle rather than the dry, detail oriented non-fiction versions of the battle.

## Quotes

"He dreamed of Maine and ice black water; he awoke to a murderous sun."

Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 2, Chamberlain, p. 18

"The land west of Gettysburg is a series of ridges, like waves in the earth. The first Rebel infantry came in that way, down the narrow gray road from the mountain gap. At noon they were in sight of the town."

Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 3, Buford, p. 35

"What bothered him most was the blindness. Jeb Stuart had not returned. The army had moved all day in enemy country and they had not even known what was around the next bend. Harrison's news was growing old: the Union Army was on the move."

Monday, June 29, 1863, Chapter 4, Longstreet, p. 53

"Lee took a deep breath, testing his chest: a windblown vacancy, a breathless pain. He had a sense of enormous unnatural fragility, like hollow glass."

Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 1, Lee, p. 78

"Buford got one last glimpse of Reynolds. He was out in the open, waving his hat, pointing to a grove of trees. A moment later Buford looked that way and the horse was bare-backed. He did not believe it. He broke off and rode to see. Reynolds lay in the dirt road, the aides bending over him. When Buford got there the thick stain had already puddled the dirt beneath his head. His eyes were open, half asleep, his face pleasant and composted, a soft smile. Buford knelt. He was dead."

Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 2, Buford, pp. 101-102

"Heth's Division had formed on a front of about a mile, had obviously been repulsed. The Union infantry was firing from a line at least as long as Heth's. There did not seem to be many cannon, but there were many rifles. Was this the whole Union force or only an advance detachment?"

Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 3, Lee, p. 107

"Tom hummed a few bars of what was still known as Butterfield's Lullaby by which the army would later know as Taps and which now had no connotation of death, which simply meant to rest for the night, rest after a long day in the dust and the sun, with the bugles blaring, and Joshua Chamberlain, listening, thought of the sound of Butterfield's Lullaby coming out of the dark, through a tent flap, with the campfires burning warm and red in the night, and Chamberlain thought: you can grow to love it."

Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 4, Chamberlain, p. 124



"Buford took off his hat, looked up to the stars. He said to John Reynolds, 'Well, John, we held the ground.' He wiped his eyes. He thought: *have to get some more lieutenants.* Then he rode off down the hill into the black beneath the trees."

Wednesday, July 1, 1863, The First Day, Chapter 7, Buford, p. 158

"Chamberlain felt an oddness, a crawly hesitation, not wanting to touch him. He shook his head, amazed at himself. He saw: palm of the hand almost white; blood dries normally, skin seems dusty. But he could not tell whether it was truly dust or only a natural sheen of light on hair above black skin. But he felt it again: a flutter of unmistakable revulsion. Fat lips, brute jaw, red-veined eyeballs. Chamberlain stood up. He had not expected this feeling. He had not even know this feeling was there. He remembered suddenly a conversation with a Southerner a long time ago, before the war, a Baptist minister. White complacent face, sense of bland enormous superiority: *my dear man, you have to live among them, you simply don't understand.*"

Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 2, Chamberlain, p. 179

"Lee looked at him, the deep-set eyes still bright, still hot, still questing. Longstreet said nothing.

'You disagree,' Lee said.

Longstreet shrugged. He had disagreed last night, had argued all morning, but now he was setting his mind to it. The attack would come."

Thursday, July 2, 1863, The Second Day, Chapter 3, Longstreet, p. 194

"'I was trying to warn you. But...you have no Cause. You and I, we have no Cause. We have only the army. But if a soldier fights only for soldiers, he cannot ever win. It is only the soldiers who die.'"

Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 5, Longstreet, p. 361

"They were not done yet. He felt an appalling thrill. They would fight again, and when they came he would be behind another stone wall waiting for them, and he would stay there until he died or until it ended, and he was looking forward to it with an incredible eagerness, as you wait for the great music to begin again after the silence. He shook his head, amazed at himself. He thought: *have to come back to this place when the war is over. Maybe then I'll understand it.*"

Friday, July 3, 1863, Chapter 6, Chamberlain, p. 365

# Adaptations

During his life, Shaara had worked intermittently at a screenplay version of *The Killer Angels*, but he never completed it. Although in the mid-1970s the Vietnam-weary public lacked interest in any more battle involving American casualties, the novel has taken on a life of its own, and it continues to inspire readers with its enormously powerful reaction to America's most crucial battle. Producer Ted Turner turned *The Killer Angels* into an enormous film, *Gettysburg*, released in 1993, first for TNT, then in a theater version (four hours plus intermission), and finally in video. Writer-director Ronald F. Maxwell received mixed reactions to his adaptation of *The Killer Angels*.

