

Reading Group Guide

for *Blood Red Horse*

1. Gavin often teased William that perhaps he should be a priest rather than a knight. Why do you think he does this?
2. Who do you think shows greater signs of knightly behavior, Gavin or William? How so?
3. The horses in this book each have distinctive personalities. Do you see any similarities between the personalities of each horse and its owner (Gavin and Montlouis, William and Hosanna)?
4. During William's first practice tournament on Hosanna, the horse seemed to follow its instincts, rather than William's lead. While the horse's maneuvers impressed everyone watching, it was also evident that William may have his hands full taming Hosanna. "I think we both have a lot to learn," William says to his father afterward (p 38). In the end, what do you think William learned from Hosanna?
5. "You never know when your sins might catch up with you" (p. 17). Do you think Gavin's sins caught up with him? Did William's? If yes, what were they and how so?
6. Why do you think Gavin is at times mean and antagonistic and at other times kind and thoughtful toward Ellie? For example, when Gavin's dog dies, he quietly assents to Ellie's thoughtful burial, an instant later stalks off without word, and a month later hands her a carved wooden dog.
7. Why do you think Gavin chose to continue with the hunt and run Hosanna until he collapsed, rather than stop when his fellow huntsmen suggested they stop?
8. When Hosanna is recovering, Gavin and Ellie get into a fight over him:

"For goodness' sake, Ellie," he said. "Hosanna is just an animal. William can always get another."
"You know nothing." Ellie tried to keep her voice from sounding shrill and silly.
(p. 51)

What did she mean? Why is it Gavin and Ellie see Hosanna so differently?
9. Brother Ranulf and Ellie both knew that meeting up for him to teach her how to read and write was forbidden. Why is it that both felt it worth the risk?
10. Compare the Christians and the Saracens. How are they similar? How are they different?
11. Saladin notes that "strength and mercy" go together (p 73). What does he mean by this? When Saladin says this to Kamil, Kamil does not believe it to be true. In the end, does he change his mind?

12. What similarities, if any, do you see between Kamil and William? Between Kamil and Gavin?
13. Sinan tells Kamil, “Never betray your feelings” (p. 169). How do you think Kamil interprets this advice?
14. Sinan and Saladin, two elders of the Muslim faith, have very different views on how the battle with the Christians should be carried out. How would you describe their differences? Do you agree or disagree with either man’s approach? How so?
15. Saladin tells Kamil “Sacrifices must be made in the name of honor and love. Only then is the sacrificial gift worthy of the giver” (pp. 176-177). What do you think Saladin is trying to tell Kamil? Do you think Kamil ever fully understands or heeds Saladin’s advice?
16. While both brothers held a deep-rooted hatred for the Saracens, war soon affects Galvin and William differently. At one point Galvin says to William, “Everyone has to get through this in their own way little brother” (p. 123). Describe how each brother endures battle. What is it about each young man that brings about very different reactions to the same situation?
17. In reference to Hosanna, Kamil says, “He has taught me many things, and not all of them to do with horsemanship” (p. 198). What do you think Kamil learned from Hosanna? What is it about this horse that brought about so much change in Kamil, and in William?
18. Kamil had been so intent on avenging his father’s death. Yet when he faced the man who killed his father, he chose not to kill him. What do you think brought about his change of heart?
19. Do you think it was realistic that Kamil and William would work together—and pray together—for Hosanna’s recovery?
20. At the start of the novel Gavin and William have a very antagonistic relationship, but by the end they have more respect for one another and are friendlier toward each other. What do you see as being the pivotal point in their relationship?
21. Why do you think Ellie chose Gavin over William? Who would you have chosen?
22. If you were to produce a movie of *Blood Red Horse*, whom would you cast in each role?
23. The story of William and Gavin continues in K. M. Grant’s next book, *Green Jasper* (April 2006). What do you think the future holds for these two brothers? For Ellie? For Kamil?