

Lonesome Dove Study Guide

Lonesome Dove by Larry McMurtry

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Contents

Lonesome Dove Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	4
Part 1: Chapters 1-3.....	6
Part 1: Chapters 4-6.....	8
Part 1: Chapters 7-9.....	10
Part 1: Chapters 10-12.....	12
Part 1: Chapters 13-15.....	14
Part 1: Chapters 16-18.....	16
Part 1: Chapters 19-21.....	18
Part 1: Chapters 22-25.....	20
Part 2: Chapters 26-29.....	22
Part 2: Chapters 30-33.....	24
Part 2: Chapters 34-37.....	26
Part 2: Chapters 38-41.....	28
Part 2: Chapters 42-45.....	30
Part 2: Chapters 46-49.....	32
Part Two: Chapters 50-53.....	35
Part Two: Chapters 54-57.....	38
Part Two: Chapters 58-61.....	41
Part Two: Chapters 62-65.....	44
Part Two: Chapters 66-68.....	47
Part Two: Chapters 69-71.....	50
Part Two: Chapters 72-74.....	53
Part Three: Chapters 75-77.....	56



[Part Three: Chapters 78-80..... 59](#)

[Part Three: Chapters 81-83..... 61](#)

[Part Three: Chapters 84-86..... 64](#)

[Part Three: Chapters 87-89..... 67](#)

[Part Three: Chapters 90-92..... 70](#)

[Part Three: Chapters 93-95..... 72](#)

[Part Three: Chapters 96-98..... 75](#)

[Part Three: Chapters 99-100..... 78](#)

[Part Three: Chapters 101-102..... 80](#)

[Characters..... 83](#)

[Objects/Places..... 93](#)

[Social Sensitivity..... 96](#)

[Techniques..... 97](#)

[Themes..... 98](#)

[Style..... 101](#)

[Quotes..... 104](#)

[Adaptations..... 106](#)

[Key Questions..... 107](#)

[Topics for Discussion..... 108](#)

[Literary Precedents..... 110](#)

[Related Titles..... 111](#)

[Copyright Information..... 112](#)



Plot Summary

Lonesome Dove, by Larry McMurtry, is an adventure from beginning to end. This epic story will make the reader laugh out loud and cry unabashed as it journeys from Lonesome Dove, Texas to Montana on a cattle drive. The Hat Creek Cattle Company, half experienced and half young men new to the trail, are bound and determined to find unpopulated land to start a ranch. Led by Captain Woodrow F. Call and his partner Captain Augustus McCrae, both former Texas Rangers, the company includes Pea Eye and Deets, who also rode as Texas Rangers with the Captains, and Newt Dobbs, who is Captain Call's only son. The whole adventure begins when Jake Spoon, another former Ranger, returns from Arkansas with stories of untouched green pastures and mountain wilderness. The fact that Jake is running from the law is not missed by Gus or Call, but the lure of open land pulls so hard that Call makes up his mind to go. Lonesome Dove is almost a ghost town when they leave, as they even take with them Lippy the piano player from the Dry Bean saloon, and Lorena Woods, who was the only "working girl" in Lonesome Dove.

The cattle drive is never dull, and the cowboys battle fierce storms, fast rivers, and more danger than any of them ever imagined. From one extreme to another, they travel from stormy territory on through to country so dry that the cattle barely make it to the next watering hole. Jake is traveling with the herd to begin with, and has won the heart of Lorena, who insisted on being taken along. She adjusts better to trail life than Jake. He finally leaves her in their camp while he goes off to gamble in a town nearby. Gus rides over to their camp and while he sits with Lorie, Blue Duck shows up. It is the first time Gus has met him, but his reputation precedes him. Blue Duck knows all about the Texas Rangers named Augustus McCrae and Woodrow Call, and fearing Call is around he doesn't linger, but Gus is nervous. Blue Duck hardly looks at Lorie, but he sure eyes their horse and mule. Gus wants Lorie to come back to camp with him, but she feels safe and insists on staying. Lorena is taken by Blue Duck to use a chattel with his boys and the Indians who ride with him. He ties her to a horse and they ride for days to get back to his camp. When Jake returns from gambling and Lorena is gone, he thinks she's with the cowboys. He jealously rides over, demanding they return her, but Gus knows that Blue Duck has her. While Jake is totally ineffective, Gus saddles a horse and heads out after Blue Duck alone. For days he travels, after finally finding the trail, and is filled with guilt for having left her alone. He's gone for so long that Call begins to believe he's dead, but the story doesn't end there. The adventures continue as Gus comes face to face with Blue Duck's crew and, in a quirk of fate, has the sheriff from Arkansas with him. While they rescue Lorena, Blue Duck savagely kills his deputy Roscoe, his stepson Joe, and a young girl named Janey who joined them on the trail.

The sheriff, July Johnson, is devastated. His deputy was only there because after July left his home in Arkansas with his stepson Joe to chase down Jake Spoon, his wife Elmira left town. His sister-in-law, Peach, sent Roscoe to let July know, and now July has lost all interest in finding Jake. All he wants to do now is find his wife. Jake doesn't know that though, and he keeps hearing about the sheriff who is looking for him. July is so close at one point that Jake decides it isn't safe to stay where he is. He takes to the



road with a group of men led by a barbarian. They cross the plains, killing Wilbarger, his man Chick, and a boy traveling with them so that they could steal his horses. They kill or destroy whatever they come across, and Jake knows he has to get away from them. However, before that can happen, Gus and Captain Call talk to the dying Wilbarger after finding his horse riderless and bloody and backtracking. He tells them before he dies that the Sugg's brothers are responsible for this crime. They bury him and his men, and head out to find the Sugg's brothers and bring justice to them. As former Texas Rangers, they've hung many a horse thief, but when they find the Suggs' brothers, they are heartsick to find Jake riding with them. Without choice, they hang all four men, including Jake Spoon, who gives his horse to Call's son Newt before he bravely kicks his own horse out from under him.

Ride with them, taste the dirt of the trail, and feel the force of story as it rockets along. Never dull, never slow, and hard to put down, this story will make it difficult for the reader to pull themselves back into present day. At the end, one may wish there was more, and may find themselves thinking about many of the characters for a while to come. This is a western at it's finest, a love story of many layers, an adventure of youth and a tale of cowboys and Indians. It takes one back to a simpler time, when survival is the goal, but not always the outcome.



Part 1: Chapters 1-3

Part 1: Chapters 1-3 Summary

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The Hat Creek Cattle Company isn't much. The barn's missing a roof, but it only rains in Lonesome Dove once or twice a year so on the rare occasions when they have cattle, none suffer. There is a couple of corrals, a patched up office, and a spring house that barely springs much of a leak most years. They employ Bolivar, a Mexican cook; Pea Eye, who can do just about anything given time and instruction; Newt, youngest in the crew; and Deets, as hard a worker as any two men. Somehow Captain Call keeps them all busy, regardless of whether they are running cattle or not. Around him no loafing is tolerated. Captain Call picks up his rifle and goes out the door for his usual circuit after another meal of beans is consumed. It's hardly necessary now but old habits die hard, and he enjoys keeping his senses sharp. He's been Captain for as long as he can remember. Augustus is every bit the Ranger and Captain that Call is, yet still it seems that the men look to Call for orders and to Gus when they want to get drunk. The others retire to the large porch. The only livestock of note are two pigs, there are a few hens and some horses, but it's hardly a large operation. Everyone is kept busy but Gus, who prefers to spend his days sitting on the porch exercising his mind, or down at the Dry Bean Saloon exercising the rest. Newt is happy to daydream about Lorena, the whore who works at the Dry Bean Saloon. When the Captain returns from his walk, he tells Augustus that he thinks it would be a good time to try and cross some cattle. He thinks they might as well just drive the cattle to the buyers instead of waiting for the buyers to arrive in Lonesome Dove. Newt asks right away if he can go with them this time, having wanted to join them on one of their Mexican roundups for years. Gus decides to go down to the Dry Bean to see if he can scare up a card game, and Call warns him not to get himself married while he is gone. He's been married twice before, and would have married a third time, but the woman turned him down. Strangely, there is something about Lorena that reminds him of Clara. Lorena, dumped in Lonesome Dove by a



gambler named Tinkersley, is the finest working girl on this side of the river and is known by one and all.

Part 1: Chapters 1-3 Analysis

Lonesome Dove truly represents a one horse town. Woodrow Call and Augustus McCrae own and operate the Hat Creek Cattle Company, employing any number of hands to dig wells, mend fences, and look after the occasional livestock. Hat Creek is a dry gulch most of the year, and only the creatures that thrive in desert conditions do well. Bolivar, the cook for the outfit, is a cantankerous old Mexican bandit of days gone by who finally got too tired and old for that lifestyle and crossed the river to cook for the Hat Creek Company instead. Somehow, he manages to serve fried goat three or four times a week, and is never out of beans. No one asks where the goat meat comes from, although the Hat Creek Cattle Company doesn't trade in them. Gus will only comment that it tastes like it's been fried in tar.

Woodrow is a conscientious and straightforward kind of man, who is larger than life and an imposing figure to all he meets. The only one who really stands up to him is Gus. Despite Woodrow's small stature, his carriage and demeanor more than make up the difference. Gus is more likely to be found at the Dry Bean Saloon playing cards, or entertaining Lorena, than he is to be found working, but in an emergency he is every bit a Ranger. He usually rises early enough to see the sun come up, makes sourdough biscuits for breakfast for everyone, and that's the extent of his labor for the day. Woodrow is restless, and wants to round up a herd of cattle and drive them to the cattle buyers, but Gus isn't interested in working too hard. Pea Eye is a Corporal who has worked under Captain Call for many years. His loyalty and blind devotion are occasionally irksome to Gus, but a Corporal is who he is. Newt is the youngest, not yet being taken on roundups and still not allowed to carry a gun. Lorena is the working girl at the Dry Bean Saloon and more than half the reason that it gets it's business. At the age of twenty-four, she dreams of going to San Francisco. She enjoys her time with Gus because he tells her he's been there, and she likes his stories of the city.



Part 1: Chapters 4-6

Part 1: Chapters 4-6 Summary

Lonesome Dove is quiet when Gus walks into town. A single horse is hitched at the Dry Bean, and he knows right away it belongs to Dishwater Boggett. Gus is glad because Dish loves to play cards. He joins the table where Dish is trying to convince Lorena to give him a poke on credit. Gus showing up spoils things, so he changes his tactics and instead asks Gus if he can borrow two dollars. Gus turns him down, then Lippy, the piano player joins them. All Dish really wants to do is take Lorie upstairs and instead he gets talked into playing cards. Gus likes it when Lorie plays. He lets her win a little because it's the only time he gets to see her smile and laugh, showing traces of the child she must have been. They play until Lorena's mood has brightened to such a degree that Dish positively aches for her. He stands outside with Gus, talking about where he is headed, and Gus offers him the use of the porch to put his bedroll on for the night. Dish agrees, and Gus pulls out two dollars and gives it to him. "I'd not want it thought I'd refuse a simple loan to a friend", he tells him. Suddenly Dish remembers he's left something behind and tells Gus to go on ahead without him. Gus heads back, and goes to sleep, and by four in the morning he is up, preparing the sourdough biscuits for breakfast. The Hat Creek outfit is a small one, but the Captain still offers Dish a job if he's interested. Dish accepts, knowing it will keep him closer to Lorena for a while. Breakfast is almost finished when Call notices two riders approaching. Deets is returning from a trip to the bank the Captain sent him on, bringing Jake Spoon. No man ever made a larger impression on Newt as a child than had Jake. He had been a Ranger back when Texas was wilder, and had ridden with Captains Call and McCrae. Jake gets off his horse, is introduced to Dish, and then shakes hands with Pea Eye. Augustus notices how hard Jake's bay has been ridden and tells Deets to give it a good feed, wondering what Jake is running from. "There ain't no posse", Jake assures them, going into the house. Dish is at a bit of a loss. He'd been ready to hire on, but now with the new man here, it seems as though he's been forgotten. Jake complains about the state of cleanliness and the lack of biscuits, and then tells them what he's been up to since they've seen him last. He tells them about Montana, where the grass is green, and the country is free and beautiful. He tells them that up past Yellowstone some of the Blackfeet can still be troublesome, and he had helped to scare buffalo out of the way of the cattle drive. Gus had thought the buffalo were mostly gone, but Jake insists that he's seen fifty thousand or more up above Yellowstone, and explains that the buffalo hunters don't have the nerve to take on the Indians. The minute the Indians are dealt with, there'll be fortunes to be made in Montana. He suggests they round up some of the free cattle roaming around and drive them to Montana. Call asks what he's running from, and Jake admits he killed a dentist in Fort Smith, Arkansas, though he insists it was an accident. He tells them about the shooting, and how the dentist had been the victim of trajectory when the bullet hit him as he walked across the street. Still, the dentist happens also to be the July Johnson, the Sheriff's brother. July was out of town at the time, and Jake didn't wait around for him to come back and decide what to do about Jake.



Part 1: Chapters 4-6 Analysis

Gus goes into Lonesome Dove to play cards and brings home Dish Boggett. Dish sleeps on the porch and in the morning the Captain offers him a job which he accepts. Shortly thereafter, Deets returns, bringing Jake Spoon with him. That Jake is in trouble is no surprise to Call or Gus, and he tells them that he accidentally shot a dentist. He hadn't waited around to see what the victim's brother, the Sheriff July Johnson, would say about it. Before that, his adventures took him to places past Yellowstone where Blackfeet still roam and are troublesome. He tells them about lush green grasses and abundant water supplies, and Call just listens. Jake asks about Maggie, Newt's mother, and is stunned to find out that she died from fever not long after he left. What really gets him, though, is the realization that Call and Gus have been looking after and feeding Newt for nine years now. Gus tells him that it's only right, as it's likely that either Jake or Call is Newt's father. Newt has always wondered if Jake might be his father, but no one will tell him anything that resembles the truth.

Lorena is the working girl and love interest for all who come to town, or who live there. Gus is a regular customer, and Newt is distantly in love with her, having never actually admitted it to her or engaged her services. Dish has fallen for her hard, and she is well known for her beauty up and down the river. The Dry Bean survives largely because she lives and works there.



Part 1: Chapters 7-9

Part 1: Chapters 7-9 Summary

Jake and Gus go out to the spring house, where Gus retrieves his jug and hands it to Jake. He amuses himself thinking about how Call will feel when he comes back to the house at lunch time and finds them both drunk. They talk about Clara, reminiscing about the one that got away, and about her husband Bob Allen, a horse trader of some repute. Gus is jealous that Jake might have seen her, but he tells Gus that he barely had time to say hello. Gus and Jake drink until Jake falls asleep in the shade behind the spring house, and Gus decides he should get over to see Lorie while he still can. It's only a matter of time before Jake and Lorie meet. Gus knows Jake will use those big eyes of his on Lorie, and that will be it for Gus. Gus heads to the Dry Bean. The midday brings more heat, and for the boys digging the well, it is unbearable. Call comes to check on their progress, riding up on Hell Bitch, his mare, who he has under reasonably good control. He tells them to take a break and informs them they'll be going to Mexico that night. Newt is excited. So far, the Captain hasn't told him he can't go. They rest for a while before seeing two riders approach. The two gentlemen stop at the Hat Creek Cattle Company sign that Gus created. It includes their names, the names of Pea Eye Parker, and Joshua Deets, and details of their outfit. As an afterthought, Gus added "We don't rent pigs", and a last line added later read "Uva Uvam Vivendo Varia Fit". He wasn't sure what the motto meant, but it amused him, so he put it on. The men got a good laugh from it, and then continue on in, asking after the purchase of forty horses. Newt knew they didn't have that many horses to sell, but he sends the men up to see the Captain at the house. Dish takes the opportunity to go and see Lorena, but when he gets there, he hears the distinct noise of bedsprings at work. Somewhat confused, and a bit distraught, he isn't sure what to do at first, but he lingers, ready to kill whoever comes out of the room. While waiting, he gets a second surprise. There are no horses out front. He goes down to the riverbed for an hour, and when he comes back, he walks into the saloon and finds Lorie seeming very comfortable with Jake Spoon. Dish is stunned by how close and friendly Lorena is with Jake, the two of them looking as though they'd known each other for years. He is about to continue right on back out again before anyone sees him, but Jake calls out, happy for company, which ends Dish's exit plan. Knowing it wouldn't be a good idea to take on a man in Call's employ, Dish puts his nose to a bottle instead. Before long, he's singing with Lippy at the piano. Meanwhile, the two men, Wilbarger and his man Chick, meet Call. They order forty horses and Call tells them they are closed for the evening, but promises to deliver in the morning. Gus is leery, especially when Call tells him that the other half of his plan involves driving the remaining animals to Montana. Gus settles on going down to the saloon to tell Jake they'll all be working tonight, thanks to him. When he gets there, Dish is very drunk, but swears he can still ride. Call lets Newt come on this run and even gives him a holster with a gun that smells of having been freshly maintained. Feeling like a whole man for the first time in his life, Newt begins rounding up the horses with Deets.



Part 1: Chapters 7-9 Analysis

Jake and Gus spent most of the morning down by the spring house. They sit in what little shade is available, and drink from Gus's jug until Jake finally passes out. Then Gus heads to see Lorena while he still can. Jake has already asked if there are any sporting women in town, and it won't be long before he finds her. Once Jake encounters Lorena, she probably wouldn't be working for much longer because Jake will want exclusivity, and Gus is pretty sure he'll get it.

Jake's stories about grasslands and abundant water capture the Captain's interest. The Captain has been idle in his mind for too long, and sees this as a great opportunity. The deal is cemented when two men show up looking to buy forty horses because theirs were stolen by Mexican horse thieves. Call thinks quick, and tells them that they're closed for the day but that they can have a hundred horses tomorrow. The men are disappointed, but agree to return the next day. Call wants to collect a herd and drive them to Montana, but Gus is less than amused by the idea. He isn't interested in going to a cold climate, or having to work to get there. He decides to go to the saloon to tell Jake they'll be working tonight, and finds Dish there as well, very drunk. Dish went to the saloon looking for Lorena and arrived to find her under Jake. Realizing that Call will be mad if he shoots Jake, Dish gets blind drunk instead.

Newt is given permission to cross into Mexico with the hands for the first time, and the Captain makes it official by giving him a gun and holster. It is a moment that changes Newt's life in an instant. He goes from being a boy to a man, and the Captain acknowledging it makes it worth so much more to Newt. In this moment, he feels as though he's become a man.



Part 1: Chapters 10-12

Part 1: Chapters 10-12 Summary

Newt's concept of time changes as soon as they cross the border. Having heard tales from Gus and the Captain for years, he assumes there is more to Mexico than unending emptiness. They ride for two hours before seeing the first small herd of cattle, but having promised Wilbarger forty horses, they continue. Dish is almost sober by the time they come across Pedro Flores's main camp. Flores was a mean Mexican who held onto and added to his kingdom of riches for forty years. Deets is the first to hear singing coming from over the ridge and comes back to warn them. Call figures it's best if they split up. He sends Jake, Pea Eye, and Dish with Gus to get the horses, and tells Gus that he and Deets will look after the wranglers. He forgets about Newt for a minute, and he ends up going with them. When the men realize Call has no intention of gunning them down, they introduce themselves as Allen and Sean O'Brien. The Captain knows Pedro, having lost his horses, will be looking for blood in the morning and he won't care who's. He tells them to stay put—they'll come back with extra horses. Gus and the boys have stumbled onto a small herd of about forty horses, and are just trying to decide the best course of action when Call, Deets, and Newt arrive. Call gets the feeling that this isn't going to be an easy night. He tells Newt to go and rope a couple of horses for the O'Brien boys, and Newt is stunned. He's never roped at night, and surprises himself when he gets the first one he tries. Feeling pretty good, he is about to grab the second when Dish ropes it for him. Gus starts laughing because he notices that the brands on the horses in this herd are Wilbarger's. He sends Jake, Dish, and Deets home with the forty horses that belong to Wilbarger. Deets is the only one who would find his way back. That leaves Gus to get the O'Brien brothers. Gus knows that Call will be left with Pea Eye and Newt to round up the hundred horses they originally went for, and gripes about being left out of all the fun. Call tells Gus if they don't make it back to give Wilbarger his own horses back in the morning. An hour later, Call, Pea, and Newt find the main herd of horses in a valley that is barely a mile from Pedro's headquarters. They start back slowly. Surprisingly, no one tries to stop them. It doesn't take long for Newt to recognize the danger of the situation he is in. The herd is large enough to put distance between himself and help, but the miles pass uneventfully. He is daydreaming about crossing the river and bringing the horses home when suddenly he sees what looks like half the herd running towards him. Some of the horses around him veer off into the chaparral and he hears the confused curses of Mexican riders trapped in the same mess of horses as he is. Then he finally understands that their herd is merging with a herd that is coming across to Mexico from Texas. Most of the horses mix with their herd and continue with them back to Lonesome Dove. As the sun rises, Wilbarger returns and Chick helps to cut out his horses from Call's herd. When asked if he wants more, Wilbarger offers Call thirty-eight horses of his that Call and the boys found and in return he'll take Hell Bitch. Call turns him down cold, surprising Wilbarger and a few others who are close enough to hear. Gus returns with the two Irishmen who look very uncomfortable astride large Mexican saddles.



Part 1: Chapters 10-12 Analysis

Newt gets a wake-up call. He wanted so badly to be part of these nighttime runs, but once given the opportunity, he discovers that it isn't all the glorious stuff that tales are made of. This is a large and dark terrain, and he is nervous, even downright scared on more than one occasion, although he certainly won't admit it. When they come across the Irishmen, he discovers that he is not as brave as he would like to be. His mind creates scenarios where more bandits come out of the bushes around him, and he becomes numb with dread. He is so determined not to disappoint Call that he says nothing, not wanting to appear weak. He is fearful on and off the rest of the trip, partially from his own imagination and then again when the Mexicans come across the border and both of the herds merged. His fears don't end there. He is afraid he'd get lost, or get caught, or both, and is so relieved when he finally finds home that it reduces him to tears. He even suffers from a bit of internal conflict where obtaining the horses is concerned. If they were Mexican, and caught in Texas stealing horses, they'd be hung as horse thieves, but by stepping across the border, it is not against the law. Newt finds himself wondering if it is against the Mexican law and if they would hang him if they caught him. None of these things occurred to him before. It's pure luck that they end up with Wilbarger's horses, and the Mexican's in the bargain, and Call knows it.

Pea Eye and Call are very similar in nature in that neither has any inclination to marry and complicate their lives. Pea has often thought of it, but discounted it, unable to picture himself at the breakfast table every morning with a woman. Besides, marriage would mean leaving the Captain and Gus, and Pea Eye has no intention of doing that. Fortunately, Gus bakes biscuits as well if not better than most women, so there is no pressing need. When Gus finally returns with the two Irishmen, they are looking very uncomfortable and unhappy. It is an easy guess that they haven't spent much time on horseback. Allen manages to dismount, but Sean gets stuck half on and half off in such a pose that he has the entire company laughing by the time he gets his feet on the ground. Call goes out to hire hands to help drive the cattle to Montana and asks Gus to move the herd upriver, but Gus balks. He doesn't want to sleep on the ground, he tells Call, and when Call asks where he planned to sleep on the way to Montana, Gus tells Call that as yet he has not committed to going.



Part 1: Chapters 13-15

Part 1: Chapters 13-15 Summary

Lorie is taken by surprise, as Jake Spoon comes into the bar. He begins by saying hello to Lippy and Xavier, standing while Xavier pours him a free drink before taking the bottle and coming over to her table. Usually Lorena prefers the older cowboys because they just get what they pay for and leave. The younger ones like Dish look at her with puppy dog expressions that make her feel like they're looking for love instead of just a quick poke. When Jake finally sits down beside her, he tells her he's surprised to find someone so beautiful in Lonesome Dove. She belongs in San Francisco, he tells her, and she is smitten. While Jake is with her, he tells her of his troubles with the dentist, and explains that he is on the run from Sheriff July Johnson, but that he intends to stay one step ahead of the law and if he can, he'd like to take her to San Francisco where she belongs. When they go downstairs finally, they run into Dish. Seeing them together, Dish promptly falls into a bottle of whiskey and spends part of the night sitting at the piano with Lippy. Later, Jasper Fant comes in off the trail and approaches her, but Lorie just stares at him until he becomes so embarrassed that he just leaves without talking to her at all. The word up and down the river is that the sporting woman from Lonesome Dove is out of business.

After spending most of the day in bed with Lorie, Jake walks back to the Hat Creek Cattle Company. He is disappointed to find out that Call is already gone, having wanted to borrow ten dollars from him. Jake admits he is a fool for having mentioned Montana in the first place, and Gus agrees. Gus finally gets a good look at the horses they brought back, and discovers that many aren't much more than soap right now. He decides to cut the worst of them out, and leave them for Flores if he and his men come, and then tells Deets and Dish to take the horses they cut out and put them to bed. As soon as the herd is penned, Dish tells Deets that since it all looks quiet, he's going to go up to the saloon for a drink. He gets to the Dry Bean and finds Lorena sitting with Jasper Fant and Xavier. Surprisingly, Lorie seems happy to see him, even if it is only so they can get a card game going. The good feeling doesn't last though, as Lorie immediately asks him where Jake is. It isn't so much the question as it is the knowledge that she will never ask where Dish is that bothers him, but he pastes a smile on his face and tries not to show it. Still, Lorena has never looked as pretty to Dish as she did then, and as a result in the following hour, he loses the equivalent of three months wages and Jasper doesn't fare much better. They leave the saloon together, and Dish tells Jasper that he's hired on with the Hat Creek bunch and that he might as well, so they both head back together.

Part 1: Chapters 13-15 Analysis

Lorie falls for Jake the minute she sees him. He knows just how to handle her, and before the evening is over, Lorena is a sporting woman no more. She listens to his quiet



talk, and believes him when he tells her that he will take her to San Francisco, if it is in his power—always giving himself an out. He is tender and loving and comfortable in her company, which is something else she isn't used to. He stays even after he's finished, and naps for a while, and when he wakes, he gently approaches her again. When he finally stretches and goes downstairs with Lorena, she is smiling in a way that Lippy and Xavier have never seen. They hardly know what to think. Dish knows. He takes one look at Lorena and Jake, sees the way they are behaving, and knows that his time with Lorena is over. He knows he's blown his chance.

Dish is itching to leave. Deets understands the restlessness, and sends him on his way to the Dry Bean. When Dish arrives, expecting to catch Lorena by herself, he finds Jasper Fant instead. Though he really likes Jasper, it's hard not to be disappointed. Despite that, Lorie seems happy to see him and even eager to play a game of cards, so the rest doesn't matter. He looks at her and forgets everything else, right up until she asks him where Jake Spoon is. Then the bubble bursts, and he's picking his heart up off the floor again. In the next hour, he and Jasper both play cards so badly that they each lose the equivalent of three months wages, and the only way that is possible is if he isn't looking at the cards at all.



Part 1: Chapters 16-18

Part 1: Chapters 16-18 Summary

Call manages to collect four boys in his first day out hiring and not one is eighteen years old yet. Swift Bill Spettle and his younger brother Pete, and Jimmy and Ben Rainey will all be ready to leave Lonesome Dove by the end of the week. Bill and Pete already set out on foot in the direction of Lonesome Dove with their bedrolls, and Maude Rainey promises Call that her sons will be there by week's end. Call heads back home and takes a circuitous route, thinking he'd check on the horses on his way. He rides to where he thought they'd be, and the land is quiet and empty, so he continues home. He finds Gus on the front porch with his jug. After minimal preamble, Call asks why the horses are back so soon. Gus tells him that while he was gone, Pedro Flores died. Jasper Fant rode in with the information the night before. They'd seen no reason to stay out after that. There is much speculation as to what might have caused Pedro's end, but the result is the same. Call feels strangely empty. "Well, we might as well go on to Montana", he announces. "The fun's over around here".

Inside ten days time, Lorena comes to know Jake quite well. The first day she meets him, she is fairly overwhelmed by him and his tender attitudes, but as the days go by his affections grow, and she still feels the same peaceful feeling as in the beginning. This isn't a problem for Lorie. She just wants more. She wants San Francisco, and her aim is to see to it that Jake takes her. Needle Nelson from San Antonio and Bert Borum from Brownsville come looking for work and find it with Call. For the first few days, Xavier and Lippy are busy and happy with all of the new business, but the realization that when the Hat Creek crew leaves they will be a ghost town has not escaped them and as that day nears, depression sets in for Xavier. The heat of the day fairly blisters and Lorena sits alone with Lippy in the Dry Bean. Xavier has gone fishing, and Gus comes in smiling, grabs a bottle and two glasses from behind the counter, and joins Lorie at the table. He pours them both a drink and without further ado announces, "I want a poke". Lorie tells Gus she's with Jake now. Gus thinks it's nice that they've found each other, but right now Jake is at the ranch branding cattle and he still wants a poke. He takes out fifty dollars and suggests they cut the cards. If she cuts high card, the fifty is hers and he'll go home happy but unsatisfied, and if he cuts high card, he gets the poke and she still gets the fifty dollars. To Lorie that sounds like gambling, and for a blink she imagines herself winning and the laugh she could share with Jake over it. Before she even finishes saying yes, the cards are cut, and her ten will not beat his queen of hearts. She feels like somehow he cheated, but can't say how, and can't back out. She takes him upstairs. Besides, the fifty dollars is still a lot of money, she is flattered, and she likes Gus. She's thought of them as friends for some time, and afterward finds herself talking to him. He warns her that Jake will use the cattle drive as an excuse not to take her to San Francisco, but Lorie is determined to come along if he intends to go. In the meantime, Call goes across the river every night and brings back two or three hundred Mexican cattle that the boys would brand the next day.