Stanley Kaufmann, voicing the consensus of most critics and viewers, noted the ineffectiveness of Martin Sheen as Robert E. Lee, praised Jeff Daniels for the best portrayal in the film, and grudgingly observed that "Despite the mushy interludes, it fascinates — terribly."

The release of *Gettysburg* sparked renewed interest in *The Killer Angels*.

Overall, the novel is considered the finest account to date of the Civil War fighting, and video historian Ken Burns, who produced the acclaimed Civil War series for PBS, claims that the novel ignited his interest in the Civil War.

*The Killer Angels* was also recorded in an unabridged, nine-cassette audio version in 1994 by Cathedral Audio Books. It contains an interview with Shaara's son Jeffrey, who describes his father's seven-year writing of the novel.



## Topics for Discussion

Why does Lee not trust spies? Why does he decide to believe Longstreet's spy? Why does Lee trust J.E.B. Stuart more than he trusts the spy? Is Lee wrong to trust Stuart? What if Lee had not believed the spy and had not acted on his information? Would the Union have attacked Lee where he was camped?

Why does J.E.B. Stuart not fulfill his orders? Where does Stuart go instead? What would have been different had Stuart fulfilled his orders? Could the Confederacy have won the battle with Stuart's information? Would they have chosen to fight elsewhere? Would the outcome have been different?

Why does Longstreet not fight Lee more actively over his battle strategy? Would the battle have gone differently if Longstreet had his way? Was Longstreet correct in laying the entire blame of the battle's loss at Lee's feet?

Discuss Chamberlain's tactics on Little Round Top. Was Chamberlain brave in his actions? What could he have done rather than send his men down the hill with bayonets? Was this brave or lucky? What would have happened had the Confederacy realized Chamberlain's men were out of ammunition?

Discuss the reason the South went to war. Did they go to war to preserve slavery? Did the war have anything at all to do with slaves? Why or why not? What did slaves represent to the South? What about to the North? Do you think the Northerners had more compassion for the slaves than the Southerners? Why or why not?

Why does Lee refuse to court martial Stuart? Why do the other generals feel he should be court martial? Do you think he should have been court martial? Why or why not?

Was Gettysburg the reason why the South lost the war? Why? What did Gettysburg prove that caused the South to lose the war? Was Gettysburg an emotional loss that caused the South to lose faith? Alternatively, was the loss at Gettysburg a tactical loss that caused the end of the war? What do you think might have happened had the South won Gettysburg? Would it have ended the war with a Southern win?





## Literary Precedents

Readers often compare Shaara's fiction to Hemingway's; the similarity lies more in a curious combination of outwardly raw physical courage and inward tenderness — Robert Penn Warren once described Hemingway's soul as a brawny male fist clutching a rose — than in literary style. Shaara uses description far more than Hemingway did, and Shaara's essential subjectivity is remote from Hemingway's famous objective dialogue-dominated prose.

The subject of *The Killer Angels* and its surfeit of horrors also recalls Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), but Crane's naturalism denies man's potential for growth, while Shaara's humanistic insistence on the possibility of human nobility, like Hemingway's celebrated "grace under pressure," gives meaning and even hope to one of the most desperate moments in American history.

Shaara's greatest debt, other than to the men who fought and died at Gettysburg, seems owed to Abraham Lincoln. Like Lincoln, Shaara believes that Gettysburg is America's "holy ground," consecrated and hallowed beyond human addition or detracton. *The Killer Angels* does not presume to do so; but by bringing the men of Gettysburg to life again in his pages, Shaara insists once more on the values for which "they gave the last full measure of devotion." In their struggles as well as in their nation's agony, Shaara implies the only meaning worth the tragedy, that a government allowing its individual citizens to achieve their individual destinies "shall not perish from the earth."



## Related Titles

Jeff M. Shaara, Michael's son, has written the prequel to *The Killer Angels*, entitled *Gods and Generals* (1996). Jeff Shaara follows the same four men — Lee, Jackson, Hancock, and Chamberlain — as his father had in *The Killer Angels*, through the years leading up to the Civil War. He captures Lee's and Hancock's disillusionment over their early careers, Lee's conflicts in loyalties, Jackson's overwhelming Christian ethic, and Chamberlain's lack of experience. The perspectives of the four men, particularly concerning the battles at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, make vivid the realities of war. Taken together, the two novels present a powerful portrait of the generals who won and lost the Civil War.



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