



The Call

By Yannick Murphy
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Questions for Discussion

1. How does the format employed in the novel (Call; Action; Thoughts on Drive Home; What the Wife Made for Dinner; etc.) affect your sense of the narrative? Are you aware of this element throughout the reading? Have you read any other works that feature a similar device? Why do you think an author would choose such a format for a novel?
2. In *The Call*, our sense of time passing is very much connected to the changing seasons. How would you characterize this 'natural' approach to time? Is the way time passes for the family in *The Call* unique, or does this represent for you an accurate depiction of the way time goes by?
3. As evidenced by the author bio, elements of this story are autobiographical. Why do you think the wife is not a more prominent character, given her relationship to the author?
4. It's interesting that the main character, a veterinarian, chooses to hunt when his occupation is helping sick animals. Why do you think this is? What is it about the human psyche that allows for those two activities to exist at the same time? Can you point to similar contradictions in your own life?
5. The father has many hobbies aside from his main work, including German and swimming. Did these activities inform your reading of him as a character? If so, how?
6. The mention of spaceships and the arrival of the spaceman introduce a supernatural element to the novel that contradicts the natural (seasons, animals). Do you see these as polar worlds, or as intersecting? Does the supernatural play a role in other elements of the book?
7. How does this book answer the question of what 'family' really means? How do you see this family evolving over the course of the novel? Did the spaceman drastically change the family dynamic for you? Why or why not?
8. The life portrayed in *The Call* is certainly distinctive, but routine is also a part of the family's daily life, as it is for most of us. Can you give examples of 'calls' in your own life? What rhythms can you identify?