Part 1: Chapters 16-18 Analysis

Call hires a total of four boys all under the age of eighteen, and feels just a little bit of guilt as he's leaving. The trip to Montana will be a long and difficult one, and he can't guarantee anyone's safety. The honest truth is that any one of these inexperienced young men might not come back. He thinks about those things as he leaves the Rainey farm and heads home. He expects all four boys at Lonesome Dove by week's end. When he gets home, the horses aren't where he expects them to be up river, and instead he finds everyone back at the ranch. To his surprise, he finds out that Pedro Flores is dead, which disturbs him. Flores had been one of the last worthy adversaries in the area, and now even he was gone. Perhaps in a way it also speaks to Call of his own mortality, and that might be part of what motivates him to want to suddenly leave and go to Montana.

Gus is not as ambitious as Call. He'd be just as happy to sit for a few months and contemplate the idea of going to Montana before actually making the commitment. It isn't anything special that's keeping him there other than he's become comfortable with his easy routine. Montana actually sounds uncomfortably like work. He thought he'd already earned his way out of all that. Still, once Call has made up his mind, it's hard to derail him. He goes up to see Lorena, knowing that Jake is busy and will be for many hours yet. He manages to tease and trick her into gambling for a poke, which of course she loses. Before he leaves after "collecting" his winnings, she mentions that she believes he must have cheated somehow, and he tells her that a man who wouldn't cheat for a poke doesn't want one bad enough. It's a typically Augustus comment, and as he and Lorie are also friends, she is as flattered as she is mildly embarrassed that she fell for it. One thing she learns in the process is that Jake is likely to leave her behind and go on the cattle drive, and she tells Gus that she plans to come along. Gus is quite happy with that plan, and can't wait to share it with Call. He, however, is not so pleased with the news. The boys spend ten days in a free-for-all cattle drive into Mexico and back every night, and branding what they brought back every day. A herd is assembled and ready to go.



Part 1: Chapters 19-21

Part 1: Chapters 19-21 Summary

Newt is constantly daydreaming about the upcoming cattle drive. He remembers the tales of bears that bullets can't bring down, and elk that look like deer but are twice as big. He's seen the ocean and had been to San Antonio, so cities are not new to him, but the idea of the wilderness has his mind wandering. He and Sean O'Brien become fast friends, finding common bonds, like their lack of parents. Sean is wistful as he tells Newt of the acres of grassland, and how he misses the carpet-like greenery. The crew talk about Jake when he isn't around, and he is considered by most as being lazy and even unreliable. None of the boys are pleased about his keeping Lorena all to himself, as she is the only sporting girl for miles. Newt even hears Deets and Pea Eye joking about Jake's allergy to work in general, and it makes him quite uncomfortable. Deets is worried. He has a terrible sense of foreboding as he thinks about the upcoming cattle drive, having seen how fast the plains dry up and the water holes vanish in the summer.

As soon as Jake's done, he heads back to the Dry Bean, but not before Gus tells him about his conversation with Lorie. He knows Jake well enough to know that he has no intention of taking Lorie to San Francisco, and says so. Jake announces he'll take her to San Antonio instead, but Gus tells him she won't go back to where she's already been, and he's right. Jake proposes the idea to Lorie, and she is adamant that she won't go. She tells him that Gus had come earlier, and offered her fifty dollars for a poke. At first, Jake is calm, but when Lorena tells him that she turned Gus down, his eyes flash quickly and he slaps her across the face. He isn't really angry, just unhappy about the events, and tells her that he reckons Gus got his poke, but if he didn't, Jake adds, she can hit him back. She reminds him that he promised he'd take her to San Francisco, and that she plans to leave with him when he goes. Jake laughs, but Lorie is so set on the idea that he can't say no to her. The next morning, she gives him the fifty she got from Gus to go and get her a decent horse. The only caveat Jake insists on is that they make their own camp instead of camping with the herd, which is just fine with Lorena. When Jake leaves to get her a horse, Xavier quietly knocks on the door. When she answers, he begs her not to go. He tells her that Jake will never get her to San Francisco. He offers to sell the Dry Bean and marry her. They could go to Galveston, he tells her, and then take a boat to California where they could buy a restaurant. He tells her she would never have to see men again, but Lorena turns him down. She tells him he should go as Jake will be back any time, but Xavier insists that he will shoot Jake instead so that he can't take Lorena away. He empties his pockets, and offers her even more than the fifty dollars she got from Gus. In fact, it looks closer to a hundred, and since he is usually quick as a rabbit, Lorena hopes it might calm him down, so she decides to let him in. When he finishes, he puts his head against her breasts, the tears flowing so hard that she is wet afterwards. After just staying there a moment, he pulls up his pants. Giving her the strangest look, he says goodbye to her and leaves.



Part 1: Chapters 19-21 Analysis

Newt idolized Jake for most of his life, even thinking that Jake could be his father, although no one will confirm or outright deny it. He is disappointed with the amount of disparaging talk about Jake and his work habits. Always having held Jake in the highest regard, he is finding out that Jake is not the man he thought he was. When Jake basically ignores him on the way into Lonesome Dove, Newt realizes that he and Jake haven't really had much of a chance to reacquaint themselves with each other, and he wishes things were different.

Deets is struggling with the idea of going to Montana. He knows some of the territory that they have to get through, and at the wrong time of year it is more than a struggle. He has a feeling of impending hardship, and is nervous. This is behavior very unlike the Captain, but he's worked for him for so long that he won't defy or deny him any request.

Jake is single minded, and as soon as the work is done for the day, he heads to the Dry Bean. All he wants to do is be with Lorena and have a drink, but he doesn't want the responsibility that comes with being a part of Lorie's life. He loves having someone to listen to him, rub his back, and give him a free poke whenever he wants one, but the price is a trip to San Francisco, so he reluctantly agrees to take her. That's good enough for Lorena, and she hardly sleeps that night in excitement. The next morning she is quick to send Jake out to get her a decent horse, and while he's gone she gets a visit from Xavier. Xavier has been in love with her from the very beginning. He begs her to stay, tells her that he will take her to California, and that he will marry her, but Lorena turns him down. He always believed that Lorena would come around one day, and realize that he would treat her better than any of the cowboys who came to see her. He thought that if he didn't bug her, she'd arrive at the conclusion herself, but now she is leaving and Xavier is devastated. He cries, and pleads with her, and then gives her all of his money for one last chance to be close to her. He is quick to finish, but his tears never do, and when he says goodbye to her, there is a finality in his voice that unnerves her a little.



Part 1: Chapters 22-25

Part 1: Chapters 22-25 Summary

Gus looks up after dinner and sees Jake and Lorena coming towards them, leading a pack horse. Lorena is a sight as she is wearing pants, something none of this crew have ever seen before. Dish sees Lorena coming with Jake and without a word gets up, mounts his horse, and heads for the herd even though it isn't his shift. Jake asks if they can make a meal, and Gus tells him that he and Lorie are welcome any time. He goes over and helps Lorie dismount, after Jake introduces her to Call. Sean finishes, and sitting out on his horse, he begins a mournful Irish ballad, making the mood of all who listen melancholy. When Jake finishes eating, Call walks over asks him what his plans are. Jake tells him that they are headed for Denver, but to stay safe they would tag along with the herd. By the time he announces that he and Lorie are going to try to find a spot upwind of the herd, Lorie is more than ready to go. She has been feeling a bit like a display piece, with every young man in camp looking but trying not to. She allows Gus to help her mount, much to Jake's annoyance, and they ride off after being invited back for breakfast. The Captain approaches Newt and discusses leaving. For a moment, Newt feels more grown up than he ever has. He asks Call how far up North is, and Call tells him a sight farther than Newt's been before.

When the night shift rides in, Soupy Jones, another former Ranger, is with Newt, Pea, Dish, and Jasper. The hello's out of the way, they discover Soupy's looking for work. Call hires him on the spot. Gus hitches up the wagon and heads to Lonesome Dove one last time. He pries his sign down, and goes to say goodbye to Xavier, who is sitting all by himself in the Dry Bean. He is morose, and confesses his love for Lorena to Gus. When Gus is ready to leave, he looks to say goodbye to Lippy, but Lippy is sitting in the wagon with a bag packed, having made up his mind to leave. Gus resists at first, but then relents and they head out for the herd. Call spends the afternoon weeding out the sickly or weak looking cows and horses in preparation for leaving, and Newt is so excited he can hardly eat. In the afternoon, the positions are assigned. Deets has the important task of scouting a bed and water sight each night, and Dish is given right point. Soupy is given left point, and Bert and Needle are to back them up. Lippy is to share duties with the Spettle boys, and that leaves Newt, the Irishmen, and the Rainey's with the drags. Call sees that they each have bandanas, knowing what the ride back there can be like. Gus counts the cattle, and comes back to camp with the number of twenty-six hundred cattle and two pigs. Newt isn't worried about the dust. He's so excited, nothing can dampen his enthusiasm. As they begin to move the herd, he gets an entirely new perspective on dust. He is all but blinded by it, and is so preoccupied with the severity of heat and dust combined that he rides right past about thirty-five head of cattle. Embarrassed, he realizes that it will take great effort on his part not to make a fool of himself in front of Gus and the Captain. He quickly goes back to retrieve the stragglers. Gus turns in his saddle and sees the last of the Rio Grande, wishing he'd remembered to tie his jug to his saddle.



Part 1: Chapters 22-25 Analysis

Lorena and Jake join the camp and have a quick and uncomfortable meal, during which Jake confesses to Call that he won't be joining them to Montana, but may ride along with Lorie for safety's sake until Denver. The silence is partially because Call is unhappy with having a woman on the trail, and that Jake got him wound up for Montana and won't even be joining them, but it's also partly because Lorie shows up wearing pants. None of the guys have ever seen that before. Dish is so rattled to see her there with Jake that he gets up without a word and leaves on his horse to work the herd even though it isn't his shift.

The Captain makes the decision that they'll leave that evening, and shares the information with Newt. It is a rare occasion that he would discuss his plans with him, so Newt feels a bond beginning with Call. Bolivar decides to stay with them and go to Montana without so much as saying goodbye to his wife and girls. Gus rides back to town one more time to get his sign, and to say goodbye to Xavier. While he is there, Lippy makes the decision to go with the group instead of staying behind. Lonesome Dove will practically be a ghost town.

The hands pick out their mounts for the trip, and are assigned their positions. Deets scouts ahead for water and a place to bed down each night. Gus and Call take a last look at the Rio Grande, and Gus asks him if this will be a tough enough trip for him to maintain some interest in life. He reminds Call that this is a risk solely based on money, not duty, and tells him that he has no desire to die fortune hunting. Call reminds him that they weren't finding their fortune in Lonesome Dove. His life is pushing him still, and it's likely even Call himself doesn't understand why.



Part 2: Chapters 26-29

Part 2: Chapters 26-29 Summary

July Johnson is the youngest of the ten boys in his family, and at the age of twenty-four is the Sheriff of Fort Smith. His deputy, a man named Roscoe Brown, is twice the Sheriff's age, but lays claim to less than half of his ambition. Peach is the wife of July's brother Ben who was accidentally shot by Jake Spoon. She wants to know when July is leaving to find her husband's killer. July recently married Elmira who was previously married in Missouri to Dee Boot, and has a son named Joe. Her husband supposedly died of smallpox and she meets July in St. Jo, Missouri when he came to testify. Dee has actually gone north. When July gets home, he tells Elmira it's time he goes after Jake Spoon. She tells him to take Joe with him and July tries to argue, but to no avail. Elmira resents July, but not for any reason he has knowledge of. She is pregnant, and as each day passes, she misses Dee Boot more. They are so unlike, July and Dee. July is steady and reliable and polite to a fault. In contrast, self involved and with an eye toward self interest, Dee cares only about Dee. It occurs to Ellie that once Joe and July have left, there's nothing to stop her from going to find Dee. Just before dawn, Joe and July go out and catch their horses. Roscoe can't believe that July will risk taking Joe along, but Joe isn't questioning his good fortune. He likes July, and can't wait to get going.

Less than a week later, Roscoe is sitting in front of the jail house, whittling, and sees Peach and Charlie Barnes coming up the street. Peach wants to know if Roscoe has been out to check on Elmira for July. As Roscoe sees no pressing need to do so and doesn't really care for Elmira, he's been avoiding the entire issue. Peach and Charlie assure Roscoe that Elmira is gone, and tell him he'd better do something. Roscoe is at a complete loss. He goes to July's house and finds that Elmira is indeed gone. He speculates that perhaps a bear has taken her. Peach is exasperated by how slow Roscoe is to catch on. She finally tells him that Elmira probably left on the barge that departed several days ago. Roscoe is getting a headache just thinking about it. The barge had brought whiskey traders, and Roscoe had been relieved when they left seemingly without incident. Unfortunately, however, they left with an extra passenger. He questions whether he should go after her for July, or go after July to let him know his wife is gone. The only other alternative is to stay where he is and wait for July to return and give him the bad news then. He hardly has time to think of any of these options as the news passes around like wildfire and everyone in town wants to know what Roscoe is going to do about it. Finally, old lady Harkness, the schoolteacher, comes by and tells him that he'd better decide to go after one or the other, unless he really is useless. When she marches off, Roscoe sneaks a nip from a whiskey bottle he keeps for ailments. Before long he has finished the whiskey and has fallen asleep. He wakes to find Peach and Charlie standing over him again. For a brief moment, he hopes he has dreamed the entire thing. Peach is quick to set him straight, and tell him to go and find July. Like July, Roscoe realizes he has no choice, and saddles up his horse. He has a bad feeling, but he gives Memphis a kick anyway and they leave for Texas.



Part 2: Chapters 26-29 Analysis

July Johnson is a responsible sheriff. He's a small town man, and his values are strong. He's married to Elmira, who came to town with little more than her son Joe. The townsfolk think July is crazy when he marries her as he hardly knows much about her at all, but July defends her to any who dare to speak ill of her, and that includes Roscoe. Roscoe is not as civic minded as the sheriff. As Deputy, his duties require much less of him, and with the exception of rousting the occasional drunk, his job suits his personality. Roscoe is not happy with July's decision to follow Jake and bring him back, mainly because that leaves him in charge of the town and responsible if anything goes wrong. Roscoe definitely doesn't want that responsibility. If not for Peach and her persistence, July would have stayed in Fort Smith, but Peach is not to be ignored. She is large, overbearing in size and personality, and related. The combination is one that July is unable to avoid or ignore, so without any desire to do so, he packs himself and Joe, and they leave for Texas where they believe Jake is headed.

Elmira is an unhappy, pregnant new wife who resents her husband mostly because he treats her so well. She is used to the likes of Dee Boot, men who abandon her or simply don't care about her at all. She is perfectly willing and eager to leave her new husband in search of the man whom she told the entire town is dead. She can't wait to go, and even leaves her son Joe behind. Roscoe tries everything he can think of to get out of going after July when Elmira leaves on the whiskey traders boat. He has the impression that he won't be coming back, and the premonition is so strong that it worries him. He tells the group that Elmira might come back while he's gone, but no one really believes that. He also tries to explain that with a country so large, he and July could circle each other for months and still not meet, but no one cares about that either. All they want is for Roscoe to get going, so he does with great reluctance.



Part 2: Chapters 30-33

Part 2: Chapters 30-33 Summary

Jake and Lorena reach the Nueces River before the herd. It's been a hard day for Lorena. Jake gets a mesquite thorn in his thumb and tries to get it out, but misses some. To kill the pain, he drinks steadily, and by the time Lorena finds the river, he is so drunk that he can't even help her to set up camp. She keeps hoping they'll come across a town that has a doctor, but so far it has been nothing but miles of dust and mesquite thickets. Lorena sets Jake up against a tree and goes down to the river to wash. She stands in the water chest deep, letting it wash the miles of dust away, and then sits on the grass to dry. Jake decides he wants a poke, but is too sick to finish what he starts. She makes a fire, thinking she'll get some coffee into Jake, and sees a rider come up and wade into the creek. She's afraid at first, but Jake wakes up and recognizes Deets. Deets is looking for a place to cross the herd, and luckily came across Lorena and Jake. He digs out the thorn with the needle he keeps to repair his pants, and manages to get the remainder of the thorn out of Jake's thumb. He tells Lorena that she best make camp on the other side of the river tonight, explaining that a storm is coming and the river will be up higher tomorrow. Deets helps her move their camp across the river. Call is nervous. The herd is trail green, and his hired hands are as well. He's not sure how they'll come through a bad storm this early in the trip. Call tells Newt to tell the boys to hold the herd and Newt rides off to do so, but the storm begins almost before he can accomplish his task. They all pull bandanas over their faces and hunker down, but the sand storm is blinding. Newt quickly loses all sense of direction. Knowing that he is supposed to be at the back of the herd, he keeps trying to get his bearings, but to no avail. The cattle begin to run, and his horse joins them. The wind roars and the heat and dust are almost unbearable, making even breathing difficult. Before Newt can dig the sand from his eyes, the rain starts. It blows in his face and causes streams to flow from the front and the back of his hat. He stops trying to control Mouse, and lets him have his head. The horse is as miserable and confused as Newt is, and blindly plods along with the herd.

Jake forgets to hobble the horses, remembering only after the first lightening strike. He manages to get hobbles on his horse and on the pack mule, but Lorena's horse bolts. Lorena is afraid of the lightning, and when it starts to hit nearby trees, she hides under a tarp. Jake knows they have to get away from the tree they are huddled under, but can't convince Lorie to move. He pulls at her to get her to move and she hits him, but he grabs her and drags her towards the river with the tarp. The next crack of lightning shakes the ground, and they huddle together under the tarp as the tree they had been leaning against is struck hard and half falls to the ground. She puts her head down on her knees and waits for it to pass, thinking how she didn't thank Deets when he left.

Early the next morning, the sky is clear again. Newt finds that he is at the back of the herd where he should be, and Deets reports all are accounted for but for Gus. Deets speculates that he might have gone to check on Jake and Lorena and asks Call if he

should go see. Call wants Gus with them when they attempt to cross the river, so he agrees.

Part 2: Chapters 30-33 Analysis

Lorena is already getting a feel for how difficult this trip is going to be. Suddenly, the offer from Xavier is looking pretty good, and she finds herself wondering why it was that she even wanted to go to San Francisco. Jake is unable to get the entire mesquite thorn from his thumb, and it is full of infection. He drinks excessively to dull the pain, and by the time they find the Nueces river, Lorena is ready to make camp. She finds a clearing and gets them set up, and then gets into the river to bathe. Not long afterward, Deets shows up, and saves them both. He warns them of the upcoming storm, digs the remaining mesquite thorn out of Jake's thumb, and helps them to cross the river and remake their camp on the other side.

The storm hits hard, and Newt spends a night lost and alone in the miserable weather. Beginning with a sandstorm so thick that vision is obliterated, Newt finds himself riding the storm out, with Mouse in control. Mouse moves with the herd, frightened and uncomfortable just like his owner. In the morning, to Newt's surprise, he is exactly where he is supposed to be. In all, only about twenty-five cattle are lost, which is miraculous given that the herd is new to being on the trail and the hands are inexperienced. Call is pleased with everyone's performance. Gus is the only one missing in the morning, and Deets heads out to Jake and Lorena's camp to see if he is there. Call wants someone with experience with him when they try to get the herd across this first river of many.



Part 2: Chapters 34-37

Part 2: Chapters 34-37 Summary

Lorena's spirits clear with the morning sun, and Jake rides off to look for her horse. While she is resting, Gus rides up leading her mare, telling her that she looks as pretty as the morning, and asks where Jake is. When Lorie tells him, he laughs and says they should call him back before he gets lost. He fires a couple of shots in the air, and by the time the bacon has finished cooking, Jake has returned in a foul temper. He thinks Gus has tried to sneak in for a poke, and complains that there is such a thing as too much of his company. He tells Gus that they'll be headed for San Antone. However, Lorie isn't going back. Jake is stunned that Lorie is defying him, and when he insists and she refuses again, he slaps her. Lorie is embarrassed and Gus tells her that if Jake runs off and leaves her alone, she should come and get him. She begins packing after Gus leaves, and Jake comes over with a half-hearted apology. She tells him to go ahead and gamble and he gets mad again.

Call is determined to get the herd across the Nueces before nightfall that day. Deets finds them another crossing downriver, and soon they begin the work of nudging the herd across. Newt is nervous, but Mouse swims without trouble. Barely out of the water, Newt hears screaming. Before he can turn Mouse around, Pea Eye and the Captain race back into the water. Using their ropes to beat the water, they make their way as fast as they can to Sean, who is screaming in a way that unnerves the entire group. Water moccasins are everywhere, and Sean's horse makes it back to the opposite bank and rolls in the dirt. Pea manages to grab Sean's collar, and together with the Captain, they pull him from the water. The snakes scatter, but when they pull off Sean's clothing they see eight sets of fang marks—one even on his neck. Deets is beside himself with guilt for having chosen this crossing. They can do nothing now but watch Sean die, and Newt cries unabashed. The remaining hands, cattle, and Bolivar with his wagon are leery about crossing, but the snakes have scattered, and the Captain goes back into the river first to help. Finally, all are on the other side. Allen O'Brien is beside himself with grief, but they give Sean a proper burial and Gus says a few words.

Elmira is not unhappy, despite the stink of the whiskey boat. She feels the eyes of the whiskey runners on her, but only Fowler, the chief trader, will talk to her. He drinks continuously and talks mostly of his hatred for Indians. She thinks about Dee more and more, and never gives Joe or July a second thought. Roscoe isn't having fun traveling either. On his first day, he runs into a bunch of wild pigs, and Memphis gets so spooked that he starts running. The next morning, he comes across a farmer and goes over only to discover it's a woman. Before he can find out much more than the fact that July has not passed this way, she has him off his horse and helping her to remove stumps from the ground. Alone on this farm, she works the land with more enthusiasm than most men, and tells Roscoe more than once that she figures men are a useless race entirely. She propositions Roscoe, offering a marriage during which she'd teach him how to farm. At first adamantly against any suggestion he stay, Roscoe accepts an invitation to



remain the night. Midway through the night he wakes to find her straddling him for a poke of her own. Roscoe is so surprised that he just decides to go along with it. Then he finds he's enjoying it, and obviously so is Louisa. She asks him to stay again, but he plans to return on his way back, and can hardly keep from crying as he rides away.

Part 2: Chapters 34-37 Analysis

Lorena comes to realize she is born to travel. She glories in the sunshine and open sky, the hardships only making her resolve stronger. As much as she rises to the occasion, Jake shirks from it. He is sullen and angry and suspiciously jealous after finding Lorie with Gus. The fact that Gus had returned Lorie's mare seems to escape Jake entirely, and he is rude and inhospitable. He decides to go to San Antonio to gamble, but Lorena refuses to go with him, opting to stay in the camp instead. Gus would happily have morning coffee every morning with Lorena, but he heads back to help Call cross the herd. Call is determined to do so before nightfall, and Deets has selected a spot to cross the herd. They begin gently nudging the herd in, and surprisingly, none are resistant. Newt is very nervous about crossing, but Mouse swims fine and manages to find the opposite bank. He is just getting himself out when he hears an awful scream. Sean O'Brien is being bitten by water moccasins and by the time they get him out, it is already too late. The boys are stunned and with great difficulty, they bury Sean under an old oak tree, and continue on their journey.

Elmira's trip is mostly quiet, but the whiskey traders take turns making her nervous. One named Fowler takes a liking to her, and pronounces her his on penalty of death to anyone who dares disagree. One tries, and dies. Roscoe is trying to catch up to July, but he comes across a female farmer needing help and winds up staying the night. Louisa is ready to have a husband move in, and actively courts Roscoe to become husband number four, but Roscoe isn't interested. He explains why, but she doesn't understand his dedication. She tries to convince him by mounting him in the middle night, and while he enjoys it more than he can say, he still feels the need to complete the task assigned him. He leaves the next morning, overwhelmed with sadness, having made arrangements to return on the way back, if she'll still have him. Part of his sadness is because this is the closest he's come to female companionship in many years and he has just remembered what was so good about it.



Part 2: Chapters 38-41

Part 2: Chapters 38-41 Summary

Joe has a million questions for July as they travel on the trail to Texas, but July is in no mood to be conversing. He rides with Joe from morning until night, barely stopping to relieve himself and let the horses drink now and then. The mosquitoes are the worst of the journey, and though July knows that he is pushing the horses too hard, and that Joe is probably sore, he is unable to slow down.

Sean's death affects the entire company. Even Deets is gloomy, feeling the responsibility weighing heavily on his shoulders. It is about the only thing anyone in camp talks about for days; and while Call would be happier if they'd all just forget about it, Augustus understands that the way to deal with loss is to talk it out until it stops filling all of your thoughts. Gus knows that even death will become boring if the crew talk about it long enough.

Lorena enjoys life on the trail more every day. Jake is not as happy. He whines and complains about everything, and can't get past the fact that, despite her assurances that she'll stay in camp and wait for him, Lorena won't go into San Antonio to gamble with him. He drinks to excess, and accuses her of wanting to go back to whoring. He finally admits to himself that he shouldn't have taken such a willful woman on the trail, and considers ditching her in a town somewhere and rejoining the boys on the drive. He chuckles to himself as he thinks about Elmira, wondering what July Johnson as a sheriff would think if he knew that he'd married a whore. He and Elmira are acquaintances from way back.

Just before San Antonio, Lippy has an accident with the wagon. The boys are half asleep in their saddles when the sound of running cattle gets their attention. They see the wagon, with no one at the reins, heading for the creek. Jim Rainey tries to help by heading off the mules, but only makes things worse, as instead of crossing at the shallow area they were headed for, the mules turn just enough to put Lippy and the wagon into deep water where the wagon promptly rolls over, trapping Lippy underneath, his coat caught between the seat slats. Gus sees what is going on and quickly throws a loop over one of the still spinning wheels in the air, and spurring his horse, he pulls the wagon upright again. Lippy is limp as a rag doll, but Augustus and Call seem more concerned with the condition of the wagon, to Newt's great surprise. Before long, Lippy coughs and spits up a mouthful of muddy water. Bol finally catches up. Without even looking at the wagon, he tells the Captain that he's going back. He's having dreams about his family, and wants to go home. He felt some bitterness leaving, feeling that the Captain should have tried harder to stop him. He is already second guessing himself about his decision to go home before he is out of sight of the herd. He misses Lonesome Dove, and makes the decision to stop there first to ring the dinner bell in remembrance.



Part 2: Chapters 38-41 Analysis

July is worried about Elmira, but really has no idea who she is. Elmira is just a semi retired whore that Jake knows and has enjoyed many times. Both Jake and Elmira find her current situation quite amusing, her being the sheriff's wife. July's only concern is that she might be ill, and he worries so much that he is unable to provide much companionship for Joe on his first trail ride away from home. He knows that Joe is confused by his silence, but still can't pull himself out. All he wants to do is get to Texas, find Jake, and go home. He has terrible premonitions that something is wrong, and can't shake them.

Jake likes the trail less every day. His interests lie in playing cards, whoring, and eating, and work is a four letter word he has no use for. He believes that he and Lorie were meant to sleep in feather beds, but Lorie is enjoying the trip. Every day she grows more confident, doing the lion's share of the work setting up and dismantling their camp each day. She stays just ahead of the herd, and feels secure enough that she even tells Jake that if he wants to gamble he should go ahead, without her. Lorie tires of his constant complaining, and is less talkative each day, refusing to respond to his childish whining and complaining.

By the time the herd is passing San Antonio, they are doing it without a wagon or a cook. Bolivar accidentally discharges his rifle scaring the mules into running, and causing the mishap that breaks the wagon in half. He resigns, already feeling as though he's come too far. He wants to go home, but not to his home in Mexico. Bol misses the Lonesome Dove ranch. He wants life to go back to normal, and is disappointed that the Captain is determined to travel so far away. Given a gentle horse, he decides to head back to the Hat Creek Cattle Company and Lonesome Dove.



