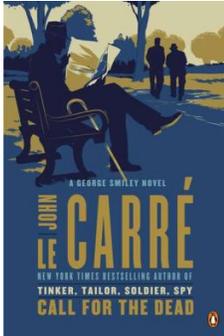# Books by the Stack

Call For the Dead by John le Carré

British undercover agent George Smiley accepts one final mission to reveal an insidious plot which may involve a suspect civil servant and a one-time hero of the German underground.

Why you'll like it: *Spy fiction, character-driven, bleak, suspenseful.*

About the Author: John le Carre was born in 1931. After attending the universities of Berne and Oxford, he spent five years in the British Foreign Service. He's the author of eighteen novels, translated into twenty-five languages. He lives in England. (Publisher Provided)

Questions for discussion

1. What influence did the setting have on the events and characters? Could an almost identical story have occurred in the another time and place and still be believable?

2. What is the significance of the title? Would you have given the book a different title? If so, what is your title?

3. What scene was most pivotal for *Call for the Dead*? How do you think the story would have changed had that scene not taken place?

4. Think about Smiley's personality traits and how they are revealed? Can you tell by Smiley's words, actions, or thoughts? How do the other characters feel about him?

5. How did Smiley's and Mendel's relationship change during the novel? Were they different in any way the end of than they were at the beginning?

6. Did any of the characters remind you of yourself or someone you know? How?

7. How does Smiley feel about Matson? Give examples to support your point of view?

8. What does Smiley mean when he reflects about Samuel Fennan, "The new world and the old world met in him." [p. 66]

9. What is Smiley's impression of Elsa Fennan? How does Smiley learn that Elsa lied to him? How does he confirm his suspicions?

10. Have you read any other books by le Carre? Were they comparable to your level of enjoyment to this one?

11. Did you think the ending was appropriate? How would you have liked to have seen the ending go?

(Questions provided by teacherinstitute.yale.edu)

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