

Book Club Discussion Topics

Here's a list of topics book clubs might want to discuss when reading "On Call in the Arctic".

1. Did Tom handle his potential draft situation the best way he could?

Should he have tried to finish his internship then start his pediatric surgery training while waiting to see if the draft actually happened? Should he have succumbed to the draft and entered the Army to become a M.A.S.H. surgeon? Did he make the right decision to go ahead and voluntarily join the Public Health Service for assignment in Alaska in lieu of waiting to see if his draft notice appeared in the mail, making it too late to voluntarily join PHS?

2. Was Tom selfish and thinking of his own wellbeing when he accepted an assignment in Alaska knowing it would require his wife and family to abandon the only life they'd ever known?
3. Did Tom and Pat take too high a risk when they decided to have their son in Nome with Tom performing the delivery instead of Pat going to Anchorage for delivery under the care of an obstetrician?
4. How would Tom have handled a serious complication when his son was born since he was the only doctor in town?
5. How could Tom have better handled his confrontational relationships with the acting hospital administrator, Harland McCoy and the new Director of Nursing, Leona Perone?
6. What could Tom and Pat have done differently that might have diffused the anger Lydia Green and other hostile members of the community had because Tom was PHS and represented government medicine?
7. Did the Public Health Service support Tom in every way they could? What could they have done differently that would have eased his situation?
8. Tom and Pat left Alaska for many reasons. What do readers think were the main ones?
9. The theme of "On Call in the Arctic" is that we can all adapt to situations in life outside our comfort zone if we allow our instincts, based upon our training and experience, to show us the proper path to follow. How can readers apply this theme to their own lives?
10. Tom says he learned to improvise, be flexible, and persevere and that allowed him to accomplish feats of medicine and surgery he never believed himself capable. How can readers apply these own principles to their lives?

11. How did the experience of life in the Arctic change the lives of Tom and Pat and their children and why?