Part 2: Chapters 42-45

Part 2: Chapters 42-45 Summary

Call and Gus ride into San Antonio to find a new wagon and cook. They secure a wagon almost immediately, purchase a couple of mules to get it back to camp, and Augustus agrees to drive them to the herd under the condition that they have a meal and a drink first. They head for the Buckhorn saloon, which is owned by an old friend named Willie Montgomery. The young bartender tells them that they should have brushed off the trail dirt before they came in, and then puts whiskeys in front of them, and Gus throws a ten dollar piece on the bar. The bartender grabs it just as Gus takes hold of his head and smashes his face into the bar. He then holds his Colt to the bartender's head and tells him that they also require respect. He introduces himself and Call, and suggests the barkeep turn around and look at the pictures taken of them when they were young. Then he takes the glass the bartender just polished clean, tosses it lazily into the air behind himself, and with a shot sends it to the ground in pieces. The new owner comes down and threatens to call the sheriff, showing as little respect for Captains Call and McCrae as the young bartender had. The sheriff, Tobe Walker, was a former Ranger who had ridden with the Captains for a time. He greets his old friends and is less than impressed with the saloon owner's behavior. The next morning, Call and Gus decide to try finding a cook in Austin. They ride east and suddenly Gus veers. Call follows and finds him sitting, looking out at a little creek, and is fairly stumped by the tears on Gus's cheeks. He asks what's wrong, and Gus tells him that the place is Clara's orchard. Call might have known it had something to do with Clara, as he'd never known Gus to shed a tear for anyone else. They continue on about three miles before Gus sees Jake and Lorie's camp, and sees Lorie is alone. She'd already been alone two days while Jake gambled, and Gus decides to stay and keep her safe until Jake gets back. Call leaves, and Gus confesses he's hoping for a poke, but Lorie laughingly tells him that this time they'll play blackjack for it. Augustus gets into the creek to bathe, and when he gets out, he asks for his gun and belt. He puts both on casually, and waits until the rider he sees approaches. Blue Duck asks where Call is almost right away. Gus tells him that Call will be right back, and invites him to sit and wait, but Blue Duck declines and rides off. Gus wants Lorie to pack up her camp and go with him back to the herd, but Lorie refuses.

Roscoe's afraid he won't find Texas at all, but comes across a group of soldiers heading to Buffalo Springs, Texas. Relieved, he relaxes a little and takes the soldiers up on their offer of whiskey. The next morning he is so ill that he is unable to get on his own horse. The soldiers throw him into the wagon where he travels for miles, lying flat and vomiting out the back. He is not feeling much better when they part. Thinking about sleeping against a tree, he stumbles on a farm. The owner is outside cleaning a possum, and Roscoe figures he might get directions or a place to stay, but the man is unfriendly. Despite sharing his whiskey with him, Roscoe is not invited in to dinner or to sleep inside, and ends up propped against the wall, wishing he'd kept going. He hears the old man going at the girl and hitting her to make her comply. He leaves early, without saying goodbye. Roscoe is half asleep in the saddle when Memphis brushes up against a wasp



nest. The nest breaks away from the branch and lands right in Roscoe's lap before rolling off onto the ground, but not before coming alive. He and Memphis run, but not before a couple get down into his shirt. As he is shaking it out, checking for yellow jacket stings, he looks up and sees the young girl from the cabin. She isn't much older than fifteen, and introduces herself as Janey. She's run away from the abusive charge to whom she'd been sold for a few skunk pelts. She mentions that she's walked the distance from San Antonio, and Roscoe begins to feel a bit of hope that perhaps she could show him the way. He stops at the creek to tend his stings with mud, and when he lies back for a moment, she disappears. When he wakes, she has a rabbit, then skins it and cooks it for him.

Part 2: Chapters 42-45 Analysis

Gus and Call ride into San Antonio to replace their wagon and cook and are disappointed with the reception they get. Used to better treatment, having been largely responsible for making the area livable by engaging and removing the Indians and bandits, they are angry with the lack of recognition they receive. After some particularly rude service in a saloon where they once had been well known and appreciated in the past, Gus loses his cool and finds himself correcting the insolent behavior of the young bartender by breaking his nose on the bar. The sheriff turns out to have been a Ranger in the old days himself, and when it's suggested that he do something about the "two old cowboys" causing trouble, he can hardly believe his eyes. He greets his friends, they talk for a while, and Sheriff Toby Walker is sad to see them go.

Roscoe ends up disturbing a wasp nest, and before he and his horse can run fast enough, several go down his shirt and start stinging. When they stop running and he takes off his shirt to take stock of the bites, he looks up to see the farmer's "girl". He wants to send her back, but then finds out that not only can she hunt and cook, but she also knows the way to San Antonio. Roscoe feels like his luck may be changing. He helps her into the saddle with him after eating the rabbit she caught, and allows her to show him the way. He is regaining his confidence for the first time since leaving home.

After the evening meal, Call saddles up and rides out into the darkness to make sure everything is safe. With no cook, the crew is getting agitated by the lack of variety in their meals. Gus and Call decide to try Austin for a cook, but on the way Gus discovers that Jake has left Lorie alone. He decides to stay with her to make sure she stays safe until Jake returns. Gus has a bath in the creek, and as he's getting out he see an old nemesis of theirs called Blue Duck. A particularly violent Indian, Gus is understandably nervous. Blue Duck comes down and waters his horse, talking to Gus for a short time before leaving, but Gus doesn't believe he's actually gone. Blue Duck is a slippery one, and Gus doesn't think they've seen the end of him. Lorie offers Gus her companionship if he'll take her to San Francisco, but Gus tells her that he's going Ogallala to see Clara. Jealous and angry, Lorie doesn't understand, and cries in disappointment.



Part 2: Chapters 46-49

Part 2: Chapters 46-49 Summary

Gus rides to the herd, sending Newt back to watch Lorena. Dish would have been happy to go, but when Jake returns, he's more likely to shoot Dish than Newt. Call rides up just as Newt is leaving, and Gus tells him about Blue Duck's visit. Gus sends Deets to track Blue Duck, but he comes back at dusk, having lost the Indian when his trail led into a creek and never came out. Call rides up to the nearest bluffs and sends Deets to position himself between their camp and Jake's to keep watch. Call's thoughts are on Newt's mother, Maggie, the one love of his life. Dead twelve years, he still can't get her out of his mind, and the memory doesn't lose any of its sting with time or age. When they'd spoken last, she'd begged him to just say her name out loud, but Call didn't understand her, and something about that conversation stopped him from returning. When he heard she'd had a child, he agonized over whether or not to see her, but something always stopped him. Gus claimed Maggie told him the child was Call's, and he feels a deep sadness whenever he thinks about it. He wraps Hell Bitch's grazing rope around his waist and lays against his saddle to sleep.

Newt rides quickly through the early evening to get to Lorena's camp. Lorena doesn't want Newt to stay, and wastes no time telling him. Unable to argue with her, he turns his horse around, but then decides he can still manage his task. He rides out for about half a mile, and then ties Mouse up and walks back quietly on foot. About a hundred yards from her camp he stops under a stand of oak trees and sits down with his pistol drawn. He daydreams and then drifts off, and wakes knowing that something is wrong. A thundering sound means the cattle are stampeding. He hears men yelling to the west, and a group of cattle run past him. He has to get back to Mouse and help, so he runs as hard as he can to where he left him tied, but Mouse is gone. He can feel the earth shake under his feet, but there is no need to go anywhere, so he just sits there. Finally, he gets up and begins walking toward the wagon in the early morning light. He hears a galloping horse and sees Pea Eye. Pea tells him that the Captain is having a fit thinking Newt has been trampled, and asks if his horse threw him. Thinking quick, Newt decides that sounds better, and lets Pea believe it. Mouse is found with the cattle when they are rounded up. Heading back, they see the new cook walking towards camp, leading a pack mule. Po Campo introduces himself. As they walk the rest of the way back to camp, Po shows Newt how to find Plover eggs, and by the time they arrive, Po has sixty eggs or better, and wastes no time cooking them up for the boys. While reluctant at first, the boys enjoy the breakfast. Later, Po fries up grasshoppers, and one by one the boys try them dipped in molasses, and are amazed at how good they are. Jake rides into camp, partially drunk and looking nervous. He asks where Lorie is, and right away Gus knows. Call tells him that they aren't hiding her, and suggests that maybe she just moved her camp further. Jake tells him that the camp hasn't moved, but the horses and Lorie are gone. Gus finally tells him that it's likely that Blue Duck stole her. Jake looks sick. Gus saddles his horse quietly, and heads out to get Lorena from Blue Duck.



Lorena didn't even see him coming. Suddenly, he is just in front of her with his rifle, insisting she go with him. When she mounts, he ties her ankles to the stirrups. They hear the sound of a stampede, and Blue Duck rides right into the middle of it. Lorie is so frightened she closes her eyes, and prays Gus or one of the other boys sees them, but the sound of the stampede dies, and she loses hope. With their horses tied together, Blue Duck kicks his horse into a lope and never looks back at her once. They ride all night, and when they finally stop it is only for a moment. He gets off his horse and unties her legs. While the horses drink, Blue Duck relieves himself, telling her to do the same if she needs to, but she is so numb that she doesn't summon the presence of mind to drink or pee. It is an omission she will regret. They ride through miles of empty country, and Blue Duck never stops. They ride through creek after creek, while Lorena fairly wilts from thirst and the need to pee becomes so extreme that it becomes agonizing. Then all at once she realizes she is wet, and her bladder has let go as she dozed. Still they ride on, through creek after creek, none of which she can reach, and with her wet pants chafing against the saddle. Blue Duck hobbles the horses and tells her his cure for women who try to run away. It involves cutting a small hole in the belly and removing a string of intestine, and after dragging them forty feet or so, he stakes them to the ground and leaves them for the animals. She knows he isn't lying. She dozes for what only seems like a moment before he shakes her awake. At first she can't understand why he takes so little interest in her, but then he comments on how Monkey John will like her yellow hair. That day her horse gives out and he puts her on the mule, leaving the horse behind. When the mule quits, she is forced to ride behind him, holding onto the saddle strings so she won't have to touch him. That night he binds her hands and feet and leaves. Lorena doesn't move, too afraid to disobey him. She sleeps, and when she wakes he is cutting her loose again and another horse stands close by. There is no saddle, and she has to hold onto the mane with both hands. He still binds her ankles.

Part 2: Chapters 46-49 Analysis

When Call returns to camp after going to town to hire a cook, he finds out about Blue Duck and at first is reluctant to believe that it's true, but Gus spoke to the Indian, leaving no room for doubt. Blue Duck is an unfinished piece of business from their Ranger days, and in all their years they'd never actually seen him until this meeting. Call rides up to the bluff to keep watch, and sends Deets to do the same between the two camps. In the silence of the night, Call's thoughts again turn to Maggie. Newt's mother may have been dead twelve years already, but the wound is still fresh for Woodrow. The fact that he never returned to her nibbles at his conscience. Maggie was his one true love, and he left her because his pride wouldn't let him stay.

Newt is sent to watch over Lorena. Gus knows that Blue Duck isn't likely to just ride away and he's sure that the Indian will be back before long. Dish is upset by the decision, so in love with Lorena himself that he can't understand the fact that Gus would send Newt instead, but Gus's reasoning is sound. If Jake came back and found Dish with Lorena, it is likely that he would shoot either or both of them, but Newt was still a child in Jake's eyes, and therefore not likely to be considered a romantic threat. Newt is unable to assert himself with Lorena and insist that he stay when he should have.



Instead, he tries to watch her from a distance and ends up without a horse and walking back to camp. He is very relieved when Pea is the one to come across him first, and when Pea makes the assumption that Newt was thrown by Mouse in the stampede, Newt does nothing to correct him. As they head back, they meet the new cook, Po Campo. In the confusion of the stampede, and Newt's horse returning without him, no one thinks about Lorena until Jake comes riding into camp to find her. When Gus sees him, he knows right away what has happened. He is saddled and ready to go, feeling responsible for having left Lorie alone to begin with. Deets would happily have joined him, but Gus refuses and heads out, not wanting to risk anyone else's life. Jake is too drunk to be of much use. Angry, he rides off, but Call lets him go, figuring that with a horse as played out as Jake's was, chances were good that he'd just ride back to his own camp and sulk. Lorena knows Jake won't be able to help her, and figures he's probably still gambling. If she thought the travel portion of her captivity by Blue Duck was bad, it would pale compared to the conditions she faces with Blue Duck and his crew.



Part Two: Chapters 50-53

Part Two: Chapters 50-53 Summary

July figures he might find Jake gambling in Fort Worth. July goes to the local post office to mail a letter to Elmira and is surprised to find there is a message waiting for him. Peach writes that Elmira left the day after he did, and Roscoe is on his way to find July. Peach states that in testament to his character, it wasn't likely Roscoe would find July. July doesn't want to tell Joe that his ma has run off and left him without even saying goodbye, but Joe is way ahead of him. He asks July if his mother left and then tells him that his ma is like that and doesn't like to spend too much time in one place. He lets slip that his ma has probably gone to look for Dee Boot. This is a surprise to July, as she told him Dee died of smallpox. When July brings that up, Joe realizes he's made a mistake, but can't think his way out of it. July decides to intercept Roscoe, and by the time they stop for the night, he convinces himself that Roscoe must know something. In the morning, as July is making coffee, the sounds of cattle can be heard. By the time they are on horseback with breakfast eaten, the morning plains are full of cattle, a thousand head or better. They ride to a wagon and the cook directs them to his boss, Wilbarger. July inquires about Jake Spoon, and Wilbarger tells him that he's overshot him. He'd seen Jake in Lonesome Dove and tells July that the entire group is planning a cattle drive to Colorado and should be passing them any day now.

Roscoe travels in relative comfort once Janey joins him. She likes to walk and has no trouble keeping up. She hunts better than any man and all Roscoe has to do is ride and eat. She disappears whenever he meets anyone on the trail, and hides until he is alone again. At one point, Roscoe meets a group of bandits that make him quite nervous, and after they leave, Janey does not return. Hours pass, and beginning to second guess the direction he's traveling in, he turns his horse around. Just before he gallops back in the direction he came, Janey appears. She tells him that the bandits haven't given up, and have been following him for miles. Just a little while ago, while he waffled with indecision, they'd passed him and got out in front of them. Now they lay in ambush. Janey asks Roscoe for his gun, telling him she'll go and shoot them for him. He gives it to her, and she runs off into the night. He hears his gun fire, climbs out of the gully to find the larger bandit with the shotgun, who tells him to climb out. The bandits, disappointed by the slim pickings in Roscoe's bedroll and saddlebags, can't believe that Roscoe isn't carrying more than thirty dollars. Janey slowly slips backwards. Having bound her hands but not her feet, she springs up and runs as fast as she can into the tall grass. The bandits argue about what to do, since light is fading fast and they still remember how she ambushed them with the pistol. Had she been a better shot, they'd both be dead, and neither one forgot it. As they stood arguing, Janey begins throwing good sized rocks at them. Her aim is deadly accurate, and Roscoe admires her talents. One of the bandits loads his rifle with buckshot, readying to fire in her general direction when Roscoe witnesses a miracle. Out of nowhere, July Johnson stands up behind the men, with gun in hand. Roscoe calls Janey after all the commotion dies down, but she is no where to be seen. July wants to take the bandits back to Fort Worth. An hour later,



Roscoe is frightened half off his saddle when Janey jumps up behind him on Memphis. She tells him she thought she could keep up, but July never slows down.

Elmira knows she'll have problems with Big Zwey long before they get off the whiskey boat, even though he never spoke to her. He watches her all the time. Fowler brings her meals, talking the traders into letting her have a small room to herself. It is more of a closet right next to the warehouse where piles of buffalo skins are stored, and the combination of the constant smell and the fleas that hop off the hides and find her is enough to make her wonder about her decision to come so far. There are no stages coming through, and the dirt tracks that lead into the plains are empty and long. Finally, bringing her food one evening, Fowler confesses that Big Zwey wants to marry Elmira. She's already married, but Fowler says Big Zwey wants to marry her temporarily. Fowler tells her that Zwey will probably take her to Ogallala if she wants to go, and adds that he isn't as bad as some. Elmira doesn't care as she has no desire to return to Kansas. What makes everything difficult is her pregnancy. Big Zwey drops all pretense and watches her unabashed from morning until night. She tells Big Zwey that she'll go, if he thinks he can get them to Ogallala, and offers to pay him whatever he thinks it's worth. She's not very good on horseback, so Zwey offers to have a wagon repaired by the local blacksmith for her if she is able to drive a team of mules. Zwey tells her that he might take Luke along with them. His plan is to hunt on the way, and before Elmira can second guess her decision, Zwey is picking up the tongue of the wagon and dragging it to the blacksmith's shop.

Part Two: Chapters 50-53 Analysis

July decides to detour to Fort Worth on his way to Lonesome Dove, thinking Jake might have done the same, and when he gets there he finds a message waiting for him from Peach. It stuns him that Elmira has left him, and that fact changes everything. Suddenly, finding Jake Spoon just doesn't matter as much as finding Elmira. He also learns from Peach's letter that Roscoe is on his way, and that cinches it. He heads out with Joe, and runs into a herd being driven by Wilbarger's crew. Joe is very disappointed when July turns around and heads back towards Arkansas to intercept Roscoe, but it is a lucky thing that he does. When they find Roscoe, he is being held up by road bandits. Roscoe can hardly believe his eyes when July gets the drop on them. July is still determined to find Elmira, and Roscoe isn't about to let July out of his sight again. Knowing that it was blind luck and Janey that got him this far, he has no intentions of trying to go back to Arkansas alone. They try to board Janey with the woman who runs the livery, but Janey doesn't stay. The next morning, after riding twenty miles north, they wake to find her beside the camp fire. She had run through the night across the plains alone, and Joe is suitably impressed and discouraged by her appearance at the same time. She is so capable in every way that she makes him feel quite useless. It's a feeling he doesn't like, and he quietly tells himself that he wouldn't miss her if she were taken by Indians. From there, she runs beside them every day, never getting far behind, and no one really knows what to make of her.



Elmira has troubles of her own, and is beginning to rethink her quick departure. The whiskey boat had seemed relatively safe, but now in an isolated area with men who were used to a more violent and difficult life, she finds, as one of the few women, she has good reason to be nervous. She can hardly leave the small, flea infested closet she is in, despite Fowler's attempts to make things comfortable for her. When Fowler tells her a week later that he is leaving, but that Big Zwey wants to marry her and would probably take her to Ogallala, she makes a decision. Feeling it would be safer with Zwey on the trail, she tells him she'll go, but they don't leave alone. Big Zwey decides to take Luke along with them. Luke is not shy, and talks non-stop. He looks her in the eyes when he speaks to her, which is something Big Zwey won't do yet, and his boldness makes her nervous. In fact, once out on the lonely prairie with the two men, she is more nervous than she was before. It seems that both men want her, and their intentions are so obvious that she has difficulty eating or sleeping. Despite her reservations, they leave her alone, hunting during the day, and playing with dice well into the night.



Part Two: Chapters 54-57

Part Two: Chapters 54-57 Summary

Augustus spends most of the first day looking for Blue Duck's tracks. He almost decides that he's lost his tracking skills. Blue Duck uses the stampeding herd to hide his tracks. Gus rides as hard as he dares, trying to catch up, yet not wanting to exhaust the only horse he has. Gus makes camp near the Brazos. On the bluff he can see for a great distance in the moonlit valleys. The silence is restful. He finds the carcass of Lorie's mare the next morning. His instincts tell him that Blue Duck is headed north to the Valley of Tears. Captives recovered from this area rarely survive for long. Gus had rescued a few in his days as a Ranger, and most had long surrendered their minds.

Blue Duck isn't interested in Lorena. To him she is chattel. He sells her to his men, telling them that the Kiowa can have her to use whenever they want. Monkey John is perturbed by the fact that Lorena won't speak. He threatens to cut her tongue out, but Dog Face intervenes. He has taken a liking to Lorena, and won't let Monkey John hurt her too badly. The Kiowas show up every few days, and are allowed to drag her off to their camp to use her. The two white men don't argue. Lorena knows that when they tire of her, they'll kill her, and she hopes it isn't Blue Duck who does it. She thinks about how it might happen, and even tries to will herself to death, but it doesn't work. Monkey John also has plans for her if she tries to escape, and shares them with her. She tries not to listen, but is horrified as he describes how he will sew her up with rawhide thread so tight that she can't pee, and then watch until she explodes. She tries to close her mind when they talk like that and quickly learns not to hear, but can't teach herself to stop breathing, despite how hard she tries. Blue Duck leaves camp for days at a time. Sometimes the Kiowa go with him, and other times not. One night Blue Duck returns with whiskey, which he freely dispenses. Despite their objections, within an hour Dog Face and Monkey John have lost their horses and so have many of the Indians. Still, Blue Duck wants to continue, but the only thing left to bet is Lorena, and the men are unwilling. All the Kiowa but one finally agree, and he stubbornly refuses to risk his partial interest in her. Ermoke, one of the Kiowa, is in the mood to gamble now, and still can't get the young man to agree, when suddenly a shot rings out and the young man falls over dead where he sits. The gambling continues, without further argument from anyone. Once Blue Duck wins Lorena as well, he makes them all an offer they can hardly refuse. He tells them that there is an old man tracking him, and if as a group they can kill him, Blue Duck will return their horses and Lorena as well.

Gus is thinking about Lorie when the Kiowa attack. He puts his horse into a dead run, looking for any kind of gully or creek bank to get cover behind, but there is nothing but miles of flat plains. He comes across a depression in the ground a buffalo made rolling, and killing his horse, he drags him down across the top of the depression giving himself a small hiding place. When the Indian's horses get wind of the fresh blood from Gus's dying horse they shy and won't attack. Gus starts shooting, at the Indians sitting still on their horses. He takes several down, and the remaining Indians back up. When the



cover of night arrives, he picks up his saddle and walks west, collecting ammunition and arms from the dead men on his way. Hearing shots from the east, he makes a quick decision to head back. Whoever it is might be friendly, and he approaches carefully until he hears voices. He stops to listen and hears conversation between July, Roscoe and Janey. When one of them wonders aloud what the Indians have been shooting at, he decides it's probably safe, and announces himself loudly as he walks toward their camp telling them not to shoot. July Johnson introduces himself, and Gus can't help but be surprised. He tells him he missed Jake Spoon by quite a mark, but July says he's got other important business now. July is determined to ride with him and help him to get Lorie back. Gus would rather he stayed with Roscoe and the two children, but July is stubborn and has himself half convinced that Elmira might also have been taken against her will. He leaves with Gus, and on the way to Blue Duck's camp Gus tries to assess the sheriff's skill level, finding he's never killed before, and he's had no experience with Indians. He won't be much help.

Dog Face, hit by one of Gus's shots, knows he is dying. Blue Duck won't leave him be. He wants to know how many men there were, and if McCrae has been hit. Monkey John is sure they'll get Gus in the morning because he's without a horse. Dog Face begs Monkey John to help Lorena, but Monkey John can't. Blue Duck gave her to the Kiowa. One of the Indians understands the conversation, and pulls out his knife in front of Dog Face. The Kiowa sits on his chest and Dog Face screams weakly. The rest quickly join in. One of them cuts his belt and pulls his pants off. Lorena turns away but not before seeing them castrate Dog Face. Another is already cutting deeply into his scalp, but his screams are quickly muffled when the Kiowa stuff his bloody organs into his mouth, shoving them further down his throat with the handle of his knife. Lying with her face near the ground, she hears the horses coming first, but has no idea who it is. Then Monkey John hears, and stands up with his rifle. A shot rings out and he sits again with a surprised look on his face. Lorena watches as two horses race over top of Monkey John and the shooting continues. July hasn't fired a shot, and stands looking at the carnage around him. Gus shakes him and tells him to go back to his deputy, explaining that Blue Duck is still out there, and he's a threat to fear.

Part Two: Chapters 54-57 Analysis

Gus hasn't had to use the skills he now finds himself needing the most for many years, and it takes him most of the first day to even find Blue Duck's tracks. He feels a strong responsibility for Lorena, knowing that he should have insisted that she come with him to camp after their meeting with Blue Duck. When he finally finds the tracks, it seems as though Blue Duck no longer tried to hide. His trail went straight, and after the second day, Gus stopped checking and just rode as hard as he dared to try to catch up. He didn't consider what he would do once he found Blue Duck and his crew. He ends up riding miles out of the way, a mistake he would not have made had he been checking for tracks along the way. Blue Duck seems to know his every move. He even seems to know when Gus will arrive, and sends his men out to kill him. Gus learns what he can about Blue Duck and his group from an old acquaintance he meets and heads out the next morning to get Lorie.



Blue Duck shows no more interest in Lorie now than he did the day she first saw him. She is merely a pawn he gambles with, chattel to be used, bought and sold at whim. He enjoyed that the men wanted her so badly that they would do almost anything to get and then keep her. Once he's allowed his boys to have a taste of Lorie for a couple of days, he comes back loaded with liquor, gets them all drunk, and then intimidates them into putting her up as ante for another gambling session, which of course they lose. It isn't Blue Duck's plan to keep her, though. This time he wants to use her to get Gus killed. When that doesn't work, he disgustedly gives her to the Indians, a move that scares Lorie so much she vomits in fear, but before they get a chance to abuse her further, Gus rides in to save her.

Gus meeting up with July Johnson on the trail is nothing short of miraculous, almost as much as July showing up when Roscoe needed him so badly. July follows Gus into Blue Duck's camp, although against Gus's better judgment as July has no experience either with Indians or with killing a man. His inexperience makes him more of a burden than a helping hand, and the only help he ends up giving is in providing an initial surprise. There was enough confusion with both of them riding in that Gus was able to kill all of the renegades while July sat in shock on his horse and did nothing but watch. Gus knows that Lorena is likely retreating into her mind, but still manages to get her to tell him that Blue Duck had been there that day. Gus sends July back to Roscoe and the kids immediately after the gunfight was over, knowing that Blue Duck was around, and that given a chance, he would continue his murderous ways.



Part Two: Chapters 58-61

Part Two: Chapters 58-61 Summary

Roscoe, Joe, and Janey wait for July to return. Every sound makes them jump, and Roscoe begins to drift, still holding his pistol cocked in his lap. He's glad he isn't with July and Gus, knowing that he hasn't the nerve. He wakes with a start to find Janey in front of him, holding a big rock poised over her head. When she throws it he realizes that someone else must be there. He is so surprised at first that he forgets he has his gun in his hand. Janey drops to her knees and tells him to shoot, but before he can raise the pistol a large shadow shoves him—not hard, but somehow he has no strength. He sits back down, feeling as though he is in a warm bath, totally unafraid. Janey crawls up and over his legs and reaches for his pistol, but before she can grab it the shadow is back. He tells her that if he weren't in such a hurry, he'd show her a thing or two. Roscoe watches him raise his arms and when they came down on Janey he hears a sound like an ax hitting wood. Janey collapses across Roscoe's legs and doesn't move. Roscoe calls out to Joe in confusion, and the shadow man asks, "Was that his name?" in his low and deliberate voice. Roscoe is so warm and tired he feels little concern, not even when the big shadow straddles him and reaches for his belt. He simply slips away into darkness. July returns an hour later and finds all three, stiffness already setting in. He mourns the loss of Roscoe, a man who asked for little, and mourns even for Janey. Finally, he takes out his knife and begins the laborious task of digging their graves. July is still digging when Gus and Lorie arrive, and Gus dismounts to help, wrapping the bodies in blankets. Both Roscoe and Janey are open from navel to breastbone, Janey and Joe both had their heads bashed in and Roscoe had been castrated, as well. He takes their wrapped bodies to July, who offers to help hunt Blue Duck down, but Gus tells him that he should probably go and find his wife, and trust that life will look after Blue Duck. July heads off for Adobe Walls to see if Elmira might be there. Gus and Lorena watch him ride away, and then Gus tells her to mount her horse and they'll go for a little ride. She is as obedient as a child, and won't allow Gus to get out of her sight. If she can see him, she feels safe.

Call begins to wonder about Gus. He expected him back in two or three days, and after the third day passes, he begins to worry. After five days, and then a week, he slowly acknowledges Gus might be dead. It is something he's never given much thought to. Call lets the men go into town for a last opportunity to carouse before the long journey to Ogallala, keeping the boys back to help him watch the herd. Dish decides to stay back as well, ever hopeful that Lorena and Gus will return, and still so in love with her that he can't bring himself to find a whore in Fort Worth. Po Campo didn't go to town either. He sits against the wagon, whittling chunks of wood into small female figures that he then gives away. Po tells Call how Blue Duck killed his sons, and the thought that Gus might be dead is a heavy weight for Call. Several times a day, the thought returns to him and leaves him feeling lost. He regrets not having more of a conversation with Gus before he left, and even regrets not going with him. They always rode together, and the thought that he might never know what happened to Gus is unnerving. When the



crew returns from town, Call asks them about Jake, and the crew disgustedly tells him that Jake is gambling as though nothing has happened, and they left him in a saloon with a whore. None of the men have any respect for Jake, which is hard for Newt to accept, but even he begins to see that Jake is not the man he thought he was. Po treats everyone to dewberry cobbler, loaded with sugar and great for a hangover, he tells them. Two days before they reach the Red River, the sky opens and it begins to pour. Po makes coffee by the gallon, but no one bothers to get off their horses the first night because it is just too wet to sleep. Dish talks to Newt, telling him that he figures because of Jake, they lost both Gus and Lorena. Dish calls Jake a perfect bastard because of it, and adds that if Lorie is still alive, he aims to marry her. When they reach the Red River, Deets is reluctant. He knows this river is well known for quicksand at its banks, but at the same time, the rain is not about to let up and the river will only get higher. Deets puts his horse into the channel, and has to change his path once or twice before making it to the other side. He waves the rest off, not wanting them to follow, and rides downriver to see if he can find a better place to cross. The rain finally slows, and Deets returns, telling them he found a gravel bar almost as good as a road.

