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Glorie

Caryn James
Zoland Books (May 2000)
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Glorie is octogenarian Glorie Carcieri, the opinionated and determined protagonist in the debut novel of Caryn James, the chief television critic for The New York Times, and a frequent Times contributor of film and book critiques.

She's also a great-grandmother staying with her daughter and son-in-law, but it's a double-edged sword. Glorie would really rather be living in her own home right across the street, yet she can't allow herself to sleep in her own bed. She hasn't slept there since the day of her husband's funeral seven years earlier. She and Jack were married for 50 years and Glorie believes she's still communicating with him on some level as she informs him of the events in her daily life.

Glorie is an honest, quietly-humored portrayal of taking account of one's life near the end of that life, when circumstances and other people are sometimes more in control than ourselves. James populates her story with memorable and well-intentioned characters: daughter Louisa, for whom the mother/ daughter roles now seem reversed; her husband, Patrick, or "Ivory Soap" as Glorie had nicknamed him years earlier; "dizzy" sister-in-law Ada; the three aunts; and, of course, Glorie, herself.

Glorie is a well-drawn character whose sense of humor is interwoven throughout the novel. She's worried that someone has broken into her house. "She used to wonder, What will I do if I find someone? What crook would be afraid of an old woman armed with pinking shears? What could I do, yell 'You're it' and run?"
ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (April 15, 1998)

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