

Discussion Questions

1. Jessilyn and Gemma are sometimes at odds throughout the book. What factors do you think contribute to this? Have you experienced a similar situation in your own life?
2. What brings about Luke's change in attitude toward Jessilyn at the beginning of the story? Can you relate to Harley's reaction to Luke's birthday gift for her?
3. In Jessilyn's past she's faced violence, but finding Callie battered by the roadside impacts her very strongly. What fears do you think Jessie was forced to confront as she waited alone with her?
4. Gemma withdraws when she finds out about Callie. How does her reaction vary from Jessilyn's? How do the differing reactions exemplify their personalities and situations?
5. Gemma's normally logical outlook is challenged by Joel Hadley's flattery. Have you ever experienced a time when emotions blinded you to sensibility?
6. Gemma and Jessie can't clear Mr. Poe's name because Joel has threatened to foreclose on the family's farm and also because they are afraid they won't be believed. Would you have handled the situation any differently? How?
7. Harley's faith wanes during the drought. What do you think made his faith particularly shaky now? Do we tend to be more heavily impacted by repetitive hardships?
8. Mr. Poe's arrest leads the people of Calloway to condemn him without trial. Have you seen similar examples in our world today? in historic events?
9. Even though Jessilyn nearly died four years earlier, Mae's death seems to be her first true realization of her mortality. How can age and maturity color our experiences?
10. Mr. Poe's sacrifice has widespread impact. Who is affected and how? Do you agree with Jessilyn that the townspeople who accused him in life and praised him in death were hypocrites?
11. Miss Cleta encourages Jessilyn to hear the "whispers" of memories she has of Mr. Poe. Have you ever been touched by your own "whispers"?
12. Jessilyn's anger at God eases with time, but she still hasn't been able to find solid faith in Him. What do you think is holding her back?