Augustus and Lorie ride east, figuring they'll run into the herd. He decides to risk going to Adobe Walls with her, and finding it completely empty when they arrive, they make a camp of sorts in a room that still has a roof. Lorie is still silent, but Gus is patient, talking to her the way he always has. On their second day, Gus finds a box of buttons of all sizes, and suggests to Lorie they play cards. He divides the buttons, telling her the values of each, and suddenly she says, "Don't you cheat, Gus . . . If you cheat I won't give you no pokes". Gus is so happy to hear her talk that tears come to his eyes, and he assures her they're just playing for buttons. She makes mistakes at first, confusing the meaning of the cards, but it comes back quickly and she becomes more animated, even laughing after winning a hand. That night, Gus sees a deer grazing and later he has Lorena eating heartily for the first time. The next morning, Augustus packs their things, and Lorena doesn't want to leave. She doesn't want to see anyone else. Just playing cards with Gus is fine. She cries when she gets on her horse, but Gus knows it has little to do with leaving Adobe Walls. He tells her not to fret, and they'll get to where the cowboys are. The first herd they come across riding eastward is Wilbarger's herd. He invites them to stay and eat with his tough bunch, but Gus smiles and tells Wilbarger they're both a little shy. Wilbarger understands and sends them meals after Gus tells him about rescuing Lorena, and explains he's trying to get to Ogallala. Wilbarger asks if he's seen July Johnson and his group, and Gus sadly reports that all but July are buried west of them. Wilbarger has a tent he loans Gus and Lorie, and even gives them bacon and coffee before moving his herd, leaving them camped as they wait for Call and his crew.

Part Two: Chapters 58-61 Analysis

Roscoe, Joe, and Janey are murdered by Blue Duck while they await July and Gus's return. It is a weight Gus and July will both carry. Gus asked July to stay with his people, and the chances for their survival would have been greatly improved if he had stayed. July is now faced with the unpleasant task of telling Elmira that her son is dead. He



can't believe that Roscoe is gone, and considers it his fault entirely, his wrong thinking having been the problem from the beginning. Had he not gone after Jake Spoon, Elmira wouldn't have left, and Roscoe, Joe, and Janey would all still be alive. The miles he travels alone will be filled with thoughts of them. Gus helps July bury the dead, and then they part company. July is motivated to find Elmira still, and Gus and Lorie are headed back to the herd and the safety of numbers.

Call starts to face the fact that Gus might actually be dead. He thinks about Gus, missing his conversation and his company, and wishing that he'd had the opportunity to say a few things to him. Part of Call wants to abandon his responsibility to the herd, pay off the boys, and take Pea Eye, Deets, and Newt to go and find Gus or his final resting place. Call lets the men go to town when they camp outside of Fort Worth, knowing that some of these young men may not make it to Ogallala, and this might be their last chance to kick up their heels a little. They come back hung over, and Po Campo, proving his usefulness, provides a sugar laden hangover cure. He is easily accepted by all the crew, despite cooking bugs of various variety. When he isn't cooking, he's carving small female figurines out of pieces of wood that he finds. When they are finished, he gives them away to the crew. When the rains hit, they hit so hard that no one bothers to even try spreading out a bedroll. Instead, all hands work, huddled down under their hats.

Gus decides the best course of action is to head east and intercept Call and the crew. It gives him a chance to bring Lorena slowly back to the land of the living. She begins speaking for the first time when they've taken shelter in Adobe Walls. After finding a box of buttons, he convinces her to play cards with him. It reminds her of life before, and once or twice Gus even gets a glimpse of her way down deep down inside. Her first sentence brings tears to his eyes, though she only warns him not to cheat. Gus doesn't push. He understands, holds her at night so she can sleep, and calms her when she wakes up shaking like a leaf and crying. Wilbarger is very understanding once he knows the situation, although he would have preferred the pleasure of someone else's company for a few days. Wilbarger misses stimulating conversation, but he still generously leaves them with coffee and bacon when he continues on with his herd.



Part Two: Chapters 62-65

Part Two: Chapters 62-65 Summary

Slowly, Po Campo invests himself as a member of the group with his culinary talents. Morale sinks when a day and half before they reach the Canadian, it begins to rain again. This is a different storm because of the lightning that accompanies it. The thunder and lightning are so intense that the remuda of horses becomes agitated and Newt rides over to help Pete Spettle calm them. A bolt strikes close enough to start his horse pitching. Another bolt strikes close and a number of the cattle drop to the ground. They hit the dirt like bricks, and the remainder run west, ignoring Call, Dish, and Deets, who are trying to turn them. Newt watches another bolt curl down. Instead of stopping, it becomes a bluish light that travels through the horns of the closely running cattle. Running for miles, Newt can do nothing but miserably follow the cattle in the rain and dark. He looks eastward, hoping to see dawn breaking, and when it finally does, it's overcast and gloomy, and he is with Dish, Needle, O'Brien, and about a thousand head of cattle. Dish finds the main herd east by six or seven miles and Deets returns with him to help the group rejoin the herd. Then they discover Bill Spettle, who has been hit by lightning and knocked off his horse. Bill dies and is buried on the trail behind them. Thirteen cattle die also. Within four miles of the Canadian, Call is worried. He wants to cross the river before it rains again. He rides back to the herd and finds most of his men have changed into dry clothes, but recommends that they strip down when they reach the river, and wrap their clothes in their slickers so they'll have something to wear on the other side. Most are a bit reluctant at first. The idea of riding naked is embarrassing, but they can't fault the logic, so when they reach the river they all strip down. A squall blows up just as they begin to cross. This time it isn't rain, it's hailstones. Small at first, but soon they're the size of chicken eggs, and hurt when they hit. Then they notice a strange sight. Po Campo is gathering hailstones in a bucket, causing much speculation. Pea is just getting on his horse when he sees a rider across the river and realizes it's Gus. "I god", he says riding up, "I never thought you boys would start working naked". He answers Call's questions, and tells them that he has Lorie, but didn't get Blue Duck. As they get the wagon and the pigs across, he says he met July Johnson, telling Call he's ahead of them somewhere. Gus asks about Jake and Call tells him Jake is in Fort Worth playing cards. He asks Gus why he didn't kill Blue Duck, and Gus explains that he had Lorie with him by that time and didn't have a horse that could do it. The boys all gather around the wagon, so Call and Gus ride over to see what's going on. Po took the hailstones and turned them into a candy of sorts, dipping them in molasses. He greets Gus and gives him dessert, and as Gus is eating it, he realizes that Bill Spittle isn't around. He asks about Bill, and finds out about the freak accident. Newt is happy now. With Gus back, Lorena rescued and the sun shining, life is fine indeed. Call lets his tired men camp, and killing a steer lamed in crossing the river, Po cooks it to perfection. Gus thinks more and more about Clara, and about settling down. He tells Call that he'll ride as far as Nebraska with them and then he doesn't know if he will continue. Lorena sits just outside the tent a small distance away, fine as long as she can see Gus.



Jake has no concern for Lorie. He gambles in Bill's Saloon on the Trinity River bluffs. Every now and then, a foreman comes in for booze. Upon meeting Jake and finding out he's been as far as Montana, the foreman offers him a job driving cattle, but Jake has no interest in working. Since leaving the Hat Creek boys, his luck has been pretty good. He's managed to win a stake that will keep him going for a while. He also has a new long-legged whore named Sally Skull who runs the whores for Bill Sloan. She's tough, thin, and tall with short black hair, and Jake enjoys her bed and the privileges that accompany it for ten dollars a day. When some of the Hat Creek boys come in, word quickly gets around and Sally bluntly asks him why he let Blue Duck get Lorie. Jake tells her Blue Duck is a tricky bandit, and for all he knows, Lorena went willingly. Still, he wishes the boys kept quiet about it all. Things change quickly when Sally is arrested for shooting a young foreman in the shoulder after he gave her lip. Jake tries to bail her out, but the sheriff wants her to sit for a while. She bribes a deputy to bring her the powders she's addicted to, and when he does there is a struggle for his gun. In the scuffle both die, half naked at the time. The incident causes such an upheaval that Jake thinks it prudent he leave town. In Dallas, a soldier he gambles with tells him about a deputy looking for Sheriff July Johnson who is on the trail of the man who killed his brother. Jake makes a decision that staying in Dallas is too dangerous. He meets Dan Suggs, his brothers Ed and Roy, and their friend Frog Lip—a black man with an eye to marksmanship. Dan knows that Jake was a Ranger once upon a time, and offers him a position in their crew. He asks Jake if he has anything against robbing banks and Jake answers that it would depend on the bank. Any other time, he would have let these boys ride on without him, but the idea of July Johnson somewhere nearby spurs him to leave. Jake is nervous about Frog Lip. There's something exceptionally mean about him.

July rides north, his mind on the deaths of Roscoe, Joe, and Janey. Joe and Roscoe are too strong of reminders of his wife. When he thinks things can't get worse, his horse picks up a thorn in his hoof. July tries to get it all out, but the horse is lame. He walks all day beside him, thinking that maybe it will improve, but by nightfall he is still putting no weight on it. Three days north of Cimarron, July sadly unsaddles his last companion in life, and shoots him. Then he takes his rifle and walks east. The next day he notices a large crowd of buzzards where his horse lay and the sight makes him cry again. He makes camp, and sits looking at the moon and thinking. The more he thinks about his life, the more depressed he gets, and he begins thinking that just one shot would put an end to his misery and balance the scales in his mind. He has his revolver to his head when he thinks about Elmira and knows that he has to at least tell her the fate of her son. Decided, his mind can finally rest. In the morning, he begins walking again. Without water or food, July is about ready to give up when he stumbles on a small oasis—a grove of trees growing beside a small creek. Though not much more than a trickle, it is enough to form a shallow pool. He stays there for the rest of the day, and later when a badger walks toward the creek, July shoots and eats him. He sits in the shade until he sees a cloud headed his way. The cloud turns out to be a small herd driven by a man named Johns, and he convinces him to sell him a horse. They invite him to share their fire and food, hoping he'll stay the night with company being in such short supply, but once mounted, July itches to be on the trail again. Riding bareback he leaves, and arrives in Dodge City four days later and sore.



Part Two: Chapters 62-65 Analysis

Bad weather continues to plague the Hat Creek Cattle Company as they ride on towards Montana. Hailstones pelt them until they have bruises, and lightning rolls across the plains in dangerous electrical storms, one which kills Bill Spettle. The loss worries Call, and he continues to second guess his decision to drive the cattle so far. The spirits of the core group are lifted when Gus rides up, and he shares the high and lowlights of his trip and the rescue of Lorena. Blue Duck on the loose bothers Call, and Gus teasingly suggests he go after him, but the head start is too great or Call probably would have.

Jake gambles and finds a new whore without hardly giving Lorena a second thought. It's a fact not lost on the Hat Creek boys when they show up, and they share the story of Lorena with as many who will listen. There is no respect for Jake, as one and all are pretty disappointed in his behavior, and they are quick to share their feelings with Call when they return. Jake doesn't sit still long. Whenever things get out of hand, he runs as he always has. His favorite whore, Sally, is arrested, and in fighting for her freedom, she ends up killing herself and a deputy. The fact that they are both half naked at the time enrages the town and Jake runs. He finds himself in Dallas, where a soldier tells him July Johnson is on his trail, and the urge to run returns. He ends up riding with a ruthless group out of convenience more than anything else, because Jake doesn't want to travel the uncertain prairie alone, but they are on a course that breaks the law. Jake as a former Ranger is uncomfortable, but not enough to stop him from going with them. July Johnson is not on his trail anymore though. He is still headed north to find Elmira. Lost in misery over the deaths of Roscoe, Joe, and Janey, July spends a great deal of time thinking about his life and it's value. He is homeless, unable to face Fort Worth without wife, son, or deputy, and just when he believes he is at his lowest, his horse picks up a thorn in his hoof. He walks for a whole day after picking as much of the thorn as he could out of the hoof, hoping that the horse would improve, but it doesn't. He unsaddles his friend and sadly is forced to shoot him. The grieving continues as he walks the next day, and looking back sees a cloud of buzzards where he left his horse. Without food or water, he considers taking his own life, but his feelings of duty to tell Elmira the fate of her son stops him. Luckily, he stumbles on an oasis the next day where he is able to recharge. He then meets a cattle driver named John who sells him a nag. Four days later, and bruised from riding all the way bareback, July arrives in Dodge City.



Part Two: Chapters 66-68

Part Two: Chapters 66-68 Summary

Five men come so quietly that no one notices them at first, and in the dust that clears, Newt sees Call talking to them. Call points out a steer, telling them to take it. Newt realizes that the leader is just skin and bones, and it turns out later that Call knows the old man from before. Call gives him a steer that he doesn't believe will make it anyway. Lorena sleeps without nightmares now, but is tired all the time. Gus thinks about how events could all be traced back to a wild shot that killed a dentist in Arkansas. Since then, Sean O'Brien, Bill Spettle, Roscoe Brown, Joe Boots, and Janey had all lost their lives, and they were still nowhere near Montana. Lorie, thinking about losing Gus, has begun to cry, and Gus is so sweet about it that she begins to feel better, and offers him a poke for free if he wants one. He teases her like always, and she can see that nothing has changed between them. Gus is intent on an approaching cloud. Suddenly he realizes it's a cloud of grasshoppers, and with that realization came the bugs. They were landing on everything, and Gus hustles Lorie into the tent for safety. Soon the canvas is insects on top of insects, and unnerved Lorie begins to cry and shake. Gus tells her to hang onto him, that it's just bugs. The grasshopper storm lasts for hours, pelting the Hat Creek Company until they are afraid to open their eyes. Mouse breaks into a run, telling Newt that the cattle must be running as well, but he still can't see through all the insects. Finally, the cattle, the grasshoppers, and Mouse all slow, and Newt is able to see. It doesn't cheer him up much. He is alone with about fifty or sixty cattle, and the rest of the herd is nowhere in sight. He rides to a small mound and to his relief sees riders coming. He waves his hat to make sure they see him. He goes back to the cattle, and when he looks up again he sees that these riders have no hats on. Realizing they are Indians, he is so scared he can hardly think. Five Indians are only yards away, and Newt can't decide whether or not to pull out his gun. Then he remembers the Captains' encounter, and waits. He is sure it's the cattle the Indians want, and tries to figure out how many he can give them that won't be insulting, and at the same time won't dishonor him with Call in the process. Sure enough, a short Indian starts talking and pointing at the cattle. The Indians make it clear that he is to travel west, and Newt thinks they are probably headed to their camp. They come over a ridge and suddenly there is the whole herd. Dish and Soupy ride over and help him with the cattle, telling him it's a good thing the Indians found him. Had he traveled north, he would have gone sixty miles without water.

Right away Jake regrets joining the Sugg brothers. Jake asks them if they know Blue Duck, and Dan says they know him well enough to know to leave him be. Frog Lip says Blue Duck stole his horse, but doesn't say any more. They all drink liberally, Jake especially, thinking that maybe he could get so drunk he'd pass out and they'd leave him behind, but no such luck. He knows he can't outrun Frog's horse, so he plans to escape in the crowds at the first Kansas town they come to. He quietly hopes that Dan will meet a meaner and quicker outlaw who would put an end to the problem at hand, but no luck. They arrive at Doan's store on the Red River, and stop to buy whiskey and decide on a direction. It irks Jake that the Captain and Gus have such good reputations,



and now here he is, riding with a gang of outlaws. The next day they came across a farmer plowing his field. Dan tries to tell the farmer that he owes them forty dollars gold to ensure that the herds don't ruin his crops, but the old man is German and doesn't understand. He tells Frog to round up the wife and son, and Frog drives them over to Dan. All three stand together shaking and crying. Dan repeats his request for money, but the woman says nothing. Finally the son speaks to his parents, and then runs for the house, returned with every penny they have. It amounts to four dollars in a leather pouch. Dan takes it, and Frog is so disappointed that he drives their cows around the side of their sod house, up an embankment, and then onto and through their roof.

Part Two: Chapters 66-68 Analysis

Elmira is rethinking the reasons she left. Her trip with Luke and Zwey is anything but easy. It rains or hails so often that she can't remember the last time she was dry, and feels miserable. Luke keeps trying to corner her, exposing himself to her and telling her how far it is until the next town. She uses every excuse she can think of, but Luke tricks Zwey into hunting separately, and then circles back to the wagon, forcing the issue to a head. Elmira finally chases him off with a rifle, and when Zwey returns with the turkey he caught, she tells him what Luke's been doing. Zwey figures the best thing to do is kill him, but Elmira suggests he just make a point of taking Luke with him hunting instead. When she wakes the next morning, it is with Luke straddling her, and struggling to avoid him she rolls. He doesn't care and is so intent on raping her that he doesn't hear Zwey come up behind him. The beating he takes because of it costs him two weeks of time close to death, and a torn ear as a permanent reminder.

The Hat Creek boys have two encounters with Indians, and both turn out to be friendly. In the first instance, Call gives a steer to a small group of five Indians that rode up on them. In the second, Newt is alone and remembers what he witnessed with Call. Though fearful, he allows for the possibility that they are friendly, and under tremulous protest, allows them to lead him in the direction necessary for him to rejoin his herd. Laughing at Newt the whole way, but unable to communicate, the Indians show Newt where the rest of his herd is, saving him from going miles in the wrong direction. He is so relieved he laughs with them. Gus still looks after Lorena, and she gradually improves when she's with him. She sees by his consistent behavior that he still feels the same way about her, and that relieves her to some degree, but she is also increasingly aware that they are getting closer to a place where she might lose Gus to another woman and the idea unnerves her to tears. Gus knows and gives her time. He never raises his voice, and is never impatient. He is warm, loving, and supportive, and Lorie feels like she won't be able to breathe without him.

Jake finds himself riding with outlaws, mostly because he is less than a man. Not staying to face the consequences of the accidental shooting, he set in motion the events that now led him here, riding with men he didn't like or trust, and unable to disengage himself from them. They are increasingly mean and unpredictable, and have an generous supply of whiskey. Jake tries the easy way out by drinking himself into oblivion, but they didn't leave him behind as he'd hoped. It is a long way from the

Ranger he once was, this group he rides with now, and Jake is painfully aware of it, but can't see a way to cut loose. He thinks of Call and the Captain and how respected they are, and it bothers him even more.



Part Two: Chapters 69-71

Part Two: Chapters 69-71 Summary

July bought a horse in Dodge, spent two days determining that Elmira wasn't there, and sent a brief letter to Peach. He suggested that if they wanted another sheriff, that was fine. He asks the clerk if he knows Ellie and finds out he does. He confirms that Dee Boot didn't die of smallpox, and is actually living in Ogallala or Deadwood. Dee Boot is the clerk's nephew. July asks after Elmira at the bar the clerk said she used work at, and the busy bartender mentions that one of the girls here was her friend. Hopeful, he waits at the bar, accepting the whiskey the bartender gives him to be polite, and the one after because it was there. The bartender keeps bringing whiskey and he keeps drinking until he forgets he is waiting for a "Jennie" at all. In a moment of clarity, he asks after Elmira again, and is told of the laugh they had over the rumor she'd married some sheriff in Arkansas. Again, he is told that Dee is in Ogallala after meeting Jennie. He realizes that he married a whore. Hours later, he decides to follow his lead to Ogallala.

The weather improves for the Hat Creek boys, and only one incident mars the two week stretch. An accident kills Mouse. Newt had traded with Ben and when Ben went to cut out a cow for dinner, she turned and gored Mouse. The wounds were so bad that there was no saving the horse, and Captain Call told Newt it was time to put Mouse down. Thankfully, Dish stepped in, saying a man shouldn't have to shoot his own horse when others are about that can do it in his stead. Newt is mighty relieved. Mouse had been with him eight years, and he is glad it is nighttime so no one sees his tears. In the morning, he has a conversation with Gus and an invite to stay and have a coffee. Lorena looks so beautiful he forgets the sting of losing Mouse for the time being. Newt even makes her laugh once in conversation about Po's cooking habits, and it only makes her more beautiful. Lorena decides to do everything she can to make Gus forget about the other woman, Clara. She decides to win Gus before they get to Ogallala. She's never thought about marrying before, but Gus is different. Newt is the envy of all the young cowboys in love with Lorena when he gets back. His visit to their camp for morning coffee did not go unnoticed. Deets and Call ride ahead to check the Arkansas River crossing. Deets listens to Call talk about Blue Duck, and tries to distract him by telling him he's seen Jake's horse's prints.

Jake and company head for Dodge, but before they get there, they come across Wilbarger and two of his hands. Dan worked for Wilbarger once, and decides this is as good a time as any to get his revenge. It looks as though Wilbarger is taking fresh mounts to one of his herds, and Dan wants them, but mostly he wants to kill Wilbarger. Jake tries to get out of it, knowing that horse stealing is a hanging offense, but Dan tells him he can learn. Jake hangs back during the night raid, and is grateful when it's over because he hasn't had to shoot anyone. After the shooting stops, they approach the campfire and find Chick and another man dead. Wilbarger has disappeared, despite assurances from Dan that he shot him three times. Frog Lip is gut shot in the exchange and dies, to Jake's relief. Jake stays hopeful for a while, but then they came across a



tent, and with two farmers plowing. Jake watches events unfold from behind the herd as Dan breaks off and rides to the settlers. He hears two shots. Stunned, Jake watches the farmers fall. Dan announces he's going to hang them even though they are already dead. He says he hates sodbusters, and they can never be dead enough. Once hung, he gets the cooking oil from the farmer's camp and splashes it on them. Then he set them on fire. Jake is nervous and knows his only hope is to escape soon.

Part Two: Chapters 69-71 Analysis

July is determined to find Elmira. He cuts his ties with Fort Smith by writing Peach and telling her that he likely wouldn't be back for a while. It seems that Elmira is well known in Dodge City, and while it takes July two days to find out she isn't there, he gets a wealth of information anyway. He learns with reasonable certainty that Dee Boot is probably alive, and the consensus is that if Elmira has gone anywhere, it would be to find him. He leaves on a horse just bought after first drinking himself ill. July is headed to Ogallala to find Elmira.

Newt suffers the loss of his horse Mouse in a freak accident. Newt trades horses for a while with Ben, who is riding Mouse when the horse had been gored beyond saving. Dish steps up to help Newt and put Mouse down for him. It is a gesture Newt appreciates. He spends the night working and mourning the loss of his companion, and is the envy of every cowboy on the trail when he is invited by Gus to have coffee with him and Lorena the next morning. Newt felt better almost immediately, as was likely Gus's intention. Lorena is almost outgoing, even holding brief conversations with Newt, and smiling at him, but it is all with ulterior motives. Lorena is concerned about losing Gus, and has decided that she will put out her best efforts to win Gus over before reaching Ogallala and her nemesis, Clara. Deets and Call scout the river, crossing ahead. They know the Captain is bothered by their inability to bring Blue Duck to justice, and Deets tries to distract him by telling him about the tracks he found belonging to Jake.

Jake is riding in the direction of Dodge, where he hopes to give his companions the slip. He knows they're a dangerous bunch and is eager to part company with them, but before he can, bad things happen. Dan is a mean man looking for an outlet, and finds one when they stumble across Wilbarger, Chick, and another young man with a group of fresh mounts for one of his other herds, no doubt. Dan, having worked for Wilbarger, still carries a grudge, and decides that it's time to get even. He tells the crew they're stealing the horses, but he is more interested in killing. Indeed, he makes a good effort of it, shooting Wilbarger three times, but they can't find him afterward. The bodies of Chick and the other young man were still by the campfire. They lose Frog Lip in the shootout as well; they leave him gut shot and dying. Jake hasn't shot anyone, and still thinks that with all the horses hooves out there, he might be able to slip away unassociated, but then Dan comes across two farmers. Dan doesn't like "sodbusters" either, and he leaves the group, and rides down to the plowing farmers and just shoots them. He isn't finished though. He convinces his brothers to help him hang the two men, and still feeling the need to express himself further, he douses them with cooking oil and

sets them on fire. Jake knows he's in real trouble now, and needs to break free of these men.



Part Two: Chapters 72-74

Part Two: Chapters 72-74 Summary

On the north bank of the Arkansas River, Wilbargers' horse is waiting when Deets arrives to scout it out. He crosses and, seeing blood on the saddle, backtracks until he finds Wilbarger, badly wounded and too injured to move. He asked for Gus, but only if Gus isn't too busy. Gus convinces Lorie to just stay with the wagon in his absence. She wants to go with Gus instead, but Gus knows that if they can, they'll hunt the men who did this, and he doesn't want to have to watch Lorie at the same time. He rightfully guesses that she's afraid he won't come back, and assures her he wouldn't do that. He asks Dish to look after her, knowing he'll watch her like a hawk, loving her like he does. After setting all of this up, Gus, Call, Pea, Deets, and Newt ride off to find Wilbarger. They reach him still alive, and while he lingers on the brink of death, he tells Gus he was traveling with another man and a boy, and he chats with them about July, discovering their fate as well. Wilbarger also manages to give Gus and Call the identity of his attackers. He tells them about Dan Suggs and his two brothers, and he mentions that he figures he hit Frog Lip. Wilbarger says they're well known around Fort Worth for being murderers. He manages to make arrangements with them to have his horses sold and the proceeds sent to his brother in New York, tells Gus that he wishes he'd met him earlier, and asks them to bury Chick and the boy, and then dies. They bury him and ride off to find his killers. Dish tries hard to look after Lorena in Gus's absence, but Lorena is all but ungrateful. She barely eats and won't speak more than two words to him. It's a great disappointment to Dish, who goes out of his way to ensure she is alright, even sitting up all night near her tent on guard. Lorena tells him he can go, and at first won't even accept the food he brings. He helps her take down and set up her camp each day, and he even saddles her horse, but as the days pass she becomes more distressed. Beginning to think Gus is dead, she voices her fears and Dish tells her how unlikely he thinks that is, and in a moment of boldness, tells her that if Gus doesn't return, she needn't worry. He'd always look after her, if she would let him. She says nothing and goes into the tent.

Following the buzzards, they backtrack and find Wilbarger's man Chick, and the young man with him. As they ride in, a fat badger waddles by them carrying a large black hand. Then they came across Frog Lip. Wilbarger had killed him. Pea Eye takes a small shovel he had with him and digs the two a shallow grave, rolling them in and covering them while the buzzards watch. Deets is analyzing the tracks made by the killers, and doesn't come back happy. Four men, he informs them, and one of them is Mr. Jake. Augustus is quick to point out that it doesn't matter. He states that they're horse thieves and murderers, and is greeted with stunned silence. Call is hit hard by the news and tells Deets that he hopes he's wrong, but deep down he knows there isn't a better tracker than Deets and if he says Jake is the rider, he is. They track the men quietly, and a few hours later they came across the two men that Dan couldn't kill often enough. They dig a grave. Deets rides ahead, and his face is somber when they catch up. He tells them that they're camped ahead, beside another traveler they killed, they are busy



drinking his whiskey. They wait until everyone is good and drunk, and leaving Pea Eye and Newt with the horses, Call and Augustus walk into the camp, guns at the ready. They hear the men talking, using the names that Wilbarger mentioned, and know they have the right group. They tell the boys to remove their boots so that boot guns can be collected, and Deets ties their hands. Jake protests quickly when it comes to him, telling Call and Gus he hasn't done anything. Deets goes in search of a tree to hang them from and Dan keeps trying to tell them he's just a horse trader who bought the horses from Wilbarger, but Gus calls his bluff, telling him they'd spoken to Wilbarger. Gus sends the horses off, and walks over to Jake last. He tells him that he got Lorie back, thinking he'd at least ease his mind on the subject, but to Gus's surprise and disappointment, it takes Jake a couple of minutes to even remember who she is. Everyone is quiet, and Jake says goodbye and tells them he hopes they won't hold it against him. He gives Newt his horse, recommending him as a good pacer, and before Newt can choke out a thanks, he spurs his horse out from under himself. By moonlight, they bury him, and after talking about it, they decide to bury Roy and Eddie as well. Dan they leave hanging with a note pinned to his chest that says, "Dan Suggs, Man Burner and Horse Thief" on it. Then they start across the prairie with Wilbarger's horses, headed in the direction the herd should be. Pea Eye and Newt bring up the rear, with Newt so tired he falls asleep in his saddle.

Part Two: Chapters 72-74 Analysis

Wilbarger's horse is the clue that leads Deets to find Wilbarger himself. Bloodied and dying, he asks to see Gus. Gus, Call, Pea, Deets, and Newt saddle up and return to Wilbarger. Newt is proud to be taken along. When they find Wilbarger, he tells them who his attackers were, naming all but Jake, and imposes the burial of his man Chick and the young man with him on them. He is slow to die, talking to Gus and Call while Pea Eye and Newt stay with the horses. Wilbarger wishes he'd met Gus earlier, having enjoyed their conversations, and tells him so. When Wilbarger dies, they give his rifle to Newt, being that he was the only one without one, and follow his trail back to find Chick and the boy. Dish goes above and beyond the call of duty looking after Lorena, despite the dismissive attitude she continues to have for him. He takes her meals, sets up and takes down her tent each day, and saddles her horse for her. He finally works up the courage to confess the way he feels for her to some degree, telling her that if anything ever happened to Gus, he would look after her if she would let him. Lorena can't think about anything but Gus, and goes back into her tent without even commenting. Dish sits beside her tent all night again while she lies awake, just feet away.

