

## Glory Road Discussion Questions

1. The setting of this book is a red dirt road in a small town. It's quiet, most of the neighbors have known each other for decades, and not much changes. Even as time charges forward, there are still towns like this all over the South—and across the country. Does the setting in *Glory Road* remind you of any place from your own life?
2. When the book opens, Jessie is only mildly aware of her mother Gus's memory lapses. As time goes on, Gus's difficulties become more apparent and concerning. Do you have any experience with walking through a similar situation with a family member? Did you walk that road alone or were there others around with whom you could share your fears and questions?
3. Jessie's daughter, Evan, is a young teenager experiencing new sensitivities and emotions as she's figuring out the world and her place in it. Jessie's plan for tackling these teen years is to talk less and listen more. If you've been through teenagerhood with a child, did you find yourself trying to come up with new strategies to connect with your teenager? What worked and what didn't?
4. What did you think about Jessie's relationships with Ben and Sumner? Did you see similarities between Sumner and her ex-husband Chris? Did you understand her pull toward both men? Were you rooting for one over the other?
5. Jessie has a deep-seated fear of letting herself love again. How do her ex-husband Chris, her younger years with Ben, and even her father's death play a part in her fear of getting close to someone else? In the end, what was it that allowed her to move beyond the fear and let her heart love again?
6. When Evan is out running with Jessie, she thinks about how she can sometimes see what her mom must have looked like as a child. She says, "If you can still look like your little girl self when you're grown, do you still feel little? Like you're playing pretend and you really don't feel like the adult everyone thinks you are?" Can you identify with Evan's thoughts and questions? Have you ever felt like you're still your younger self trapped in an adult body with adult responsibilities and expectations?
7. Let's talk about Harvis and Gus. How are their personalities different, and why do you think they mesh well despite their differences?
8. Despite being fiery and independent, Gus ends up letting Harvis in and leaning on him for strength. Given her declining health and unpredictable future, why do you think she did that? What gave her the courage or strength to admit she wanted the companionship and needed the help?
9. Do you understand Gus's desire to keep Jessie from feeling the burden of having to take care of her own mother? Do you understand Jessie's insistence that it wouldn't be a burden but a privilege? Many people are familiar with the responsibilities of being a

caretaker for an older family member. If you feel comfortable, share an experience you've had that's similar to or different from Jessie and Gus's situation.

10. When Jessie was younger, she thought love was “sparks and butterflies.” By the end of the story, she's realized her need for firm ground and a solid, tested foundation. Can you think of a time in your life when, like Jessie, you thought love was about that initial spark and the fluttery feelings? How did your view change? Or is it somehow a combination of the two?
11. The quote at the beginning of chapter 38 talks about times of dormancy in the garden, and how while the earth is waiting, “silent, invisible work is taking place.” How does this relate to Jessie's life? Do you have any experience with quiet times that prepared you for something bigger?