

## **Book Club Questions for Slow Dance by Rainbow Rowell**

1. Shiloh and Cary's friendship was once the most important relationship in their lives, but time and circumstances led to their estrangement. What do you think caused their rift? Was it inevitable, or could they have saved their bond?
2. The novel explores how both Shiloh and Cary have changed over the years. How do you think their past relationship shaped who they are in the present? How does their reunion challenge their personal growth?
3. Shiloh often feels like she is "bad at holding on to people," especially when comparing herself to Mikey, who seems to effortlessly maintain connections. How does this feeling of inadequacy affect her actions throughout the story? Can you relate to Shiloh's struggle with maintaining relationships?
4. At the beginning of the novel, Shiloh and Cary are both hesitant and anxious about seeing each other again after 14 years. How does the tension between them evolve as the story progresses? What role does nostalgia play in their interactions?
5. The book is structured with flashbacks that slowly reveal the complexities of Shiloh and Cary's past. How did the shifting timeline impact your reading experience? Did you find it more engaging to learn about their history piece by piece rather than in a linear fashion?
6. One of the themes in the book is that Shiloh and Cary understand each other better than anyone else—but sometimes that leads to miscommunication. Did you find it frustrating when they assumed they knew how the other felt? Or did it feel real to you?
7. Dating after a divorce is never simple, especially when kids are involved. How do you think Shiloh and Cary handle the challenges of reconnecting after so many years? What did you notice about their dynamic as adults?
8. Being around Cary as an adult brings Shiloh back to her teenage self. Are there any pieces of your own teenage years you'd like to reconnect with now as an adult?
9. What did you think of Shiloh's relationship with her mom? How does it compare to her relationship with her kids? Was there a particular moment that stood out to you?

10. Shiloh is faced with the reality that she didn't become the person she thought she would be in high school. She's a single mom, living with her mother, and not an actress like she imagined. How do you think this disappointment shapes her identity and her perception of success?
11. In the book, Shiloh is described as someone with "subtle beauty," while Cary is noted as being magnetic but not conventionally attractive. What do you think the novel is saying about how we perceive beauty and attraction over time? How does this reflect the themes of change and self-acceptance?
12. Mikey's wedding serves as the catalyst for Shiloh and Cary's reunion. Why do you think this event was significant for both of them? How does the idea of "home" play into the narrative, both literally (the wedding) and figuratively (the reunion)?
13. The characters in *Slow Dance* are far from perfect. They are messy, complicated, and sometimes make mistakes. How do you think the novel portrays the messiness of life and relationships? Do you think the messiness makes the characters more relatable or more difficult to empathize with?
14. Shiloh and Cary's relationship is central to the story, but the book also touches on themes of family, responsibility, and the passage of time. How do the other characters—like Mikey, Shiloh's mother, and even Shiloh's children—contribute to the overall story?
15. The novel touches on how high school friendships often don't survive the transition into adulthood. Do you think *Slow Dance* challenges the idea that we outgrow our friendships as we change, or does it affirm this belief?
16. When Shiloh divorced her ex, she fought for 50-50 custody, thinking it was better for the kids to have a dad who would fight for them. What do you make of this situation, especially considering how Ryan treated her during their marriage?
17. Cary's childhood was marked by witnessing his mother's unhealthy relationships and lack of family support. How does this impact his adult life and choices? How did you feel about his relationship with his mother by the end of the book?
18. Did Shiloh and Cary's relationship remind you of any past friendships or relationships you've had? Maybe a "what could have been" kind of vibe?
19. Shiloh's perception of herself in high school seems at odds with how others saw her. How do you think that difference affected the person she became as an adult?

20. Shiloh and Cary's bond is tested not only by time but by their individual life choices and circumstances. Do you believe that deep, meaningful friendships can survive even the most difficult periods of life, or are some relationships simply too fragile to last?
21. By the end of the novel, Shiloh and Cary's relationship is still unresolved. Do you think there is hope for their friendship to flourish again, or are they better off moving forward separately? How do you interpret the novel's ending?
22. Rainbow Rowell is known for writing characters with deep emotional complexity. Which character in *Slow Dance* did you connect with the most, and why? Were there any moments or lines that particularly resonated with you?
23. The theme of forgiveness is explored throughout the book, both in terms of forgiveness between friends and forgiving oneself. What do you think the novel says about the difficulty and importance of forgiveness? Do you believe Shiloh and Cary can truly forgive each other?
24. The title of the book, *Slow Dance*, feels like it symbolizes more than just a literal dance. As the story unfolds, how did you interpret the significance of the title? Did it evolve for you?
25. Do you think Shiloh and Cary's friendship would have turned into something more if they'd dated in high school? How might their relationship have been different (or the same) if they had?
26. Shiloh and Cary's financial struggles really shape their lives and choices. How do their financial realities affect their relationship and the way they see each other?
27. Shiloh describes motherhood as something that takes over your whole head, saying you never want anything more than to make your kids happy. How do you think the way she loves her kids compares to how she loves Cary, her mom, or even herself?
28. A big theme in the book is how the brain remembers novelty but forgets the everyday. By the end, Shiloh promises to create so many good memories with Cary that they'll blur together. What did this idea make you think about the role of memories and nostalgia in your own life? Do you believe in the power of creating those "blurred" moments?
29. Shiloh and Cary both carry baggage from their past, yet they seem to offer each other something the other has been missing. How do you think their friendship (and potential romance) helps them heal?
30. At one point, Shiloh reflects on the idea that people don't really change, but they can still grow. Do you agree with her? How do you think Shiloh and Cary demonstrate personal growth throughout the book, even if they haven't changed fundamentally?