When they find Chick and the young man, they dig graves there too, burying Frog Lip, whom they found close by, as well. Then they begin to track their killers. Deets tells them there are four riders, and one of them is Jake. They follow the tracks for hours, hoping he's wrong, and come across the farmers that Dan had killed again and again. Disgusted, they cut the men down and bury them too, the trail of dead mounting. By the time they catch up with Jake and the Suggs brothers, they had killed again. This time it is a traveler who had whiskey in his wagon. He lay dead within feet of where the boys were now drinking. Sadly, Gus and Call wait until the men have had enough to drink,



and then move in. The arrest goes easily, and before too much arguing can take place, all four men, including Jake, are sitting on their horses with nooses around their necks. Newt is stunned and hardly able to accept the events as they unfold, but once Jake realizes that Call and Gus will not make an exception for him, he is a friend to the end. He says his goodbyes and gives Newt his horse, and before anyone can move, he spurs his horse out from under himself. It is an honorable death. With heavy hearts they bury all but Dan, who is left hanging with a note that identifies him and his offenses. Newt feels funny about accepting the horse, but it is Jake's wish, so he mounts and they begin to drive Wilbarger's horses back in the direction of the herd, Newt is so emotionally and physically exhausted that he falls asleep in his saddle, and Pea Eye rides beside him to catch him if he falls.



Part Three: Chapters 75-77

Part Three: Chapters 75-77 Summary

When the wagon is seen by Sally, she can hardly wait to tell her mother. Clara figures they're buffalo hunters, but even Betsey is excited to see someone coming. As she watches the wagon get closer, Cholo rides in with two mares ready to foal. An older man, seventy-five or eighty, Clara figures, he is indispensable to Clara. The wagon arrives with two men and a very pregnant woman. Elmira asks whether they are in Nebraska yet. Clara tells her they are, offers them a meal and a place to stay for the night, and though Elmira is game to keep going, Big Zwey dismounts and unhitches the team. Elmira asks about Dee Boot, and Cholo quietly tells Clara that yes, he knows Dee, and adds the word Pistolero. Elmira says they've come all the way from Arkansas, and then faints. When Elmira begins her difficult labor in the middle of the night, Cholo is right there. He tells Clara that the birth of the baby might kill Elmira, and Clara tells him to save the child if he can. She cleans Bob up and when she finishes, she goes back to check on Cholo just in time to see Elmira's son being born. She tries to get Elmira to nurse, but she won't even hold her baby, so they decide to milk the cow early. She goes back up to check on Elmira and finds her standing at the window. Clara guides her back to bed and settles her in, asking her about her marriage to a sheriff, but the conversation doesn't help like she hoped it would. Clara gets the baby to nurse a little bit, and then goes to her room to lie down, but what seems like moments later, Cholo is waking her. "They leave", he tells her. Clara runs to the room Elmira was in and sure enough, she's gone. Zwey worries about leaving the baby behind. When Elmira came out and told him to hitch the wagons, she had come out without it. He even shyly asked her where it was before they left, but she didn't answer. Zwey piles buffalo skins on her, frightened by the way she looks. They hurry to town, and Luke asks the first cowboy he sees where the doctor is. Elmira opens her eyes and asks for Dee Boot. One of the cowboys tells her that Dee is in the jail house waiting to be hanged. He points to the building, and Elmira asks Zwey to help her to the jail. The man she sees lying on the bunk is a sad remnant of the Dee she remembers. He hasn't shaved and his hair is a mess. He smells, and she has to look hard to recognize him. Elmira is heartbroken, and as Zwey stands there holding her, he realizes that she is wet. He looks down to see blood. Dee tells Zwey to get her to the docs. He yells for the deputy, and try as she might, Elmira can't stay conscious.

July keeps trying to reach Elmira. His new horse stumbles just three days out of Dodge. He puts the horse down, hides his saddle, and begins the long walk back to Dodge City. He swims the Arkansas river, walks into town soaking wet, and buys another horse. The old horse trader teases him that he isn't getting very far, but July heads right back for the river. Near the Republican River, he falls asleep on a bluff, and waking, has severe pains in his leg. He looks down to see fang marks and realizes he's been bitten by a snake. The poison had hours to work, and it is too late to try to cut or suck it out. With no medicine, he grows lightheaded, and fears he is going to die. He doesn't, but it takes three days before he finds the strength to climb on his horse and get down to the river



for water, and five before he is ready to ride again. Finally, he sees a small house in the distance. He almost cries with relief because it's been so long since he's seen anyone. As he nears, an old man comes out towards him, and introduces himself as Cholo. He tells July to get down and Clara smiles and introduces them. He hasn't seen a woman in so long that he's almost forgotten his manners, but he manages to stammer that he doesn't want to be any trouble. He tells her his name is July Johnson and he's from Arkansas, and Clara almost drops the cook stove poker. She hadn't taken the story of Elmira's marriage to a sheriff from Arkansas too seriously, but this went beyond coincidental. She realizes the baby might be his, and looks for resemblance. Finally, still trying to adjust to the surprise, she asks him if he's by any chance looking for his wife. July tells her he's been looking for Elmira for a long way. Now, to hear that she'd been here was almost too much for July. She tells the girls to help her get bath water for Mr. Johnson, and then tells him she has another surprise for him, and tells him that if Elmira was indeed his wife, then the baby is likely his child. July is too stunned to speak. She recognizes it's too much for him to deal with, and tells July they'll talk tomorrow. She makes July a meal. The baby is hungry and she tells him that they named him Martin. "I guess he's mine", July finally admits. She takes the baby upstairs, and after July has bathed and is sound asleep, she tells the little boy, "Well Martin, your pa showed up".

Part Three: Chapters 75-77 Analysis

Elmira barely makes it to Clara's ranch with Zwey and Luke. Clara takes her in, and before the night is over, Elmira barely delivers her small son. Clara takes the new baby downstairs where the girls are both anxious to be involved in his care. When Elmira has had a chance to rest, Clara tries to give her the baby boy, now hungry. Elmira has no desire to see or care for her baby, refusing to hold him or acknowledge him. Clara persistently places the baby near Elmira's breast and gently encourages him to nurse, but Elmira has little to offer that way either. Finally, they milk the cow early, but it's so strong that the baby gets colicky. They decide to let Elmira sleep, hoping she will regain her strength and want her baby, but all she wants is to find Dee Boot. She sneaks away in the middle of the night, leaving her newborn behind. Even Zwey has trouble understanding why she would leave what he now perceives as their child. Elmira is so weak, and lost so much blood, that her body goes into shock. By the time they arrive in town she is unconscious, and Luke asks the first cowboy he sees where the doctor is. The conversation wakes her, and she immediately starts asking for Dee again. Dee is in the jail house, and she convinces Zwey to carry her there. Waiting to be hanged for killing a young boy, he is unshaven and disheveled looking, and she hardly recognizes him. Zwey suddenly realizes that Elmira is wet in his arms. Seeing blood under her, even Dee is concerned and wants her to get to a doctor. She loses consciousness while trying to stay with Dee.

July tries to catch up with Elmira. Having lost his own horse, he purchases a new one, and then just three days out of Dodge, it falls and cripples itself. July tries to nurse him along for a full day, but has to shoot this horse as well. Disappointed and discouraged, he hides his saddle and walks the long trail back to Dodge, swims the Republican River, and arrives in Dodge soaking wet. Without stopping to rest or dry off, July purchases



another horse, and sets out for Ogallala again. He camps near the Republican River, and during the night is bitten by red ants. When he wakes with terrible pain in one leg, he pulls up his pants to find fang marks. A snake bit him, and he slept right through it. Too late to extract the poison, July is sure he'll die. With no shade on the bluff, July rides out the venom. Three days pass before he is able to crawl down to the river to get a drink, and another two before he is able to mount his horse and resume his journey. He hasn't seen a single soul since leaving, and is beginning to wonder if there are any people in the north, when he sees the ranch house in the distance. He still suffers bouts of lightheaded delirium and finds himself having conversations with Roscoe at times. The sight of Clara's ranch is one he hardly trusts himself to believe, and he almost weeps with relief as he heads for it. July learns that Elmira has been in this house only days before him, and the baby Clara is holding is hers. It is all too much for his mind to comprehend, and Clara realizes this looking at him. She tells him to sleep and they'll talk again in the morning. Clara checks on Bob, cleans him up, and takes the baby onto the porch, grinning and telling him his father showed up.



Part Three: Chapters 78-80

Part Three: Chapters 78-80 Summary

Lorena is in the tent when Gus gets back. It's only been three days, but seems like much longer. Dish assures Gus that Lorena is fine and asks if they caught the horse thieves. Gus admits they did, but not before they had murdered Wilbarger and four others. Dish asks if they were hung, and Gus says yes, they'd hung them all—even Jake. That takes Dish by surprise. He didn't like Jake much, but didn't take him to be a killer. Gus opens the tent with a "howdy do miss" and a "give me a hug". Lorena does right away, blushing, and Gus laments the lack of a bathtub, telling her he feels like a groundhog. He tells her as gently as he can about having to hang Jake, but Lorena isn't exactly distraught about it. Lorena thinks more about the other woman and asks Gus when they'll reach Nebraska. Gus tells her it could take up to three weeks yet. Lorena gets a feeling of impending dread. Newt can't stop thinking about Jake, and the fact that they were forced to hang him. He rides the horse Jake gave him every day, and enjoys the stride so much that it quickly becomes his favorite mount. The hanging seems like a bad dream. No one talks about it. Deets finally recognizes the trouble Newt is having and talks to him, telling him Jake's gone to a peaceful place and he should rest his mind. Newt thinks that the absence of conversation about Jake signifies that Call and Gus don't care, but Call is having as much trouble as Newt is. He, like Newt, spends every day thinking about it all. At night, when the herd rests, he is plagued with regrets, and wonders if things would have been different if he had insisted that Lorena not come and had either left Jake behind or had him working instead. When they reach the Republican River, Gus is riding with Call. Call wants to know if he's going to leave Lorena in Ogallala. Gus doesn't know. They swim the Republican without losing anyone, and the men are anxious to go into town. They have women and whiskey on the mind, and nothing else. Every conversation revolves around town and its many attractions.

Big Zwey is the first thing Elmira sees when she opens her eyes. The doctor says he's got the loyalty of a dog. Elmira asks him about Dee, and discovers he's been hung and is buried in Boot Hill. Elmira wants to die, and even considers asking Big Zwey to shoot her, but instead just thinks about Dee. In time she can get up again, and still Zwey stands at the window. One day she looks up to see July walking in the door past Zwey. He is thinner, and Elmira just looks away. He tells her he just wants her to know he's there, and then lets her know what happened to Joe and Roscoe. He even claims responsibility for the deaths, but Elmira just doesn't care. She feels nothing. July goes on to tell her the baby is fine and that his name is Martin, but he sees that she still won't face him. His heart sinks, but he continues anyway. He tells her he'll bring the baby to town, and looks for any sign that she wants him, but sees none. He tells her he'll check on her every few days, not knowing what else to say, and stumbles out. July told Zwey how grateful he is for his looking after Elmira, and offers to pay him, but Zwey is as quiet as Elmira. He leaves and as soon as he's out of sight, Elmira tells Zwey to get the wagon. She wants to go to St. Louis. Zwey, faithful as always, does as he is told. She doesn't so much as leave a note. Zwey is smart enough to know that Elmira chose him



over the other man, and Luke must be wrong. They are really married. The only thing that worries him is what the little man at the livery said. He told Zwey if he wants to go east, he may as well leave his scalp behind now, the Sioux are so bad. He tries to tell Elmira, but she doesn't care. She hasn't seen any yet in all her traveling and is beginning to wonder if there's any truth to the stories she's heard. Now, she has no more fear of dying.

Part Three: Chapters 78-80 Analysis

Lorena has all but given up hope of seeing Gus again by the time he returns. She is so dependent on him that the thought of having to face other people makes her shake. Gus shares the sad news of Jake's hanging, but Lorena has reached a point where she doesn't care. Most of the men are shocked. Newt is really having a hard time with it. He rides the horse Jake gave him every day, and really likes him, but it seems as though no one talks about what happened. He has so many memories of Jake in his childhood that are warm and happy, and it's so hard to reconcile the fact that he was part of the crew that hung him. He can't put his mind at ease about it until Deets shares a little wisdom, telling him Jake's gone to a peaceful place now. All Lorena thinks about now is what will happen when they reach the other woman's house. It terrifies her. Call is disturbed about Jake's hanging too. He spends every day thinking about it, and is full of regrets. Gus rides with him for a while, and Call asks if he's leaving "her" behind in Ogallala. It's a subject that always irritates Gus, and he can't help commenting that "she" has a name. The boys get paid half their wages in Ogallala, and every conversation from the crossing of the Republican River on revolves around whether or not they'll find women. Everyone but Campo is feeling good. Campo feels like things are going to get very dry soon.

When Elmira regains consciousness, the first thing she sees is Zwey. As loyal as a good dog, he stands outside looking in the window and keeping watch over her. Zwey wouldn't even go to eat, the doctor tells her. She asks about Dee and the doctor tells her he was hung, on schedule. From there on, Elmira loses the will to live. All of her planning included Dee, and with him gone she is lost. July finds her, and never even asks her why she left. It's likely that he couldn't take the truth of the answer. Instead, he talks about their son, tells her about Joe and Roscoe, and even offers to be part of a family with her, and she never so much as looks at him the whole time. It unnerves him as he realizes she doesn't want him, and that she doesn't care about any of it—not about him, the baby, Joe, or Roscoe. As soon as July leaves, Elmira tells Zwey to hitch the wagon because she wants to leave. She wants to go east to St. Louis, but when Zwey mentions it to the livery man, he tells Zwey that he may as well leave his scalp behind now. The Indians are so bad that way, there is virtually no chance to survive. He tries to tell Elmira, but she won't listen. She wants to get as far away from July as possible. He is just too good for her, and she can't deal with it. Zwey is so convinced that he is Elmira's husband now, and is so proud of the fact that he is the one Elmira asks to take to St. Louis. She didn't pick July, and Dee is dead, but she picks him. It makes everything alright, even going into Indian country.



Part Three: Chapters 81-83

Part Three: Chapters 81-83 Summary

July gets back to Clara's too depressed to talk. He forgets to get the mail which is the only thing Clara asks of him, but when she sees his face she softens and guesses he found his wife. July goes onto the porch and she follows. She chats a bit, and then finally asks him outright if he found his wife. He gives her an overview of his visit, lamely saying she must still be sick, and Clara tells him that he shouldn't waste so much time on a woman who doesn't even care about him, and that the best thing he can do is pull himself together. She explains that she gets attached easy to young things, and she is getting very attached to Martin. In fact, if July doesn't want Martin, Clara says she'll take him. She goes on to tell July she'll even give him a job, though it's never occurred to him to leave Arkansas before now. Mostly, Clara wants to make sure that Elmira isn't going to change her mind, so July goes back in to talk to her again. When he gets there he finds the doctor, who tells him Elmira left. The livery man shakes his head sadly, telling July they went the wrong way. July is frantic. He hasn't even brought a rifle with him. He rides as fast as he can for Clara's, but by the time he gets there, he's exhausted. Clara right away asks him if she left. All July can do is nod. He just can't make up his mind what to do. He is sitting on the porch when Clara comes out and drops Martin in his lap. July holds the baby at arms length and Martin begins to fuss. She tells July to hold the baby against his shoulder, and encourages him to have conversations, sing, or even just hum to him. July begins to hum "Lorena", which is the only song that comes to mind, and Martin settles down. He sits like that for a while before Clara comes back for him. It is progress, Clara thinks. She puts Martin to bed and comes back to sit on the porch with July. After a minute of small talk, she asks him point blank if he's going to stay. Finally, he admits to himself and her that he probably shouldn't go after Elmira, and Betsey calls out that dinner is ready. He follows Clara inside.

On the afternoon that Deets rides in and tells them they are within ten miles of the Platte, they are celebrating. Deets seems subdued to the Captain, and after riding with him for a bit, the Captain asks him if he's feeling poorly. Deets says no, but after prodding, admits that he doesn't like the north, and says that the light is too thin. It isn't what he says that bothers Call, but rather the look in his eyes. It bothers Call so much he talks to Gus about it. Deets is the best man they've ever had, and both hope he won't leave. They are very close to Clara's, and the closer they get, the more distraught Lorie is. She asks him if she'll be left waiting in the tent when he goes to Clara's, but Gus has no intention of leaving her behind. His plan is to introduce her properly, but Lorena is afraid that her past is stamped on her like a scarlet letter and fears Clara will see it right away. The next morning, Gus rides with Deets for a while, thinking he might have a conversation with him, but before they have much of a chance, Gus spies a calvary of forty soldiers. Their captain rides over to them and asks where the hell they think they're taking the cattle. It sets the tone of their meeting immediately, and Gus responds with smart ass comments to every question put to him. Call sees that what Gus is doing isn't helping and tries to diffuse the situation, but the Captain tells them they're in the middle



of an Indian war and Call tells him they have a little experience in that area. Gus, ever the comic, asks "Don't these Indians up here fall off their horses like other Indians when you put a bullet or two in them?" The Captain is unimpressed and asks if they've seen any sign of Indians, and Call tells them that their scout Deets hasn't reported any. The Captain jumps right on to the fact that Deets is black. He wants Call to give Deets to him, but Call politely declines, citing as the reason that he's afraid the Captain will mistreat Deets. Call has had enough now, and turns his horse to leave, but the Captain asks for horses. He's noticed Call has extra and requisitions them for the army. Again Call refuses, telling them they are as close to the horse trader outside of Ogallala as they are. They can go and resupply there. Call tells him that as exhausted as his troop is, he should think about giving them a rest so that they are ready to fight if they do find the Indians, but the Captain isn't in the mood for advice and says so. Call tells him they've been there, done that, and he'd do well to listen, and then rides off with Augustus.

Part Three: Chapters 81-83 Analysis

July is having a difficult time understanding that Elmira doesn't want him or Martin. It's so foreign to him, and even this woman Clara and her girls show more interest in Martin than his own mother did. It pains him, and he waffles with the decision to hunt her down a second time, but Clara has had enough. She doesn't have the patience to coddle someone who can't see the forest for the trees, and she's blunt enough to get it across. She began by putting Martin in his lap and walking away. It is the first time that July has even held his son, and he has no idea what to do with him. It takes some coaching before he's holding him with any comfort, and Clara takes that as progress in the right direction. She takes Martin back from July and puts him down, but then she comes back. July is almost hoping she won't; as blunt as she can be, he doesn't feel like he can handle it. True to her nature, after a moment of small talk she bluntly asks him if he's going to stay. Finally, pushed to make a decision, he admits that he probably shouldn't bother to go after Elmira anymore, but it's still hard for him to admit. Clara takes that as a yes to her question.

The herd isn't far from civilization again, and it's on the mind of every cowboy, with the exception of Campo and Call. Call would avoid the town entirely if he didn't need supplies, but Gus thinks the boys need to have a little fun. He even thinks that maybe for some of them it will be the last good time, and Call doesn't understand it, but Gus thinks maybe Deets knows more than he's saying. Deets is quiet and reserved, and Call asks him if he's feeling alright, but Deets isn't sick. He's homesick. What he says isn't as important as the look in his eyes when he says it, and it unnerves Call to the point where he seeks Gus out to talk to him about it. Gus rides with Deets for a while the next day, hoping to engage him in conversation, but before they can get into it, Gus sees forty soldiers on the way. Their captain is an arrogant and insolent man who gets Gus's goat right away. Gus responds with jokes to every question, while Call is left to diffuse the situation. The soldiers want Call's remuda of horses to replenish their mounts but Call refuses. He suggests they go to Clara's to buy their horses, and the Captain is anything but gracious. He finally manages to make it clear that they can't have the



horses, and the Captain switches gears. Now he wants the "nigger" scout, Deets. Again Call refuses, telling Captain Weaver that he's afraid he would mistreat him. Weaver is not used to being disobeyed and he all but stomps his feet he's so frustrated, but Call is unimpressed. He turns his back on the soldiers and leaves them, riding back to the herd.



Part Three: Chapters 84-86

Part Three: Chapters 84-86 Summary

Finally, they reach and cross the Platte River. Ogallala is in sight. Lorena asks Gus when he's going to see Clara, and he tells her the next day is soon enough. He wants to go to Ogallala first, and invites Lorie to join him, but she's still reluctant to be around people. He invites Call to join him, but he doesn't want to go either. Gus complains that Jake would have joined him, but Call says he brought the hanging on himself. It doesn't stop Gus from missing his company around dinnertime though, and he lopes into town. Gus walks into the dry goods store and buys everything from petticoats to warm overcoats and a frock coat suitable for a preacher for himself. The merchant wraps a few things for Gus to take with him for Lorie, including a comb, mirror, and brushes. The rest he will bring the wagon back for. When he gets back, he finds Lorie sitting outside the tent, crying. She confesses she's afraid of Clara. Mostly, she's afraid that Clara will take Gus away from her. Lorie thought that Gus had gone to Clara's instead of going to town, and had convinced herself he wasn't coming back. He knows there is no way to convince her otherwise, so he tries to distract her with simple conversation, but that doesn't work either. Call decides to ride into town to supervise the purchase of provisions, and Po Campo tells him to get a water barrel because they'll need it. Newt and the others have no idea what to do first when they get to town. They are too afraid to go into a saloon, so instead they go into the store and came out with a sack of horehound candy. They sit in the shade and eat the whole thing. They are just finishing it when they see Dish, and they ask him where they can get a whore. He suggests they go out back of the saloon and Jimmy asks how much they cost. He tells the boys that the cost depends on how long they stay, and as they're talking, the same group of soldiers rides in. Dish calmly saddles Sugar, and Dixon asks him how much for the filly. Dish tells him that the horse isn't for sale, and Dixon gets mad and spits tobacco on the back of Dish's head. Dish gets up and tells Dixon to dismount or be removed from his horse. No one sees the gun he has until Dish jumps for him, meaning to knock him off his saddle. Dixon brings the gun down on Dish's head and Dish crumples without a sound. Newt doesn't know what to do, but he isn't going to let this man take Dish's horse. Dixon grabs the reins, intending to lead Sugar away, but Newt grabs the bridle and hangs on with both hands. The soldier nearest him has a quirt on his saddle horn, and Dixon grabs it. He starts lashing Newt with it. Newt shuts his eyes and hangs on, trying to stay close to Sugar. Newt looks up once and is surprised to see Dixon smiling. He ducks the next lash and it connects with Sugar instead, who squeals loudly. That gets Call's attention. He comes out with Gus just in time to see Dixon hit Newt again. Dixon is so intent on lashing Newt that he never even sees Call coming, and Call never slows Hell Bitch. He rides her full speed straight into Dixon, knocking him and his horse over. Dixon is quick to get up, but Call is livid. Finally, Gus jumps on Hell Bitch and, getting as close to Call as he dares, he lassos him around the chest and puts Hell Bitch into a slow walk away from Dixon. Call holds onto Dixon at first, dragging him down the road with him, but finally lets go. Call gets back on Hell Bitch, coils his rope, and feeling like he should make some explanation, he says, "I hate a man that talks rude. I won't



tolerate it". Then he turns and rides out of town. Gus asks the boys if they plan to stay in town for a while, and for a minute Newt is afraid Gus will tell them to get into the wagon, but he has four ten dollar gold pieces that he gives to the boys, telling them it's their bonus. They ask Lippy where they can get a whore, who tells them that they can't possibly consider seeing a whore sober. He gets them whiskey and since all cowboys drink, it feels like a right of passage to them. They don't question, they just drink. Once good and drunk, Newt works up the courage to finally climb the stairs they were directed to. He finds himself at the door, with Jimmy and Ben behind him, just as it opens and a woman with hardly any clothes on is standing there. Mary and Buf take Ben and Newt down the hall to their rooms, leaving Jimmy standing in the hall by himself. They tell him not to worry, that they'd be quick, and they are. In fact, the boys are finished almost before the girls have finished soaping them off. Luckily for Newt, Buf felt that he should at least get to the gate after paying for the ride, so she helps him. He's so quick he can barely remember it. Only Pete turns around and goes back downstairs.

Part Three: Chapters 84-86 Analysis

When the Hat Creek men reach the outskirts of Ogallala, Call begins letting them go into town. Gus goes in as well, aiming to buy clothes for both him and Lorie, and to get a good steak and a whiskey in a restaurant. The store is closing, but he convinces the owner to reopen long enough for him to buy everything he can think of that Lorie might like, from petticoats to a winter coat. He buys so much that he'll have to come back again with a wagon to pick it all up the next day. He has the owner package up an outfit and combs, brushes and a mirror so that Lorie will feel better about her visit to Clara's. Right now, she is still wearing hand-me-down men's clothes. Gus finds he misses Jake's companionship even more now. Jake was good dinner company. Augustus goes into the restaurant in the hotel, but finds it too somber for his frame of mind, and goes to find a saloon instead.

The first bunch of boys to come back are a sorry and sickly lot. Call and Gus are returning for supplies, and Po Campo tells them the only thing they really need is a large water barrel they can fill at the river. He reminds them it's going to get dry, so Call picks one up. Newt and the Rainey boys are among the second group going in. Afraid to go into the saloons, they gorge on horehound candy, looking for a whore. Totally inexperienced, they approach Pea Eye, who isn't much help because he never frequents whores. On his way back to camp, Dish is brushing his horse before saddling him when a smaller group of the soldiers ride into town. Dish ignores them completely, but one soldier wants to buy Dish's horse. Dish declines, telling him it's not for sale. The soldier spits tobacco juice down the back of his neck and Dish loses his cool. He leaps for the soldier, but the man has his weapon out, and clubs Dish with it, knocking him unconscious. Newt has the presence of mind to grab the bridle of Dish's horse and hang on when the soldier tries to ride off with him. The soldier uses his quirt to lash Newt, trying to get him to let go, but when he misses him once and hits the horse, Sugar, instead, Sugar squeals and gets the attention of Call in the dry goods store. He hops onto Hell Bitch, riding her full steam ahead into the soldier, knocking both the soldier and his horse to the ground. The beating Call then dispenses on the larger soldier



leaves him all but dead by the time Gus manages to lasso Call and drag him off. The depth of emotion released by Call as he attacks the soldier shows that Newt is more important to him than just any cowboy. Call wasn't simply angry. He was livid, and blindly attacking. Gus gives Newt, the Rainey boys, and Pete Spettle all a ten dollar gold piece to go and get a whore and enjoy themselves. Dish and Gus leave, and the boys find Lippy, who tells them that if they don't drink whiskey first, a whore might give them something that will make it fall off. Whiskey and beer are the next order of business for the boys, and once liquored, all but Spettle end up going up the back stairs of the saloon to avail themselves of the two whores that work there. They spend their ten dollar gold pieces each, and are finished almost before the girls have finished washing them with a little soap first. They head back to camp with mixed feelings, but Newt knows that when he grows up, he'll be a whoring man like Augustus.



Part Three: Chapters 87-89

Part Three: Chapters 87-89 Summary

When the four riders approach, Clara is upstairs finishing with Bob, and Martin is with the girls. Something about one of the riders strikes Clara as somehow familiar. Lately, all they'd seen were soldiers, one of whom brought news that a woman and a buffalo hunter had been scalped and killed. July turns white as a ghost, and Clara hadn't heard the story but she could tell from July's face that something was very wrong. She takes him up to the house and the girls fill her in, but Clara is losing her patience for his constant mooning over a woman who doesn't care about him. The girls pick up on it right away, and tell Clara not to chase July off. They like him and want him to stay, but are afraid that Clara will be so mean that July will decide to leave. Clara sits at the table with the girls and tells them that Elmira didn't want July or Martin, and that together she and the girls have already given July and Martin more love than they ever got from her. Still, Sally begs Clara to be more patient and less stern with July.

Clara finishes washing up and is coming down the stairs when a voice stops her cold. He sounds exactly the same, and it can be no one else. She walks on down into the kitchen and there he is, in front of his horse, talking to the girls. Beside him Woodrow is still mounted, and Lorie, and then young Newt. To everyone's surprise, she walks off the porch and right into Gus's arms, kissing him on the mouth. July and Cholo come around the corner, giving Gus and Call a surprise. Gus comments what a small world it is, and Clara laughs, telling him that it's only because he knows everyone in it now. In no time at all, Lorie finds herself enjoying Clara. Call goes out to look at the horses with July and Cholo. Clara joins them to see which horses they chose, and sets her price with confidence. When it is time to go, Newt is sorry. Clara tells him that if Montana doesn't suit him, he'll always have a job with her, and Newt admits he'd really like that. Then Clara gives him a horse she favors. Gus and Lorie linger after Call and Newt leave with the horses, and Clara takes Gus up to see Bob. They sit there for an hour, talking about life. Clara tells him that she doesn't have enough respect left men for marry again. She'd found few that are honest, and Gus isn't one, she adds. She walks back into the kitchen and tells Lorie she should stay with her and the girls. Clara admits she could use the help, but would also like the company, and assures her that Montana is no place for a lady. That makes Lorie blush, as she's never thought of herself as a lady. To her and Gus's surprise, she finds herself agreeing. The girls are thrilled, and Gus is more flustered than ever. Lorie asks Gus if he'll come back, and he promises her that he couldn't stay away. The last thing Gus does is make arrangements for Lorie's clothes from Ogallala to be sent to her.

Dish isn't happy when Gus returns without Lorie. Newt loves the horse Clara gave him, and names her Candy. Po Campo becomes more stingy with the water, giving the boys only a ladle full each no matter how hot they are. Going into Wyoming, it is drier still. Deets continues to scout ahead, and one day comes back and tells Gus and the Captain that he's gone twenty miles or better and there is no water. Call tells him to try



north, and Deets changes horses and leaves again. By the time he returns, it's long dark, and he still has found no water. Call tells Deets he'll look himself in the morning and tells Deets to rest. He leaves and rides all day, making a dry camp that night. The next day he rides again, and finally makes it to Salt Creek. The trouble is that it must be almost eighty miles of desert in between. He rests his mare, and then starts back. He shares his findings with the crew, and then walks a bit to think. When he returns, he tells the boys to push the herd into the water and hold them there. A couple of hours before sundown they begin the push to Salt Creek. They continue on until midday when he finally tells them they'll rest until it cools again. A sandstorm comes up, blowing so hard that the cattle are reluctant to go forward into it, and keep turning around. Call hasn't slept in three days, and finds himself getting confused and disoriented, even mistaking Hell Bitch for his old mount Ben now and then. His mind slips away into sleep without him realizing it until Hell Bitch suddenly breaks into a trot. He wakes and grabs for the reins to find he is being led by Deets. Far to the north they can just see the Rocky Mountains.

Part Three: Chapters 87-89 Analysis

Clara is surprised and angry with Gus. Surprised to see him after all this time, she greets him with a hug and a kiss, which is more forward of her than her girls have ever seen. She is also angry that he stayed away so long, doing nothing when she could have used a friend in Nebraska. Gus is surprised himself by a few things. The first surprise comes when July Johnson comes around the corner of the house with Cholo. He comments on what a small world it is. He charms the girls immediately, and introduces Lorie and Newt, whom Clara realizes right away is Call's son. They go on a picnic, Newt's first, and Call buys horses from Clara. Before the visit is over, Clara has given Newt one of her favorite horses, to Newt's great surprise, and has invited him back to work anytime, and Lorie has made the decision to stay with Clara. Gus is taken aback, but encourages her to stay, and rides off, telling them he'll come back. When he leaves somewhat abruptly, Lorie wonders if she's made a mistake staying with Clara. Clara is sure that she hasn't and quickly tells her so, putting her mind at ease a little. She takes Lorie inside to find her a room.

The herd presses on, and Gus is amazed at how much he misses Lorie. He'd grown accustomed to the morning coffees with her in front of the tent, and is finding that the men are a poor substitute for companionship. He is almost as surly as some of the rest. Dish is shocked that Gus would come back without Lorie, and more than just a little disappointed as he still dreams of her frequently. He isn't happy either. Po Campo is also unhappy, as he thinks leaving the river is a mistake. Newt, on the other hand, is filled with wonderful memories of his visit to Clara's and names the filly she gave him Candy. His talk of the whole event is so enthusiastic that it makes the rest jealous of what they see as special treatment for Newt. Still, no one has told Newt that Call is his father. The rest of the crew are soon inspired to be just as unhappy as a sandstorm hits, making it difficult to move the cattle. After much scouting ahead, Deets has been unable to find water, so Call sets out and finds Salt Creek, some eighty miles away, and the sandstorm is near the beginning of that trek. Amazingly, they only lose half a dozen



cattle in the drive that takes them days without a drop to drink. Po Campo's rationing keeps the men drinking right up until the day before they found water. While the men resent it a bit, they are less impatient when Po Campo tells them that they will be glad to have the rationed water and that it beats drinking mule urine. Finally, they find the Salt Creek and spread the cattle out to help them all get to water's edge. The Rocky Mountains are in the distance, and Jasper asks if they have to climb them, but Call says no. He tells them they'll go north up the Powder River and into Montana. He expects the journey to take about another three weeks. Then they should reach the Yellowstone River, he tells them. That silences everyone, as it's the last river that any of them even know about.



Part Three: Chapters 90-92

Part Three: Chapters 90-92 Summary

For a couple of days, the herd stays at Salt Creek, rehydrating. Call wishes they were already in Montana. One morning he comes into camp to find an excited group, all bearing rifles. In the night, twelve horses vanished. Call, Augustus, and Deets head out to find them, leaving the nervous boys behind to watch the herd. Deets scouts ahead and finds a group of women and children—dirt poor, who had already killed one of the horses for food. Call fires into the air to scare them away from the horses, and when they run, a young blind boy gets left behind. Deets picks up the boy and before he can do much else, a yell comes from the tepee and a young brave is running towards him. Deets looks at the Indian, and holds the boy out. It isn't until the very last second that they all realize the brave is not going to stop. He tries to sidestep him and gain a moment, but the brave swings the lance into his side and up into his chest. Call and Gus both shoot the Indian at about the same time, and he drops even as they are rushing over to Deets, still holding the child at arm's length. He asks the Captain to take him, and drops to his knees. Within moments Deets is dead. They manage to break the lance off, but are unable to remove it. They ride all night and then all day, both sick with grief and self reproach. Just before dawn, they finally catch up, and Dish is relieved. The responsibility is a big one, and he is glad he's come through it without incident. It takes a minute to dawn on him that something is wrong. The men are stunned. Deets is gone. Newt wakes but stays in the wagon and cries most of the day. No one even notices. They bury Deets, and for a long time Call stays by the graveside, carving on a piece of wagon he had taken off. Gus had been sitting by himself most of the day, but walks over to Newt and tells him that together they should go and see what his pa wrote on the sign. He adds that he's never seen him take such pains when putting a man in the ground. Newt is only half listening, but when the words sink in, he asks Gus again, "my what?". Gus tells him again, and Newt thinks it's an odd time to make that kind of joke. Call finishes hammering the sign just as they get there, the words carved so deeply that time and sand will not likely erase them soon. Josh Deets, it reads on top. "Served with me 30 years. Fought in 21 engagements with Comanche and Kiowa. Cherful in all weathers, never sherked a task, splendid behavior". One by one, the men read it in silence. Lippy, dry eyed all day, cries when he reads it and wishes that he'd never left Lonesome Dove. They continue up the Powder River, the whole camp deeply affected by the death of Deets. The signs of Indians are everywhere, but there are none to be seen.

Lorena enjoys her time at Clara's. Clara asks no questions. Lorie keeps waiting for the other shoe to drop, but it doesn't. She misses Gus on occasion, with a strength that takes her breath away. Two weeks later, Bob finally passes away. Clara goes up to tend to him one day and finds he isn't breathing anymore. She wraps him in a sheet, and sends Lorena to get July. He doesn't live in the main house. It is hard enough for him to be around all of the women at meal times, shy as he is, so he lives next to the saddle shed. It is fine for summer, but when the season changes, July knows he will be forced



to make a decision. He still laments the loss of Elmira whenever he thinks about her, but that isn't his biggest problem. He is consumed with guilt because he is in love with Clara and has been almost since the moment he met her. He thinks about her all the time, imagining things are different, wishing they were, alternating with guilt because Bob lay just upstairs. His head aches with the complexities of it all, and he can't make a decision on anything it seems, so he doesn't. When the knock comes at his door, he opens it to find Lorena. She tells him Bob is dead, and that Clara is asking that he bring the coffin. All July can think at first is, she's free! Lorena notices no trace of remorse in his face. Watching him makes her remember Gus, and she misses him so fiercely sometimes that the reminder makes her sharp with July.

Part Three: Chapters 90-92 Analysis

At Salt Creek, twelve horses were stolen in the night and there is general embarrassment that it happened right under their noses. Call, Gus, and Deets ride to find them, leaving a nervous group of hands behind. Deets scouts ahead as always and reports that he's found their camp—a starving group of Indian women and children. Call still doesn't want to leave the horses, so Gus fires a shot in the air, meaning to scare them off. It works and they scatter for the tepee, leaving one small blind boy behind. The child falls into the carcass and Deets picks him up gently. He is crying and Deets is trying to soothe him when out of the tepee comes the oldest male child. He screams his war cry the whole way to Deets, and then before Deets can register that he isn't going to stop, he buries his lance in Deets's chest. Gus and Call recover their shock and both shoot at the same time, killing the young Indian. Deets, still holding the boy at arm's length, hands him to the Call before sinking to his knees. It isn't long before Deets is dead. Call and Gus are stunned silent. Finally, Call decides to leave them three of the weakest horses while Deets is tied to his horse by Gus. It is days before they reach the herd, but they are determined to take Deets to where the men can pay their respects. Gus spends most of the day by himself, and Call spends it up at the gravesite, carving into a piece of wood he'd taken from the wagon. Newt cries unnoticed all day in the wagon, consumed with grief. Gus realizes how hard he is taking it, and invites him to come and see what his father had written for Deets. It takes a second for it to register, and Gus repeats himself. Newt figures someone would have told him by now, and thinks now isn't the time to be correcting Gus, so he lets it go. The sign Call carved for Josh Deets is so full of praise and respect for the man that even Lippy cries and wishes he never left Lonesome Dove.

Lorena thrives at Clara's. Bob finally slips away, sending a sad wave through almost the entire ranch. The only one not saddened by the news is July. All he can think is that she is finally free. It alleviates a large portion of the guilt brought on by his love for Clara. Clara knows how he feels, and is frustrated by his awkwardness. Lorena sees how July feels as well, and it makes her think about Gus. That makes her miss him, and she is short with July because he reminds her of her longing for Gus. Cholo digs a grave for Clara, wishing he could do something to ease her spirit.



Part Three: Chapters 93-95

Part Three: Chapters 93-95 Summary

When the herd finally goes from the desolate Wyoming plains to Montana's lush and beautiful high prairie, even Call is given a lift for the first time since Deet's death. Captain Call and Gus take turns scouting, and one day Gus takes Newt with him. Chatting amiably, Newt works up the courage to ask Gus if he knows who his pa really is. Gus insists that Woodrow Call is his pa, and is so serious about it that for the first time Newt begins to believe it might be true. Newt is really confused. He can't remember the Captain ever mentioning his mother, and he can't understand why he hasn't been told before. Pea Eye and Gus are sent ahead to scout the land closer to Canada. They ride for two days before coming to the Yellowstone River, which to most of the men is the same as the end of the known world. The land is absolutely beautiful and Gus rides to a little rise to look beyond it. Pea keeps northward until he hears thundering hooves, and turns to see Gus riding full out in front of about twenty mounted Indians. The only shelter for miles is a good sized creek about an hour back. He figures that's where Gus is going, so he follows. Gus has three arrows sticking out of his leg. When they get to the creek, Pea drags the horses into the underbrush and goes back to Gus, who is trying to get the arrows out. One has been cut out, but the other is more deeply embedded. Gus notices Pea has a wound of his own and asks Pea if he knows he's been shot, but Pea has forgotten in the excitement. The bullet went all the way through and the wound looks clean. Pea tries to work the second arrow out for Gus, but can't. Distracted, they hear the horses shriek. Gus knows the arrow has to come out and he asks Pea to push it through. When Gus bends down to twist the arrow, Pea Eye notices that he's been shot as well, but Gus behaves unconcerned. By morning, he has a fever though, and Pea comes to the shocked understanding that Gus might die. Gus tells him he has to go and get Call. The rain begins, and the creek level rises quickly. Pea is frightened and uncertain, but finally goes with the rifle tucked down his pant leg so that he won't lose it. Instead, it almost drowns him and in an effort to save himself, he loses his pants, boots, and the rifle. Naked and barefoot, his walk begins. He uses the stars to maintain the right direction and walks until he collapses. He sleeps for just a little while and when he wakes it is snowing. Cold and hungry, he walks on. On the second day, Pea Eye gets directions from Deets. Just before sunrise on the fourth day, Dish is scouting and sees a figure in the distance. He's amazed to find it's Pea, sitting on a tuft of grass, having a conversation with himself. When Pea sees them, tears spring to his eyes, his emotions are so strong. He tells the Captain he just missed Deets, and Call asks if Gus is dead. Pea explains what happened, and tells them that Gus was alive when he sent Pea for help. They take him back to the wagon, where Dish asks Call what Pea meant when he said Deets helped him. Call tells him he was just out of his mind with exhaustion. Call packs up his horse, takes an extra rifle and takes back the slicker he gave Pea, replacing it with a blanket. He tells Dish to keep the herd pointed north. Dish is terrified. Here they are, miles from everywhere, and both Captain and Gus are gone. It is responsibility that makes him sick with apprehension. Gus sits all night with his pistol cocked, and Pea's pistol as well, but the Indians don't strike again. The



sun comes up, warming Gus and helping to clear his head a little. He realizes that Call is still days away and his chances aren't good if he doesn't get medical help soon. As soon as the sun is high, using a crutch made from an Indian's carbine, Gus crosses the creek and climbs out, hoping to make for Miles City. He crutched himself along until he falls face forward, unconscious. When he wakes again, the sun is high and he hears someone behind him. He borrows Hugh's horse, named Custer, and asks Hugh to tie him onto the saddle, knowing if he falls off he'll never be able to get back on. When he makes it to town, it's almost dark. He can't get off, tied on and weak as he is, and fires his pistol into the air until a couple of guys stumble out of the saloon. One of them recognizes Hugh's horse, and Gus explains the loan and asks for a doctor. They look at his leg, and help to untie him, but Custer gets nervous with so many people around, and bucks Augustus off as soon as the knots are undone. He feels nothing though, having passed out after introducing himself.

Part Three: Chapters 93-95 Analysis

Montana turns out to be everything Jake told them it would be. They can hardly believe how beautiful it is. Even Call can't help but enjoy the raw, untouched majesty, and for the first time since Deets died, he feels a sense of adventure. Gus is bored though, and wants to be free of cattle, but loves Montana. He gives Call a hard time, but only because it amuses him. He tells him how he misses Texas, but the truth is that he hasn't felt this spirit of adventure in a long time. Gus chooses to take Newt for a ride and give him the family he needs so badly right now. He's correct in his assumption that Newt is floundering a bit emotionally, and the loss of Deets hit him especially hard. Now, he gets a chance to think about having a father. He dreamed about being Call's son many times, but in the real world, feels that he never does the right thing around Call. He asks Gus why he hadn't been told, and Gus is unable to explain it so that he understands. Gus and Call have been taking turns scouting ahead, and Gus takes Pea Eye with him. Gus rides straight into the Indians by coming over a rise without first taking precautions—something Captain Call has warned him about many times. When he understands how bad his wounds are, he knows he can't travel and knows he needs help. He sends Pea downriver, terrified, to find his way back to the herd a hundred miles away. Seeing Gus's leg, he pushes past his fear, and sets out. He loses his pants and his rifle before even getting away from the stream, but they were sacrificed to save his life as they made it impossible to stay above water. Naked on the mountain plateau in August, Pea is cold and barefoot as he heads determinedly for the herd and help. By the second day, without food and water, and without much sleep, Pea is pushing himself as hard as he can and the hallucinations begin. He sees Deets, and follows him, talking to him in the night as he travels. Using the stars, he is able to distinguish north and keep going in the right direction. He walks for three days before Dish sees him in the distance and races to get Call. Dish has a fear of ghosts, and just the thought that Deets is roaming the plains is enough to unnerve him completely. Gus waits the first night, but notices how fast his leg is turning, and his experience with wounds tells him this one is going bad. He decides to set out on foot, and is lucky enough to discover that the Indians have left. Gus knows they don't like to fight in the rain, and figures that might have scared them off. Luckily, Hugh Auld stumbles across his semi-conscious body, and by loaning him his



horse Custer, enables him to get to Miles City. By the time he gets there, he isn't even able to untie himself from the horse, so he shoots his gun in the air to draw attention to himself. Fortunately, he is able to stay coherent long enough to introduce himself, explain himself on Hugh's horse, and ask for a doctor. It is a miracle he is still alive, having been shot once, and with three arrows that have gone into his legs.



Part Three: Chapters 96-98

Part Three: Chapters 96-98 Summary

Gus wakes in considerable pain, and looks down to see a stump where his leg used to be, oozing unpleasantly. He wakes a man sitting in the corner and asks him for whiskey. The doctor is happy to give him the bottle after taking a healthy swig himself. He is Dr. Joseph C. Mobley and he tells Gus that he's glad Gus is a man of spirit because it will be necessary to remove the other leg too. Gus refuses, saying he needs that leg, but the doctor insists. Gus threatens to shoot him, and then sends him out for whiskey. He gets the doctor to push the bed closer to the window, pays him, and drinks all afternoon. He starts to get hungry and asks for a beefsteak, but venison is all that can be had. He enjoys it but can't keep it down. He begins to run a fever, and now the second leg looks as bad as the first did. That night he wakes to the sound of Woodrow's footsteps. Gus teases him about being slow but sure, and Call tells him that they only found Pea Eye the day before. Call looks at his leg, and chastises the doctor for not having the good sense to take the second leg off with the first. Call is sad, angry, and tired. He'd raced to find the battle site and then found Pea's rifle and pants, finally pushing Hell Bitch to the point of almost ruining her to arrive too late anyway. Now all he can do is sit and watch Gus die. Gus says he has a big favor to ask. He wants to be buried in Clara's orchard, in Texas. Call thinks maybe Gus is delirious. He reminds him that they had just arrived in Montana. Gus isn't in a hurry though. He says he's happy to winter in Montana with them and have Call haul him back in the spring. He listens while Gus gives him a few other instructions. He asks that Call stop and let the women in Nebraska know, and tells Call that he informed Newt of his parentage. Call tells him that he ran into Old Hugh and Call hired him to scout for them. He falls asleep again, exhausted. Call thinks he may not wake again, but he does briefly and manages to write notes to Lorie and Clara. He asks Call to put the Lonesome Dove sign over his grave and to give his saddle to Pea Eye. He closes his eyes again, and Call sits, hoping he'll wake again. Exhaustion overtakes Call and he dozes. The doctor comes in later with a lamp and tells Call that the bed was full of blood and Captain McCrae is dead. Call gathers up the notes for the women, and wipes the blood stain off of one. Call talks to the doctor and asks if there is a place he could store Gus. The doctor offers the use of his harness shed, and asks if Call wants the other leg as well. The livery man told him where he could go for a coffin. Call rents a wagon and fills it with supplies. Then Old Hugh Auld drives the wagon back to the herd. He can tell that Call is restless and tells him to go ahead. He'll be along. Call does, but he doesn't hurry back like he normally would have. He stops at a creek and thinks about Gus. When it gets dark, he mounts Hell Bitch again and rides toward the herd. The next afternoon he catches up. Dish wants to know if he found Gus, and Call sadly tells them he died. The men are stunned. At first they thought the Indians had done it, but the Captain tells them what happened and even Pea Eye is astounded. Now the only remaining original members of the Hat Creek Cattle Company are him and Pea Eye. Old Hugh Auld finally rolls into camp with the wagon full of coats and supplies. The soldiers at Fort Benton bought two hundred head immediately. Call is still trying to deal with Gus's death and is short with everyone. The men are used to Call's silences, but



this is extraordinarily quiet even for Call. Finally, they reached the Milk River, and Old Hugh tell them this is the last one before Canada. Call rides off by himself for a while. He knows it's time to stop. He scouts a place for the headquarters, beside a creek that had a fair sized stand of sheltering timber. That night as he camps alone, he dreams of Gus and hears his voice so vividly that he keeps expecting to see him. He even begins hearing Gun in the daytime. Usually he just shows up to tease Call, like telling him he shouldn't stop now, he should turn east and go to Chicago. When Call tells the men to let the cattle graze because they'd arrived, some of the men want to turn around and go back. Call tells them the weather would make traveling difficult, and they should go back in the spring, but Dish isn't happy with that idea. He hadn't hired on for carpentry or wintering in Montana. He finally decides that as soon as the building is done, he'll head for Nebraska. Lorie foremost on his mind, he hopes that no one came along and won her heart before he could get back to her. The building is started and ten days later, a rough house of logs has been built, and Po Campo has added a fireplace and chimney.

Part Three: Chapters 96-98 Analysis

Gus is out for some time, and when he wakes, he sees a stump where his leg used to be. Though the doctor assures him he'll die unless the other leg is removed, Gus swears he'll shoot him if he tries. Call finally arrives, and gives Dr. Mobley a hard time for not having removed the second leg. Gus is so worried about them overpowering him and cutting it off against his will that he has his pistol cocked under the sheets, until Call tells him he can rest easy. He sees that it's pointless and doesn't want to fight with Gus. Augustus tries to explain his reasons, but Call knows that it can all be boiled down to vanity. He still can't get over the fact that Gus is going to die, and that there's nothing he can do but watch. Call had pushed Hell Bitch so hard he'd almost ruined her, only to discover it was all for nothing. Gus asks a favor of him, knowing that if Call agrees, he'll actually do it. He asks Call to take his body to Clara's orchard for burial. Call has trouble believing it, but makes the promise. Gus confesses that he told Newt Call was his father. Then he writes notes to both Lorie and Clara for Call to deliver. Not long after telling Call what to do with his half of the partnership, Gus dies, and Call is so exhausted that while Gus passes, he is asleep. His guilt is large when he realizes Gus is gone. He manages to make the arrangements for Gus's body, get supplies organized and a wagon to haul them in, but he is largely on automatic pilot. Hugh Auld, whom Call met as he was looking for Gus and hired as scout, offers to drive the wagon, and sensing how restless Call is, tells him it's alright if he rides on ahead. Call does, but he doesn't hurry back to the herd. He stops by a stream, and spends the day talking to Gus off and on, hearing him as though he were right there beside him, mostly teasing him as he always had. When he finally gets to the herd the next day, his news is devastating to all. Call reminds them that winter is upon them, and it would probably be better if they stayed until spring, but Dish can't stop thinking about Lorie. He wants to get back to her and the idea of winter doesn't scare him. Pea Eye is devastated, Lippy breaks into tears several times, and Newt cries all afternoon, feeling as bad as he had when Deets died, if not worse. Pea keeps second guessing leaving him behind, and not arriving quick enough, but the truth is even harder. Gus chose to die, rather than to live with no legs. Oddly, Captain Call is less and less bothered by the idea that Newt is his son. Before it



had seemed like a beacon to advertise a weakness that he wasn't proud of. Now, he finds watching Newt calming and takes to doing it often. He learns that Newt has a feel for breaking horses, and even the local fort asks Call to loan Newt to them for a bit when they needed some horses broken. Newt is turning into a man, and the Captain likes what he sees more and more. Call's feelings where Newt are concerned are the only good ones he has. Most of the time, he wishes all but Pea Eye and Newt would just go away. He's tired of leading, and just wants to watch now. The men are feeling a little lost too without his constant instructions.



Part Three: Chapters 99-100

Part Three: Chapters 99-100 Summary

July stays with Clara and the girls. In the new year, he actually screws up his courage to propose to her, and she asks him if she's put enough cinnamon in a recipe. July doesn't get it. Clara holds out her finger, daring him to taste, and he does by taking as much off her finger with his as he can. Discouraged, she turns away after licking the rest off her finger herself. She keeps leaving the door open for something more intimate, but July just doesn't get it. It is three days before he has the chance to talk to her alone again. Martin has developed a cough and high fever, and Cholo is sent to get the doctor. Clara sits, rocking the cradle he's in. July came in after working the day and is uncertain as he approaches her. Clara is so scared, and so filled with memories of her boys being sick that she puts herself into July's arms and confesses all. She tells him how frightened she is, and how the memories seep in, making it even more unbearable. She wraps her fingers around his and tells him that if Martin dies, she doesn't think she'll have anything left. She cries, and he is so timid that he goes to bed. He lies there awake most of the night while she sits with Martin. By morning she is mad at July for leaving her alone when she was so vulnerable. She tells him that she knows he's bright because Martin certainly didn't get his intelligence from his mother, but she finds July to be as useful as a fence post. He is remorseful, and so uncertain, but he finally asks her if she would ever consider marrying him, and she tells him to ask her again in a year. He deserves to suffer for a year because she had suffered at least a year's worth with Martin the night before. Then Dish shows up with the news that Gus is dead. July is uncomfortable around Dish.

Call is aggravated by the fact that Gus left his half of the herd to Lorena. One morning they discover they are short fifteen horses. Old Hugh had spent a great deal of time negotiating peaceful living conditions for the ranch and encouraging trade, so the loss of the horses is a surprise. It is actually a sad irony that Gus was killed by Indians because they were a rogue bunch and most of the tribes are interested in negotiating trade and keeping peace. Call takes a group of men and goes after them. It doesn't take long to rule out Indians. Their behavior is much more lax. They've camped less than thirty miles from the ranch, which Indians wouldn't do. It turns out to be a man and a boy. The weather is warming, and Call begins to think more and more about his promise to Gus. He also thinks of Newt a lot. He watches him with great pride, and Pea Eye even comments that Newt walks just like the Captain. Call remembers it later, and thinks about all of the times Gus tried to talk to him about Newt. Finally, Call tells Newt one morning that it's time to take Gus back, and he wants Newt to be range boss while he is gone. Pea Eye will help, he says.



Part Three: Chapters 99-100 Analysis

Martin becomes ill, and Clara is terrified. Having lost three sons, she can't help but make the connection, feeling as though some unseen force wants to prevent her from raising a boy. When Dish arrives, July is disappointed. He's having a hard enough time integrating himself with the women, and Dish arriving makes things difficult in more ways than one. To begin with, he brings them news of Gus's death. That didn't affect Clara as deeply as it did Lorena, and even July has a hard time grasping that the man who took on Blue Duck's group by himself is dead. Dish is confident and outgoing with the ladies in the house. His love for Lorie is as plain as day, but all July can see is how much Clara seems to be taken with Dish. Dish plays games with the girls and Clara most nights, and July is too shy to join in. Instead he worries. He sees that Dish is in love with Lorie, but notices that Lorie isn't interested, and he's deathly afraid that when Dish gets tired of waiting for Lorie to come around, he'll realize what a catch Clara is. It doesn't help that Dish is also good with the horses. July is beginning to wonder if he fits in at all.

Call is frustrated with Gus's decision to leave his half of the herd and partnership to Lorie. Newt notices the Captain seems to be enjoying watching him, and he begins to wonder if maybe Gus was right after all. Maybe he really was Call's son. Newt starts to believe that the Captain is getting ready to tell him, and his spirits soar. It is a bizarre twist of fate that Gus had been caught by a renegade group, because it seemed as though these local Indians were more than willing to establish communication and the resulting peace. Now Call finds himself the diplomat, and Gus is gone. The weather warms to a point where Call knows he has to get going with Gus. He tells the men that Newt will be in charge while he's gone, and asks Pea Eye to be his right hand and help him out. He gives Newt Hell Bitch to ride while he's gone, and even replaces Newt's old Winchester with his Henry, claiming Newt might need it for bears. Pea Eye is scared for the first time in a long time. He's been with the Captain for thirty years, and many times the Captain and Gus had saved his life. Now, he feels old, and without the Captain he is nervous. Pea and Needle follow Newt as he does what his pa would have done in the same situation. He throws himself into the work at hand.



Part Three: Chapters 101-102

Part Three: Chapters 101-102 Summary

When Call arrives in Miles City, he finds a buggy, strapping the coffin that he'd had reinforced to the seat. He travels for almost two weeks without seeing anyone, and then runs into a group of Indians. Seeing the coffin, they leave him alone. He spends most of his time going over and over the way he and Newt parted, imagining he'd said things that he didn't. Finally, he arrives at Clara's, and barely reins in before Clara tears into him. She can't believe that he's going to honor Gus's request, and tells him to be sensible and just let her bury him beside her boys so that he'll at least be near Lorie. Dish walks out to greet the Captain and shakes his hand. He asks how the boys are doing and Call tells them they made it through the winter fine. He notices Lorena come out of the house and walk over to the buggy and Gus. When it gets dark, Lorie is still standing out by Gus. When they rise the next morning, she still stands by the buggy. The men don't know what to think of it. One more time, Clara tries to convince Call to leave Gus with her, but Call is determined to honor his promise to his friend. Lorie suddenly crumples to the ground. Clara knows she's fainted, and the men carry her upstairs. As soon as she can, she leaves Betsey to watch over Lorie and goes downstairs to find Call. She tells him one more time that a live son is more important than a dead friend, but he says a promise is a promise. Clara asks him point blank if Newt knows he is his son, and Call tells her that he should as he gave him his horse before he left. Clara swears that she'll write to him and see that he gets Call's name if she has to take the letter all the way to Montana herself. Filled with regrets and with Clara's words burning through him, he continues on his quest. Before too long, word spreads ahead of him that a Ranger is carrying a dead man home to Texas. Even the Indians have heard, and he passes small groups of them now and then who have come out just to watch. He rides through Denver thinking about Wilbarger and remembering that he still hadn't told his brother of his death, and decides that he owes the man that consideration, so he rides into town. He gets out of town as quickly as he can, and camps on the Purgatoire River, where he runs into Charles Goodnight, a famous cattleman from the fifties. Goodnight tells him that Blue Duck was recently caught, and is due to be hanged. He takes the opportunity to go see Blue Duck himself. Blue Duck tells Call with some amusement that he raped and stole, burned and shot men all over his territory, and before today, Call had not even managed a good look at him. Call is forced to agree. On the day of the hanging, the crowd is gathered when suddenly the sound of breaking glass is heard and Blue Duck makes good on his promise to fly. He sails out the upstairs window, holding onto Deputy Decker and taking him out the window as well. Blue Duck looks straight at Call and smiles on his way down.

It is a dry year, and Call tries to ride at night, but finds that he keeps falling asleep and almost ruins the wagon one evening. Then, half asleep one day, he feels something hit him. Touching his side, his hand comes away bloody. He races for the river and goes off the bank so hard that the buggy breaks apart. He sees only four Indians, and manages to shoot one of them. He waits all night for the other three, but they are gone. He is left



with the task of trying to make a litter of some kind to get Gus the rest of the way. Using Gus's sign, he wraps Gus in the tarp he uses when it's wet, and lashes him to the sign. Greasy the mule finally just stops, deciding to die right where he is, and Call has no choice but to continue on the Dun. When he finally reaches Clara's orchard, the sign is almost worn away. He digs a grave with a little hand shovel, taking him most of the day, and thinks to himself that if anyone else had been there, he would have had them dig him one as well. He uses the Hat Creek sign as a crossbar, tied with saddle strings. Call goes down to the little pool and promptly falls asleep. He sleeps until dawn, and then sets out for Lonesome Dove after carving AM on the back of the sign. When he reaches Lonesome Dove late in August, he is surprised to hear the old dinner bell clanging. Bolivar had gone back to his wife, but returned to Lonesome Dove. He is overjoyed to see the Captain, and blubbers with relief. Standing on the porch with the coffee Bolivar made him, it occurs to him that something has changed about the town. It takes a few minutes to realize that the Dry Bean is gone. He walks across the dry bed of Hat Creek to where the saloon was, meeting Dillard Brawley on the way. Dillard tells him it burned down a year ago. Wanz locked himself in Lorena's room for a month after they left and wouldn't come out. Finally, he'd burned the place down around him, killing himself as well. Call is stunned, alone in Lonesome Dove.

Part Three: Chapters 101-102 Analysis

Call goes and gets Gus from Miles City. He travels towards Nebraska first, aiming to take Clara and Lorena their letters from Gus. Clara is livid. She hasn't got much use for Call to begin with, but his stubborn determination to take Gus all the way back to Texas irks her. She tells him that a live son is much more important than a dead friend, but even that doesn't get through. She finally asks Call if he gave Newt his name and he tells her he gave her his horse—something he thought to be much more valuable. Clara can't believe what she's hearing and vows to write to Newt and see to it that he gets Call's name even if she has to take the letter to Montana herself. Call rides on, filled with regret, and unable to escape Clara's scorching comments. He thinks about the way she accused him of ruining his life and Gus's in the process, and much of the conversation hits home. Word travels ahead of him that he is traveling with Gus, and the result is more company than he can stand. He finally veers off towards Colorado to get off the main cattle drive path, and nearing Denver, realizes he hadn't notified Wilbarger's brother of his death. He goes into the telegraph office and rectifies that situation, only to come out and find a crowd around the buggy. He leaves as fast as he can, and once camped for the night, is visited by an old acquaintance named Goodnight. Goodnight tells him that Blue Duck was caught and is awaiting his hanging in Santa Rosa. Call decides to attend, and even has a chance to talk to Blue Duck first. Blue Duck is as cocky as ever, telling Call that he raped and burned and pillaged all over the territory of the so-called lawmen, and this was the first time Call had ever even seen him. Call is forced to agree, but doesn't believe Blue Duck's claim that he can fly. On the day of the hanging, as they were getting him out of his cell, Blue Duck grabs Deputy Decker and takes him out the upstairs window. They both fall to the ground and Blue Duck is killed instantly, but Call doesn't forget the fact that he looked straight at Call and smiled on the way down. The smile will haunt him for miles. He suffers one Indian attack before he



can get Gus to Clara's orchard, and though he is injured and the buggy is destroyed, he still doesn't stop. Shot with a small caliber, he still manages to lash Gus's body to his sign and drag him the remainder of the way. A part of him is so tired that he wishes he could just jump in beside Gus, but there is no one to dig the grave so he continues, finally fulfilling his promise to Gus. After marking his grave with the top piece of the sign, Call sleeps until dawn and then heads for Lonesome Dove. He gets a surprise when he gets to town, finding that Bolivar is still ringing the dinner bell like always. Bolivar cries when he see him, and makes him a coffee. Standing on the porch, Call realizes something is missing. The Dry Bean is gone. He walks into town and runs into an old acquaintance, Dillard Brawley. Dillard tells him that after they left, Wanz was so depressed that he burned the saloon down around himself, piano and all. Call finds himself back where he started. Lonesome Dove is a lot more lonesome now.



Characters

Augustus McCrae

Married twice, Augustus McCrae is not as a young man anymore to look at, but his spirit stays young and fanciful. His hair is gray and he's seen more time go by than he cares to think about. He doesn't believe in hard work, and would rather spend his time on the porch with a good jug of mash, exercising his mind. He would have married a third time, Clara having turned him down when he asked her, and he still tells people that she made a mistake saying no. Jake and he both vied for Clara's affections and neither won. He spent most of his youth riding as Ranger with Captain Call, Deets, Jake, Pea Eye, and Dish Boggett, keeping Texas safe so that ordinary people could live and range cattle without fear. Once the Indians were scared off or killed and the bandits stopped crossing over, knowing they'd come across Gus and the Captain on the other side, Gus and the Captain began rounding up free ranging cattle and selling them to cattle buyers who would then drive them on. Gus liked his simple life, and in the years that they'd owned the Hat Creek Cattle Company, he'd contributed so little to its general improvement that it would take nothing for him to just pack a horse and leave it all behind. That was just the way he liked it. It's his sense of adventure that spurs him on to join Call on the cattle drive to Montana. He and Call have been partners since they were both young men, and had conquered much uncharted territory in their days, and the idea of driving the cattle to somewhere new appeals to him, although he'd never let Call know that.

Best friends, he and Call have a relationship based on mutual teasing. Call is so serious and takes work with such seriousness that Gus can't help but throw a wrench in now and then just to shake things up a little. They have ongoing conversations about things like Call's son Newt. Call refuses to admit that he's the boys' father, and it's a point that bothers Gus, so every chance he gets, he bothers Call about it. Call won't do it simply because he doesn't like to be pushed. His instincts have him pushing back, and knowing this amuses Gus and makes him keep up the banter. They both have the respect of the men who serve under them, but while the men go to Gus when they want to play cards or get drunk, they go to Call only when work is concerned. Gus is unfailingly cheerful, able to deal with any crisis when called into service, and determined to enjoy life. His favorite pastimes are cards and whores, and he spends most of his time figuring out how to keep his supply of both full.

Gus ends up the caretaker of a young whore named Lorena Woods after Jake Spoon abandons her and she is stolen by Blue Duck. After Gus manages to rescue her, she is devoted to him. Damaged by her captivity, she wants little to do with anyone else until they reach Clara's ranch. When Clara invites her to stay, she does, feeling more at home there than she has since she was a child. Gus goes on to Montana, and in a bizarre encounter is chased and mortally wounded by a small group of renegade Indians. Infection sets in where the arrows were, and after having one leg cut off, Gus decides his life is done. He refuses to let the doctor remove the other leg, and dies as a



result of gangrene poisoning, devastating all who knew and loved him, including Call, Lorena, and Clara.

Captain Woodrow F. Call

A hard task master, Captain Call is not one to sit idle for long. He is used to putting in a hard day's work, and expects the same from any man in his employ. He tires of being the Captain though. He was fine when the Indians roamed the land, and led the men into many a skirmish, but now all that business had been quiet for many years, and he wishes that someone else would take the lead now and then instead of always looking to him for answers to everything. He is a stubborn man, and once he decides on something, it is almost impossible to change his mind. Hell Bitch, his new horse, is a prime example. She bit and bucked, and had no desire to be either saddled or ridden, but the Captain was not about to be beaten. He stubbornly kept with it, even hobbling her and tying her to a fence rail to finally convince her that he was the one in control. As was usually the case in such matters, the Captain prevailed.

Call has no sympathy for any kind of human weakness. He had been in tight spots many times over the years as a Ranger, but there had never been time to feel fear. Instead, Call seemed to come into his own when the situation became dangerous. In battle, he was fearless and aggressive. He couldn't understand the fear that kept white folks from settling the plains and often commented that if people would just stick it out, the Indians would be beaten back once and for all. The decision to go to Montana is his, and he convinces an entire group of men to join him on a cattle drive that will kill some, and put the rest to a test of their endurance with regularity. Stubborn and determined, he continues despite all obstacles, and even manages to finally get the herd to Montana, although he loses his best friends in the process. He is a reliable friend though, even agreeing to take Gus's body all the way back to Texas to be buried in Clara's orchard, despite the grief he gets about it. Woodrow's son Newt came as a result of time he spent with a whore named Maggie, and he is reluctant to admit his parentage. Feeling that it would make him look weak, he won't even admit he'd been with a whore, let alone fathered a son. It's a point that Gus relentlessly teases him about, mainly because it's the one time Call showed his feelings. Gus isn't about to let him forget it.

When Gus dies, he confesses to Call that he told Newt the truth, but he tells Call that he should give the boy his name. Call tries, thinking the conversation through in his head over and over again, but is still unable to form the words that his son so needs to hear. Instead, before he leaves on the journey to bury Gus, he gives Newt his prized horse Hell Bitch, his Henry rifle, and the pocket watch his pa gave to him, but the truth still doesn't come out. True to his word, Call resists all reason, and takes Gus all the way back to Texas to be buried, leaving Newt in charge of the ranch in his absence. While on his trip, Call begins to realize that perhaps some of Clara's accusations are right. He is vain and too self absorbed to see how much others around him need from him.



Newt Dobbs

Newt Dobbs has been with the Captain and Gus since his mother passed away with the fever. They took him in, knowing it was the only Christian thing to do, as he had no where else to go. He has always wondered if Jake Spoon is his father, but no one would ever confirm it. He's been told that his father was a man who went west at the wrong time, and that was the last anyone saw of him. Newt doubts the story as no one ever speaks of a Mr. Dobbs in any other tales.

Newt is in love with Lorena, although he hasn't even worked up the nerve to speak with her yet. The fact that she's a whore is a complication, but he isn't concerned. He sees past her occupation, which he believes is just an accident of circumstances for her. Oddly, that's how she sees her occupational choice also. Newt is Captain Call's son, and anyone who looks at him can plainly see, but Call won't admit it to him, or give him his name. Family is the one thing that Newt wants more than anything. Lonely without those ties, he bonds with Deets and with Gus, and in a more distant way with Call. When they head for Montana, there are many setbacks, including the deaths of several members of the group, and Gus finally decides that Newt needs to know he isn't alone. When they bury Deets, Gus tells him that Call is his father, but Newt has a hard time believing him. No one has ever mentioned it before, and Call never talks about his mother, Maggie.

On the trail to Montana, Newt discovers himself more and more, and proves himself to be a capable hand. When they reach Montana, Call gives him more and more responsibility, setting him up for a future that no one else understands. Once Gus dies, Call loses interest in most everything but Newt. Newt works the horses, and often finds the Captain watching him. He begins to wonder if Gus was telling the truth about his parentage, and even starts to entertain the idea that Call will tell him soon. His hopes are so high that he is devastated when the Captain doesn't. Instead, he is given Hell Bitch to ride, and a Henry to shoot. He's even given control of the ranch, but would trade it all for confirmation that Call is his father.

Pea Eye Parker

A Corporal for many years in Captain Call's employ, Pea Eye is a Ranger that can be counted on. A tall and lanky man, he likely had never been full a day in his life. He had an awkward look about him, appearing helpless most of the time, but that couldn't be farther from the truth. He wasn't what anyone would have called a true Indian fighter, but given a task like carpentry or blacksmithing, or digging or just about any other kind of labor, Pea Eye was one of the best for the job. Call wouldn't have tolerated anything less, but Pea Eye was dedicated and blindly loyal. This dedication sometimes grated on Gus.

Despite Pea's loyalty to Call and Gus, his biggest failing is his inability to learn from his mistakes. He would walk up the wrong side of a horse that was known to kick, time and again, and look surprised each time it did. It is a fact that doesn't escape Call. Pea Eye's



loyalty never comes into question. He spends better than thirty years of his life with Call and Gus, and they have saved his life more than once. His debt to them is insurmountable, and he's likely to stay until his dying day. By the time they reach Montana, much of the original gang is gone. Deets is dead, and so is Jake. Gus dies, but not before Pea Eye walks for three days and nights in the cold without so much as pants or shoes to try to save his life. He will second guess himself as to how long he took when he finds out Gus is dead. When Call leaves Montana to take Gus back to Texas, he tells Pea that he's the most reliable and trustworthy hand he has, and asks him to help out Newt while he's gone. Pea Eye follows orders—always has, and he watches the Captain ride away feeling older and more alone than he ever has before. One other feeling surfaces that surprises him a little. Fear. Without the Captain, Pea Eye finds he is afraid for the first time in a very long time. He does notice, however, that Call treated Newt just as though they were related.

Joshua Deets

Deets is a large black man with very white teeth. He wears pants made from old quilts that have cotton ticking that sticks out all over the place, and an old cavalry cap that he had found somewhere back in the fifties as close as anyone could remember. Deets wasn't the type to give up on a garment just because it had a little age. He was once given a sheepskin coat found by the Captain after settlers had cleared out and left it behind. The Captain gave it to him mostly because the Captain figured Deets would be the only one strong enough to carry it. It weighed almost as much as a fully grown sheep, and Deets wore it for fifteen years. Finally, it was so full of lice that Gus made Deets sleep in the barn, and one day when he and the Captain were out on the trail, Gus stole it out of the barn and burned it. He told Deets that a buffalo hunter had come through and stolen it.

Deets is the one man in the outfit that Call feels he can completely depend on. He hardly ever would volunteer advice, but when asked, his advice is usually right to the point. He is an incredible tracker, and has a sense of weather that is almost as good as an Indian's. He spends his whole adult life with Call and Gus, and manages to scout reliably, taking the cattle drive from watering hole to watering hole. His death at the hands of a young Indian boy leaves Call and Gus so shaken that they hardly speak as they take his body back to the herd. He has been such a large and steady part of the Hat Creek Cattle Company that the entire crew is devastated by his loss. He is buried with great care, and Call spends most of a day carving an epitaph into a board he scavenges from the wagon. It is the only time he has ever done such a thing, and his words bring most who read them to tears. It reads, "Joshua Deets, served with me 30 years. Fought in 21 engagements with the Commanche and Kiowa. Cherful in all weathers, never sherked a task. Splendid behavior."



Dishwater Boggett

Barely twenty-two, Dish sports a walrus mustache of a yellowish brown color that makes him look older than his years. He earned his moniker by coming in from a dry and dusty trail and, unable to wait his turn for water, had taken the dishwater the cook had been about to throw out and drank heartily from it. Dish had a soft spot for Lorena. He usually frequented Mexican whores, but Lorena was different. Around her he got tongue tied and found himself wanting to buy her presents. Steady and reliable, Dish is a hand that Call and Gus can count on. He's one of the originals. A Ranger in earlier days, he now hires on with the Hat Creek crew to drive a herd to Montana. His love for Lorena will decide his future. He manages to go all the way to Montana with Call and the herd, but once a ranch house has been constructed, he draws his wages and to the surprise of all, leaves in the winter for Nebraska where Lorie is living with Clara. Determined to prove that he loves her, he hires on with Clara and is content for a time to just be near her. He tries everything he can think of to engage Lorie in conversation, but Lorie only wants Gus. She won't look at or talk to Dish. Dish finally makes the decision that if things haven't improved by the next spring, he'll return to Texas and try to forget about her.

He's a reliable hand, good with horses, and confident. Clara is happy to hire him on, but July is not so thrilled by the extra hand. Dish is much more at ease with the ladies of the house, and to July it seems that Clara really likes him too. Dish only has eyes for Lorie.

Jake Spoon

Jake Spoon had eyes the color of coffee that somehow gives him a sorrowful expression the ladies were drawn to like flies. He sports a small mustache, and his curly black hair is interrupted by a sizable bald spot on top. He prides himself on pretty horses, but has a mind that is slow to work. He prefers the easy way, and there is something about him that doesn't ring quite right with either Call or Gus, although they both would admit that they liked him well enough. A gambler and a rascal through and through, Jake does whatever he has to in order to get by, and nothing more. He looks for the easy way.

Jake goes to Lonesome Dove, leaving Arkansas on the run after accidentally shooting a dentist who happens to be the sheriff's brother. He convinces Call that Montana is the last unpopulated wilderness, and there is land for the taking. He fills them with stories of how beautiful the land is, and how untouched the mountain meadows are. He talks just long enough about it to wake the adventuring spirit in Call, and before he knows it, they are on a cattle drive for Montana.

When he meets Lorie in the Dry Bean saloon, he convinces her easily that he'll take her to San Francisco, and they leave at the same time as the herd leaves for Montana. Traveling within sight of the herd, they feel relatively safe, but Jake is not cut out to rough it. His idea of life is feather beds, whiskey, cards, and a warm body when he wants one. He soon tires of traveling, and tries to convince Lorie to go into San Antonio



to gamble. Lorie refuses, and Jake goes off alone. When he comes back, he discovers that Lorie has been taken by Blue Duck, but he's too drunk to do anything about it, so Gus ends up going after her. Jake goes back to town, and is soon gambling as though nothing has happened, much to the disgust of the Hat Creek crew who find him in town with another whore draped over him. He pretends he doesn't know them, but word soon gets around, embarrassing him.

When things get too hot there, he moves on, finally falling in with the wrong group of men in an effort to cross some bad territory and stay ahead of Arkansas sheriff July Johnson. The men have an especially mean streak, killing for fun along the way. When the leader decides to kill Wilbarger and his men, and steal their horses, he signs their death warrants. Gus and Call come across Wilbarger before he dies, and he manages to tell them who is responsible. When Call and Gus finally catch up with them, they are collectively responsible for the deaths of five men, and the theft of horses, either one a hanging offense. Jake tries to talk his way out of it at first, but then, resigned to his fate, he gives his horse to Newt, and kicks the horse out from under himself so that the others don't have to do it. He dies a fine death, in their eyes.

July Johnson

At the age of twenty-four, July is the youngest of ten Johnson boys. He's worn the sheriff's badge in Fort Smith for two years, and in that time has grown into the job both in responsibility and understanding. A newlywed at the beginning of the story, his wife supposed to have been widowed and left with her young son, Joe, he has already taken the brunt of bad comments with a wife like Elmira who begins berating him just two days into their wedded bliss.

When July is forced into chasing Jake Spoon by his sister-in-law, Peach, Elmira takes the opportunity to send her son Joe along with him. She has ulterior motives though, and as soon as July is gone, she convinces a group of whiskey traders to give her passage on their boat, and leaves. July is long gone, and doesn't know about it until he intercepts a wire from Peach telling him about it and letting him know that Roscoe, his deputy, has been sent after him. July decides to find Roscoe in the hopes that he knows more about where Elmira is. July no longer cares where Jake is. July manages to find Roscoe and the young girl named Janey that he picked up along the way, and together the group heads out to find Elmira. Before they manage to do that, they hear shots being fired. When they investigate, they find Gus on foot and looking for Blue Duck. He had just been attacked by Blue Duck's crew and borrows a horse from them to hunt them down and get Lorena back. July decides his place is to help Gus, and he won't be talked out of it. When they find Blue Duck's crew, Gus shoots them all, leaving July watching from the back of his horse, in a stunned stupor. He's in shock and it takes prodding from Gus before he heads back to Roscoe, Joe, and Janey, but by the time he gets back to them it is already too late. Blue Duck has killed them all. Worse still, he castrated Roscoe, and the bloody mess left behind is almost more than July can bear. When Gus and Lorie catch up to him, he is digging graves. Gus helps him to bury the three in a shallow grave, and then July continues on his search for Elmira.



After many days travel, he stumbles across Clara's ranch and is stunned to find out that Elmira had been there before. More surprising still was the son she gave birth to and then left behind. He rides into Ogallala and finds Elmira still recuperating in the doctors place, but when he tries to talk to her, she is unresponsive. July is devastated, and can hardly think. He tells her he'll check on her in a few days, but when he returns the next time, he finds she is already gone. He goes back to Clara's in shock, and waffles with indecision about whether or not to go after her again. Finally, he decides to stay with Clara, much to her relief as she has grown quite attached to his son which her and her girls named Martin. When he gets news from a soldier that Elmira and Zwey were found scalped, he almost comes apart, but Clara tires of his moping and harshly sets him straight .

It takes a while, but July finally realizes he's in love with Clara. When he finally proposes to her, she is angry with his lack of participation in anything other than work, and she tells him to ask her again in a year. Finally, he's come to the conclusion that he is where he belongs, with Clara and his son Martin.

Roscoe Brown

Roscoe Brown is forty-eight, and the Deputy Sheriff of Fort Smith. He's a confirmed bachelor and proud of it, having once told July that all he had to do was look at the women in his life and that was enough to scare him off. Roscoe is not fond of July's wife Elmira, or of July's sister-in-law, Peach. When Elmira leaves, Peach insists that Roscoe go after July and let him know. Roscoe tries everything he can think of to get out of it, but the townsfolk don't care. He reluctantly leaves, with a feeling that he won't see Arkansas again, and on that note he is correct. After traveling with Janey for days, they are ambushed by road agents. Stripped down naked and robbed, Roscoe is ready to believe his life is over when a miracle occurs. July Johnson comes out of nowhere and rescues them. After taking the road agents to the nearest town for justice, they head out to find Elmira. Now that Roscoe has found July, he has no intentions of letting him out of his sight again. They travel until they come across Augustus who is trying to rescue Lorie from Blue Duck. July decides to help Gus and makes the mistake of leaving Roscoe, Joe, and Janey alone just long enough for Blue Duck to kill them. Roscoe dies without even firing a shot at Blue Ducks' hand.

Lorena Wood

At the age of seventeen, and with both her parents dead, Lorena met Mosby, a Southern gentleman. He had a fine pair of horses, and having nowhere else to go, she went with him. She sort of fell into a sporting kind of lifestyle purely by accident, beginning with her father when he became delirious near the end, and then Mosby who claimed to want to marry her at first, but then took her to Gladewater where he used her at his will, threatening to send the dogs after her if she ran. Constantly bothering her with his "radish", wanting a "poke", Lorena became so depressed she hardly spoke. Mosby gambled, and when he lost, he would offer Lorena for a poke to square his debt.



She wasn't armed or she would have fought back. Finally, Mosby sold a poke to a traveling man who saw Lorena and took a liking to her. John Tinkersley, the tallest, cleanest, and nicest looking man Lorena ever saw asked if she and Mosby were married. She told him no, and he asked her right then and there to go with him to San Antonio. Lorena was only too happy to agree. Mosby panicked and even offered to marry her himself then, but it was too late. San Antonio was a big improvement over Gladewater, but having no real marketable skills, it turned out that Tinkersley expected her to get into the habit of thinking of herself as a sporting woman. In fact, he considered her already trained. It wasn't all bad, though. The rooms were nice, and most of the men were gambling acquaintances of Tinkersley's. Sometimes they even gave money right to her, but Tinkersley was smart and he'd always find it and take it from her. On one such occasion, Lorena got so angry that she forgot her fear of him and actually tried to kill him, but having never used a gun before she didn't know about safety switches. She hit him with it instead, and he bit her, leaving a scar on her upper lip. Tinkersley got drunk and told everyone in Lonesome Dove that she was a murderous woman, and the reputation stuck for a while. Luckily she could cook, and was able to convince Xavier Wanz to let her do the cooking until the cowboys lost their fear of her.

Lorie falls for Jake and is convinced that he'll take her to San Francisco, but that doesn't materialize. She ends up on the trail, stolen by Blue Duck and abused by his crew and the Indians he hung around with until Gus comes to rescue her. She is so damaged by then that she doesn't feel safe unless he is right there with her, and he takes her back to the herd. They travel along with the boys, keeping their distance for Lorie's sake, but following closely enough to ensure their safety. When they reach Clara's ranch, Lorena is so frightened she's actually ill. She's afraid that Gus will marry Clara, but her fears are unfounded. Clara asks her to stay instead, and feeling safe and comfortable, she agrees, much to Gus's surprise. Staying with Clara, she comes out of her shell a bit, but climbs right back into it when Dish shows up with the news that Gus is dead. She hardly speaks she is so devastated, and when Call shows up with Gus's body, she stands outside beside his coffin for so long that she collapses. They take her upstairs and Call leaves, but Lorie can't get past Gus's death. Dish tries so hard to be there for her, but she doesn't want anything to do with him, much to his dismay.

Clara

Clara is the love of Gus's life. She lives on the Platte with her husband Bob, their two girls Sally and Betsey, and Cholo, their ranch hand. Hospitable and capable, Clara is a woman of strength and character. Having lost three sons to illness, she is nevertheless strong and decisive. When her husband is kicked by a horse, she takes over the running of the ranch, doing an even better job than he did. She loves Gus, but his rambling and unsettled life is not the life she wants, and she tells him so many times.

Clara's ranch is on the main road outside of Ogallala, and seems to be where everyone ends up. Clara takes in Elmira when she shows up, and even looks after Martin when his mother abandons him. Her only weakness is seeing children sick. When Martin gets



ill, she spends the better part of two days rocking his cradle and hoping he gets better. She opens her home to July, his son Martin, and then to Dish and Lorena as well. She is generous to a fault, but quick to speak her mind as Call finds out when he shows up with Gus's body. She asks Call to leave Gus with her, but Call is determined to fulfill his promise. She berates him and tells him that it's his fault that Gus turned out the way he did. She also tells Gus that she intends to see that his son Newt gets his name. She intends to write him and hand deliver the message if necessary.

While Martin is ill, she shows July a rare vulnerable glimpse into her. She puts herself in his arms and holds his hand as she explains how helpless she feels. Despite the obvious opening, July is nervous, and retreats to his room for the night, leaving Clara alone with Martin all night long. When July proposes to her, she tells him to try asking her again in a year. Having suffered at least a year's worth in one night with Martin, she feels that since July let her suffer alone through that, he should suffer a while too.

Mary (Peach) Johnson

July Johnson's sister-in-law, Peach got her nickname from July's brother and it's a name July has never understood. An overbearing woman, Peach is controlling and not afraid of anything or anyone. When Jake Spoon accidentally shoots her husband, she bullies July into going after him although it's against July's better judgment as sheriff. Mary had met Ben in Little Rock, and he had been so smitten with her that he even stayed there two months to court her.

Janey

A young girl, barely in her teens when July passes by the house she lives in, she has been bought and sold more than once already. When July leaves, Janey takes the opportunity to leave the abusive man who controls her now, and follows July on foot. So swift that she can keep up, she scares July half to death when she allows herself to be seen. She is shy with everyone but Roscoe, and convinces him to let her travel with him by telling him that she can hunt and cook, and knows her way through the country. Roscoe agrees to take her, and she ends up losing her life with Roscoe and Joe to Blue Duck.

Blue Duck

A throwback from more dangerous times, Blue Duck is one of the Indians that Call and Gus didn't manage to hang or eliminate while they were cleaning up the country and making it safe. Blue Duck is a large and frightening man who has no morals or scruples. Happy to steal, rape, and pillage, he commands a rag tag group of Indians that know the back country well. He lives for the opportunity to kill Gus and Woodrow, and steals Lorena in the hopes that either or both will come for her and give him the opportunity. He steals Lorena right out of her camp, and passes her around the boys until she loses the will to live.



While Gus manages to rescue Lorie, and kill Blue Duck's crew, he isn't able to catch Blue Duck. He is killing Roscoe, Janey and Joe while Gus and July are rescuing Lorena. Blue Duck gets away that time, but a long time later, when Call is taking Gus to his burial sight, he finds out that Blue Duck has been caught and is ready to be hung. Call makes the trip to watch, and Blue Duck has one final surprise as he avoids a hanging by grabbing a deputy and throwing himself out the window.



Objects/Places

Lonesome Dove

Texas town near the Mexican border and longtime home of the Hat Creek Cattle Company. Sporting little more than a general store and a saloon called the Dry Bean, it is the town where former Texas rangers Woodrow Call and Augustus McCrae have semi settled. Lonesome Dove is a quiet little town with one prostitute named Lorena who operates out of the only saloon. The town gets very few days of rain each year, and the nearby Hat Creek is a dry ditch most of the time.

Hat Creek Cattle Company

Company owned by Captain Call and Augustus McCrae in Lonesome Dove. Starting out as a cattle company that collected it's "free range" cattle from across the border in Mexico, they sell to outfits that would then drive the cattle north for sale. The Hat Creek Cattle Company employs any number of men, mostly former rangers, depending on the ambition at the time. It's regular and full time employees include Pea Eye Parker, Joshua Deets, Newt Dobbs, and Bolivar, the cook.

Fort Smith, Arkansas

Home of July Johnson and his family, Fort Smith is the town in which Jake Spoon starts everything by accidentally shooting July's brother Ben. Though an accident, Jake is afraid since July is the sheriff. Instead of facing the consequences, Jake runs to where he feels safe—The Hat Creek Cattle Company. July Johnson is pushed into chasing him, which gives July's wife Elmira an opportunity to send her son Joe along, and then leave herself. This shooting is the incident that sets in motion the cattle drive to Montana.

Clara's Orchard

A small grove of trees beside the Guadalupe River in Texas where Clara and Gus used to have picnics. Both have very different memories of the place. To Gus, it exemplifies where he was happiest in his life. He was with Clara, and his memories of her in this place are sweet and uncomplicated. It is where his heart stayed all the years of his life. Clara remembers it as the little picnic place that she and Gus used to argue at. Neither willing to give in, the discussions were always the same—fruitless.

Call will remember Clara's Orchard as the promise he kept to Gus, and the place he dragged Gus's body from Montana to in order to be buried. He will also remember it as the place he wished he could climb in with his friend, but there was no one there to cover him up.



Uva Uvam Vivendo Varia Fit

Last line on the Hat Creek Cattle Company and Livery Emporium sign.

Dry Bean Saloon

Xavier Wanz's saloon in Lonesome Dove. It is where Lorena Woods works out of and from where she meets Jake. It is the saloon where Lippy plays piano, and where Gus and anyone else who wants a "poke" can go and get one if they can afford it.

It is the saloon that had its owner burn it to the ground in despair after Lorena, the working girl and love of his life, left for San Francisco.

Ogallala

Town with a bad reputation in Nebraska, twenty miles from Clara's horse trading ranch. Also the place where Newt and the Rainey boys lose their virginity to two whores named Buffalo Heifer and Mary.

Quirt

Lasso-like rope carried by some cowboys. Used to encourage cattle or horses to move along.

Milk River

Destination of the Hat Creek Cattle Company and herd.

Pickles Gap

Closest town to Lonesome Dove. Named after Wesley Pickles who got lost in a mesquite thicket, and after finding a clearing, was simply too lazy to find his way out and settled in.

Miles City

Place where Augustus McCrae, tied to a horse named Custer, rode in too sick to untie himself. It is the town in which Dr. Mobley took off one leg and wanted to remove the other, but instead Gus declined, choosing to die before becoming that dependent. His vanity wouldn't tolerate it.



It is also the town in which his body was stored over the winter until Captain Call could return for him and take him to Clara's orchard.

Musselshell River

The place where Augustus and Pea Eye holed up after being chased by a renegade group of Indians. It is where the Indians kill their horses, forcing them both to walk out in opposite directions.

Hell Bitch

The name Pea Eye unwittingly gave to Call's mare after watching him trying to stable her. A smart filly, she'd lure her rider into a false sense of security and then buck him off, or bite if given a chance.

Remuda

Name given to the group of horses that the cowboys draw from when they're driving cattle.

Nueces River

River where Sean O'Brien lost his life to a nest of moccasins.



Social Sensitivity

Perhaps the biggest social concern in *Lonesome Dove*, which critic Mark Horowitz calls "the War and Peace of cattle-drive novels," is that of the "dying West"—the West that Gus and Call, two aging ex-Texas Rangers, remember from the adventures of their youth. We see that the West of their imaginations is neither mythic nor romantic, but, rather, embodies more of a regret the two men have as they address the fact of their aging and their inability to change much of what has happened.

Another social issue is that of the law—though the West is becoming increasingly settled, there is no clear line demarcating the place where the law resides. July Johnson, an Arkansas sheriff, is ineffectual and reluctant; Woodrow Call, on the other hand, is absolutely sure if what is right and wrong; there is no hesitation when he and Gus hang four horse thieves and murderers, even if one is their former Ranger colleague and friend, Jake Spoon.

That the law must be obeyed whenever possible comes through powerfully in the novel. When Gus and Call come upon their former friend Jake Spoon in the company of cattle rustlers and murderers, they summarily hang the criminals on the spot, Jake among them; it is surprising perhaps to the reader, but not necessarily to Jake, Gus, and Call, that they would do this—especially since Call and Gus are no longer, technically, Rangers—but they perform the executions without hesitation, a small bulwark against the anarchy of the West.

This anarchy and cruelty of life in the West is an omnipresent cloud lurking in the backs of everyone's mind in the novel, as well it should. Death and disaster are quick, random, frequent in this land (though not quite as much as in *Dead Man's Walk*, 1995 or *ComancheMoon*, 1997; see separate entr). One of the Irish brothers dies horribly in a water moccasin nest; July's deputy and a child are murdered silently by Blue Duck; Blue Duck kidnaps Lorena with stealth, and brutalizes her nonchalantly. This is a land with danger lurking everywhere—it is no wonder, then, that the people therein react so quickly, violently, and thoroughly to it. Cruelty surfaces in relationships as well; Call is cruelly distant from Newt; Blue Duck is the epitome of cruelty.

Women have a place in the West of the novel, though it is a supporting role.

Women are not independent in *Lonesome Dove*; they are, largely, supporters, lovers, or ancillaries. Many of the women in the novel are prostitutes; of those who are not, only two (Elvira and Lorena) have independent streaks and try to manage their own destinies. Both end up beaten by the novel—Elvira is killed, and Lorena savaged by Blue Duck. Clara Allen, Gus's long-lost love, is the only independent woman character not mauled by the West, but even she has suffered, through the loss of her sons and her husband, and finally through Gus's death as well.

Techniques

The dialogue in *Lonesome Dove* is a unique Western patois, a mixture of ungrammaticisms and half-remembered bits of old learning and formal fiction; it sounds quaint, yet mannered and sturdy.

The speeches of characters help portray them; Call's is direct and sometimes abrupt, helping to show his unbending nature, while Gus's is loquacious and humorous, intimating the not-too-serious elements of Gus's nature. According to the narrative, Gus "just plain loved to argue" and "would seize any chance for a dispute."

The setting, though, makes the novel come alive almost as much as the characters; McMurtry unforgetably portrays the environment that takes such a cruel toll on the men on the cattle drive, as well as others in the novel. The brutality of nature is shown by the horrifying death of one of the crew in a riverside snake's nest, as well as the bitter cold of the northern plains and the terrifying cattle stampede as seen through Newt's eyes.

But it's not only nature that becomes ugly and turns savagely on humans in the novel. The humans become part of the ungoverned and barely governable land.

Gus and Call may feel sorry for the West they had left behind in their youth, but there is still plenty of danger and frightening behavior. There are, for example, half-human rivermen, like Big Zwey; or people who abandon each other without seeming remorse, such as Elmira Johnson, who leaves her son as well as her husband, Fort Smith, Arkansas sheriff July Johnson, to take up with Zwey and escape the dreary boredom of frontier town life. Most brutal of all is the halfbreed Blue Duck, who kills for sport, loathes all whites, and kills July's sheriff as easily as he would mice.



Themes

Augustus as ranger/cowboy versus Augustus as Clara's husband

Augustus McCrae lives his life romantically remembering the one that got away. Clara is the love of his life, but she's not the only love. He also loves gambling, whores, whiskey, and adventure, not necessarily in that order. In the time before the cattle drive, he had the opportunity to make a decision, and likely made the wrong one. When Clara told him she was going to marry Bob, he could have changed her mind. Bob wasn't the love of her life, and Gus was. The only thing that stops him from taking Clara into his arms is his own fear. Deep down, Gus worries that she has a stronger will and personality than he does. She likes to have control of her life, and so does Gus. Gus can't see his way clear to allowing her to be in control, and can't bring himself to match her wit and strength. The truth is that Gus is a bit lazy, and life with Clara would have meant work. Gus doesn't really want to work. It's much easier to sit on his reputation as a ranger of some renown and drink whiskey than it is to pull himself together and be a match for Clara on a daily basis. Luckily for Gus, Clara knows this and gauges his responses to the things she says. She's convinced that if they spent too much time together, they would do nothing but fight because his attitude would drive her crazy, and she is likely right. Instead, both live separately, loving each other from afar as the one who got away.

If Gus had applied half of the energy he reserved for figuring out how to get a poke for free, or to getting his next whiskey, he could have been a horse trader. Not wanting to settle down cost him the love of his life, and would be his biggest regret in the last weeks of his life.

Newt Dobbs versus Newt Call

Despite harping from Gus, Call refuses to give Newt his name. There is little dispute that Maggie's son was fathered by Call, but he is stubbornly resistant. Call doesn't want anyone to know that he has weakness like everyone else. In all the years after being with Maggie, Call never visited a whore or even had a woman friend that the rangers or hands saw. He is a loner, and he wants people to believe that he is emotionally bankrupt, but it doesn't work. It's apparent to anyone who watches or looks at Newt that he is Call's son. Everyone, however, but Call. He even refers to Maggie as "her" or "she" instead of by name, thereby avoiding attachment.

The truth is that Maggie was the love of Call's life, and he gave a great deal of thought to quitting the Rangers in what he perceived as disgrace, and going with her instead. Had he done that, chances are good not much would have changed for them, but a great deal would have changed for Newt. When his mother Maggie died, Newt was left without anyone. He had no family he knew of and felt lost and disconnected because of it. By claiming Newt as his son, Call would have given him such a source of pride and



self worth that it would have likely changed his life. By refusing to do so, he created in Newt a copy of himself, just younger. Being told by Gus that he was Call's son, and then going through the anxiety of why he wasn't told, coupled with the anticipation that at long last it would happen when it didn't, leaves Newt as hard and bitter inside as Call is. The sad part is that Call is proud of Newt, and knowing that Newt is his son gives him great joy.

Lonesome Dove versus Montana

In Lonesome Dove, the Hat Creek Cattle Company existed by eking out a meager, but safe life. Whenever the mood struck, they would go across the border into Mexico, round up as many "free range" cattle or horses as they could find, and then hightail it back across the river with their prizes. It was an easy life. The local saloon never ran out of whiskey and there was even a whore in town who was beautiful, if not reserved. The Hat Creek outfit wasn't much, but it was a safe place for Newt to grow up.

The decision to go to Montana might have been started by Jake, but Call was already getting restless. If Jake hadn't come, Montana might not have been the destination, but there would have been one all the same. The first trip would instead have been to deliver the cattle rather of waiting for the buyers to come to them. Call had already floated the idea before Jake showed up. Having been a Ranger for so many years, Call is unable to restrict himself to such a tame living.

Montana offers so much that can't be had in Lonesome Dove, but the cost is high. In order to get to the untouched beauty that Jake describes, they will lose many of their most experienced hands, and some of their horses as well. Though the trip gives Gus a feeling of new adventure that he thought was long gone, it also costs him his life. The danger and the uncertainty of being the first to settle in an area will have its price.

Cowboys versus Indians

Clearly a story of early America, Lonesome Dove exemplifies the spirit of the pioneer. It is a story that is repeated worldwide in dozens of languages, where one race of people assumes possession of property that clearly has been occupied before them. Cowboys drive a herd to Montana to find untouched paradise, and instead find Indians and hardship. The forward thinking of Augustus McCrae as he attempts to create alliances with the Indians is an attitude that is way before its time. It takes Call until Gus's death to realize that he had the right idea in attempting to maintain a degree of safety in Montana. The best thing to do would be to create understandings with the Indians. By establishing councils to mediate peaceful situations, they make ranching in the area much less complicated and costly. By acknowledging the Indian's skills and special knowledge of the area and its weather and seasons, the ranchers can increase their own survival rate in an unforgiving territory. Ironically, Gus is killed by a renegade group of Indians, whose chiefs were eager to engage in discussions of peace, as that served all parties.



Significant Topics

Unrequited love is a powerful theme in the novel; we see Gus still in love with Clara Allen, who threw him over for Bob Allen twenty years earlier, though she loved Gus at the time. When Gus finally finds Clara—her husband in a coma from an accident—he renews his love for her; this love is so strong that on his deathbed he asks Call to bury him in a place where he and Clara used to picnic. Lorena Wood, a prostitute who is captured and savaged by a group of renegades, is rescued by Gus, and falls in love with him; ironically, it is Clara with whom she stays to complete her recuperation. Newt admires Call out of all reason, as Call refuses to acknowledge that he is Newt's father; Newt's disappointment at Call's departure is one of the keenest blows in his young life.

Newt's disappointment kindles the theme of honesty in the novel—with others and with oneself. Call is dishonest to himself and to Newt, for by acknowledging his paternity he might make a more confident man of his son. But Call's tunnel vision of duty and work renders him incapable of showing emotion or affection. Duty is his stern master and will not let him go. Ironically, it is Call, the strongest character in the novel, who is most hurt in the end.

Newt feels abandoned, and for good reason. This is a theme running throughout the novel. Newt is abandoned; July's wife in Arkansas abandons him and her child; the Hat Creek crew leaves Lonesome Dove without much reservation; Jake abandons his friends (and Lorena); the characters periodically abandon and reencounter civilization. All human relationships in this novel seem to be ones punctuated by loss and disconnection.

Clara is abandoned many times in the novel; first by her husband, who dies of a horse kick; second, by Gus, who has walked away from her all her life, and in this novel dies; another by her sons who were taken from her by the cruel weather and climate. Loyalty in the novel does not invariably cement humans together and cause them comfort; it is, rather, a harder bond that is more particular, and which does not always involve sentiment. Call's devotion to what he sees as his duty and the "right" things to do allow him to choose his loyalty to Gus over his responsibility to his son, Newt; Gus chooses his loyalty to his friends and himself over his love for Clara, who desperately needs him.

That the women in the novel do not have easy lives is not surprising. In this version of the West, the strong are those who ride horses and carry guns; those who do not (mostly women) are at the mercy of fate. Lorena's transformation from small-town whore to brutalized victim shows the awful consequences of being a woman in this West; Clara's loss of sons, husband, and lover show another set of consequences. Men are the adventurers and the doers; women are usually endurers. Ironically, women serve as support sources for men (except, of course, Call); Clara's memory is fond to Gus, who asks to be buried where they once courted; Lorena is a source of gratification and company to Jake, and an object of admiration to young Newt. Even Elmira, who seems to deserve none, is granted respect and affection (though not without some considerable confusion) by July Johnson.



Style

Point of View

Told in the third person, this story weaves itself throughout the many miles of a cattle drive. The focus shifts from one group to another, beginning with the Lonesome Dove Hat Creek Cattle Company. They leave the relative comfort of Lonesome Dove for the unknowns of Montana as a result of the excited utterances of Jake Spoon, who had spoken at length of greener pastures and unclaimed countryside. He leaves Lonesome Dove along with them, traveling with the Dry Bean Saloon's only working girl, Lorena Woods. Unfortunately, his weakness for gambling will have him in a small town trying his luck while Lorena is taken by a particularly bad Indian named Blue Duck.

From there it switches to the life of July Johnson, the sheriff of Little Fort, Arkansas. Gambling there, Jake Spoon accidentally shoots July's brother while July is out of town. When he returns, he is sent after Jake, and he no sooner leaves when his wife runs off on a whiskey boat. His deputy Roscoe is sent after him to tell him Elmira's run off. July intercepts mail from Peach and knows the worst of it before he ever sees Roscoe, but seeing him makes July feel better. He decides to follow Elmira instead. Traveling together now, they stumble on Augustus McCrae, who had been under attack by Indians. Saving himself by killing his horse, he is on foot at first, but they loan him a small horse and together he and July go to rescue Lorena from Blue Duck's gang. Killing all but Blue Duck, Gus rescues Lorena single handedly, while July watches in shock. Sadly, while they are rescuing Lorena, Blue Duck is killing Roscoe, July's stepson Joe, and a young lady named Janey.

Just when Gus returns with Lorena to the herd, the perspective is shifted to Ogallala and Clara's world. Clara and her husband Bob run one of the finest horse trading outfits in the area, and after Bob is kicked by a horse, Clara continues the business on her own with Cholo. Her house is an open door, first for Elmira, then July, and then Lorena, and still she has a heart that has enough room to keep July's son Martin too. The love of her life, Gus, visits her then leaves her with the latest woman he's been with. Promising to come back, he goes off and gets himself killed. Her next visit is from Woodrow Call who is taking Gus's body back to Clara's orchard. Call fulfills his promises to Gus, and finds himself back where it all started, in Lonesome Dove.

Setting

Lonesome Dove is set in the late nineteenth century in America. A western epic, Larry McMurtry lets the reader taste the dirt, smell the cows, and ride along on an adventure that begins in Lonesome Dove and then goes on a cattle drive that seems to last forever. Woodrow Call and Augustus McCrae take the Hat Creek Cattle Company to Montana. Former Texas Rangers and now partners in the Hat Creek Cattle Company, Gus and Call know each other about as well as anyone can know them, and that



doesn't say much. Gus romanticizes life more than Call and Call's work ethic could put a company of men to shame. Crossing the country with a mixed group of men and boys, they encounter every weather disruption imaginable. They battle wind and dust storms, thundering rain storms and lightning, hailstones and drought, with one traveling for love and one for the lack of it. Both men are headed for new horizons, yearning for youthful years when they battled Indians and conquered new lands for people to inhabit. One loves women to the distraction of almost all else, and the other loves one woman and will have no one else. They are an unlikely pair of best friends surviving the wilderness together again.

Language and Meaning

Written in English, *Lonesome Dove* includes many terms and expressions from the time, beginning almost right away with referring to getting a whore as "getting a poke", and continuing with expressions like "I God", used to begin a sentence of surprise. Darn is commonly used in place of darn, and the book is peppered with quaint expressions like "Well, I swear" as an exclamation, making the trip back in time more realistic. The Texas drawl is easy to imagine as one reads the beginning, and Larry McMurtry's grasp of the time period is wonderfully well rounded. There is a quest, an adventure, a romance, a setting of cowboys and Indians, and the brutality and raw unsettled country are aptly portrayed all at the same time.

Structure

Lonesome Dove is divided into three parts. Part one takes the reader from *Lonesome Dove* to a place on the trail where they get their last look at *Lonesome Dove* and Mexico across the river. It covers the decision to go to Montana, the hiring of a crew, the gathering of cows and horses, and finally leaving *Lonesome Dove* with all of them. The main characters, Augustus McCrae and Woodrow F. Call, are former Texas Rangers who still have an eye toward keeping the law. Jake Spoon has run to *Lonesome Dove* and convinced Call and Gus to head to Montana. The notion exists of, once a ranger always a ranger, although Jake Spoon could be the exception to the rule.

Part two introduces July Johnson and Roscoe Brown, located in Arkansas. July is goaded into hunting Jake Spoon after a bullet Jake fires hits July's brother Ben who was walking by outside. July's wife Elmira convinces him to take her son Joe along with him. Unable to refuse her, he and Joe leave for Texas. They are hardly gone at all before Elmira runs away on a whiskey boat, intent on finding Joe's father Dee Boot. Deciding it is important enough, July's sister-in-law Peach tells Roscoe to go after July as he might want to know. July and Roscoe are both tried to their limits and beyond in a never ending series of intertwined circumstances. By the end of part two, Jake is hung, but not for the offense committed in Arkansas.

Part three is an insight into a number of characters, including Clara, a horse trader who opens her home to Elmira and the buffalo hunters she travels with; July Johnson, who



shows up after Elmira has had their baby and left it behind with Clara; and, Lorena Woods, who shows up with her old beau Gus McCrae and still has room for more.

Through all of it, a thousand head of cattle make their way from the prairie to the territory on an adventurous undertaking to settle one of the last wilderness outbacks left.

Quotes

"I figure out why you and me get along so well. You know more than you say and I say more than I know . . . we're a perfect match as long as we don't stay together longer than an hour at a stretch." Chap. 3 p. 29

"Better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it . . ." Chap. 9 p. 88

"Look at 'em. You'd think they just discovered teeth." Chap. 9 p. 89

"It'd be like tradin' a fifty dollar gold piece for thirty-eight nickels." Chap. 12 p. 110

"If opinions was money, you'd all be rich." Chap. 12 p. 110

"Why, you're as fine as flowers." Chap. 13 p. 125

"Call's gone to round up a dern bunch of cowboys so we can head out for Montana with a dern bunch of cows and suffer for the rest of our lives." Chap. 14 p. 127

"Every time I jingled my money she looked at me like she was ready to carve my liver." Chap. 15 p. 139

"We was the law around here when you was still sucking a teat. So many people think we saved them from the Indians that if you was to bring charges against us, and any of the boys that rangered with us got wind of it, they'd probably hang you. Anyway, whacking a bartender ain't much of a crime." Chap. 42 p. 286

"By God, life's cheap up here on the gaddamn Canadian." Chap. 55 p. 387

"Don't worry about the sleepers." Chap. 79 p. 559

"Don't these Indians up here fall off their horses like other Indians when you put a bullet or two in them?" Chap. 83 p. 583

"Served with me 30 years. Fought in 21 engagements with Comanche and Kiowa. Cherful in all weathers, never sherked a task, splendid behavior." Chap. 90 p. 651

"It's wasted on horse thieves." Chap. 100 p. 736

"No, I ain't kin to nobody in this world. I don't want to be." Chap. 100 p. 742

"Gus was crazy and you're foolish to drag a corpse that far." Chap. 101 p. 745



"A live son is more important than a dead friend." Chap. 101 p. 749

"I raped women and stole children and burned houses and shot men and run off horses and killed cattle and robbed who I pleased, all over your territory, ever since you been a law . . . and you never even had a good look at me until today." Chap. 102 p. 753



Adaptations

Lonesome Dove was made into a highly popular and critically acclaimed CBS television miniseries in 1989. Robert Duvall, who had some years earlier won the Oscar for *Tender Mercies*, played Gus.

Tommy Lee Jones portrayed Woodrow Call, and Danny Glover portrayed Deets.

Angelica Huston portrayed Clara Allen and Diane Lane played Lorena Wood. In general, the miniseries was faithful to the book; the length of the miniseries format made it possible to fit many scenes from the rather long novel into the production.

Robert Duvall was especially effective as the loquacious Gus McCrae, although Frederic Forrest, though menacing, did not seem to generate the horrific dread that the book gave to Blue Duck. Tommy Lee Jones's stoic portrayal of Woodrow Call provided an effective and believable foil to Duvall's Gus.

Return to Lonesome Dove (1993, TV) was a miniseries continuing the adventures of Woodrow Call after Gus's death. Neither authorized by McMurtry nor containing material written by him, it starred Jon Voight, Barbara Hershey, Louis Gossett, Jr., Oliver Reed, and Rick Schroeder reprising his role as Newt; John Voight did, in any case, manage to capture the grim dutifulness of Call in some scenes.

Larry McMurtry's *Streets of Laredo* (TV, 1995) adapted the chronologically-last episode in the *Lonesome Dove* series, and starred James Garner, Sissy Spacek, Sam Shepard, Ned Beatty, Randy Quaid, George Carlin, Wes Studi, and Charles Martin Smith. *Dead Man's Walk* (1996), a TV adaptation to the first book, chronologically, in the *Lonesome Dove* series, starred F. Murray Abraham, Brian Dennehy, Keith Carradine, Harry Dean Stanton, and Edward James Olmos.

In addition, a Canadian series, *Lonesome Dove: The Series* was produced in 1992, and was re-titled in 1995 as *Lonesome Dove: The Outlaw Years*. Several World Wide Web sites on these series exist.

Key Questions

A critical beginning for discussion, and an obvious one, is the harshness of life in the West of the 1870s, and its effect on the people in the novel. It's worth noting that the characters react differently to their environment than in *The Last Picture Show*, where people are constrained by their environment in both novels, the characters in *Lonesome Dove* rise to their several occasions, like Gus with Lorena, Pea Eye after Blue Duck's attack, or Newt as he grows up along the trip.

1. How does the author portray the characters of Call, Gus, and Blue Duck? What techniques does he use to show us what they are like?
2. How do the characters for example, Lorena Wood, or Gus manage to survive the incredible hardships they face? What does the author give the reader to explain the hardness of some of the characters? How do they rise to the occasion and take control (or not, as the case may be) of their own lives?
3. What are Call's reasons, or at least his motivations, for going to Montana on the cattle drive?
4. How does the character of Newt change during the trip?
5. Discuss Gus's burial request to Call. Why does Gus want to be buried in this place? What does it tell you about Gus? What does it tell you about Call that he honors such a request?



Topics for Discussion

What is the catalyst that prompts the Hat Creek Cattle Company to leave Lonesome Dove? What are the different personal reasons that Gus and Captain Call decide to go and what reasons do they share? What was the original plan and how did it differ from the Hat Creek Cattle Company's usual routine? Discuss the more likely outcomes of that plan.

What secret does Call keep about himself and who in the company shares this particular trait? How is Newt affected by it, and who finally corrects the omission and why? Discuss the ways that Call declared without actually declaring the truth. What were his possible reasons for not coming clean all this time? How many people knew before Newt?

When the drive starts, there are Call and Gus, Deets, Pea Eye, Newt, Bolivar, Dish, Sean and Allen O'Brien, Ben and Charlie Rainey, Soupy, Jasper Fant, Bill and Pete Spettle, Bert Borum and Needle Nelson, Jake Spoon and Lorena Woods, and Lippy the piano player. Who doesn't make it to Montana and why? Who ends up in Montana that didn't start out with them?

How do Gus and Call find out that Wilbarger, his man Chick, and a young hand of his have been killed? Who takes action to right that injustice, and what is the action that is taken? What conflict arises because of it, but doesn't change the outcome?

Jake Spoon makes several mistakes, any one of which could have resulted in trouble with the law, but, what crime does he pay for when he's caught up with? What kindness is extended to all but Dan Suggs afterward?

What is the biggest reason Clara didn't marry Gus, despite the fact that he was the love of her life? What part in that did Call play?

Clara tells July to wait a year before asking his question again. What is the question and why does she want him to wait a year? In what way is that similar to what she asked Gus to do when she told him she was getting married? What could July have done that would diffused Clara's anger and why doesn't he do it? Discuss how a personality can end up so repressed.

Who tries to help Lorena when she is with Blue Duck? She causes disruptions in several ways, all indirectly. What are they? Lorena never even tried to escape. What two ways did she learn could be employed if she did? Discuss which is more effective—psychological bonds or physical ones?

What kills Joshua Deets and why does the Captain behave differently about his death? What does Gus do about this tragedy and what is the outcome of it?

Clara asked Gus to stay in Nebraska. Why didn't he?



What did Call give Newt before he left and what was the significance of each item?

If you had to write a fourth part to this story, how would it continue?

What is Clara's weakness? Who does she share it with and when?

Call winds up exactly where he started. What two surprises does he find?

Literary Precedents

The Western adventure novel is one of the oldest genres in American fiction.

Robert Adams states that *Lonesome Dove* follows "in trails well worn by Zane Grey and Clarence E. Mulford;" one can also add the Westerns of Louis L'Amour to the long list of American Western novels.

The Western genre can in some ways be considered as having begun with James Fenimore Cooper's early-nineteenth-century Leatherstocking novels, including *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826; see separate entry), *The Deerslayer* (1841), *The Pioneers* (1823), and *The Pathfinder* (1840; see separate entry), Cooper brought in some now-standard elements—Indians, descriptions of the landscape so different at that time from the postcolonial cityscapes of his readers; the white man who is nearly as adept in the ways of the land and the native peoples as they are themselves; the white women who urgently need rescuing. Indeed, Gus and Call are not unlike Cooper's Leatherstocking, (Natty Bumppo); both are, by the end of the series, wiser than all whites and some of the Indians; both know the ways of the land; both have a deep devotion to that land and are wistful when they think of the way the land used to be and of the encroachments of civilization. Yet where Leatherstocking is a romantic character in a tale of the then New West of America's youth, Call and Gus are made much more real, for McMurtry shows them, in *Lonesome Dove* and the three other novels of the series, as often befuddled, impotent, and fallible. Cooper's novels show a brand-new America; McMurtry's show a wilderness which has lost its bloom and waits apprehensively for the next onslaught of civilization.



Related Titles

Lonesome Dove is the first-published, but third in chronology, of the four Lonesome Dove novels. Chronologically the novels in the "saga" are as follows: *Dead Man's Walk* finds Call and Gus joining the Rangers as very young men following, as in *Comanche Moon*, an erratic commander into a dangerous situation; they are captured by Mexican forces, and literally walk across Texas and New Mexico into Mexico and captivity. *Comanche Moon* follows, covering several years in the lives of Gus, Call, and the Rangers, and introducing the town of Lonesome Dove; *Lonesome Dove* finds them after the War Between the States, no longer Rangers, going on one last grand adventure, a cattle drive to Montana. In *Streets of Laredo* (1993), in which Call alone is the central character, he takes one last adventure before "retiring."



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