

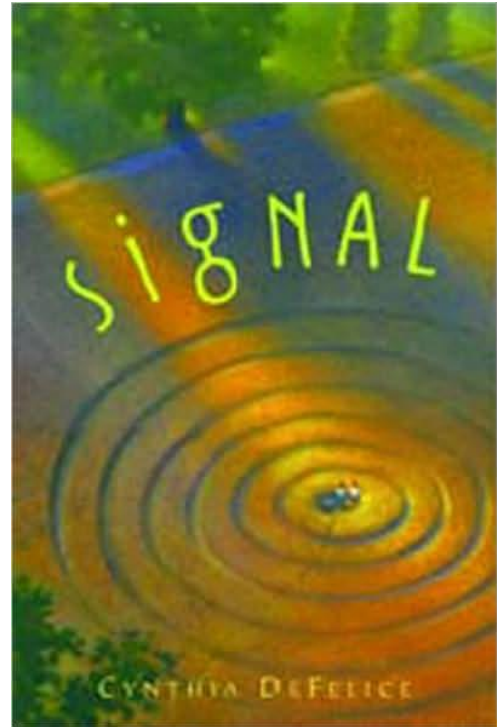
Signal by Cynthia DeFelice

(Farrar 2009)

Owen McGuire is having a lonely summer until he meets Cam, a girl with strange green eyes and cuts all over her body. Cam says she's an alien, and is waiting for her parents to come back for her. When she leaves Earth, should Owen go with her?

Discussion Questions:

1. What has Owen's life been like since his mother died?
2. Foreshadowing is a technique authors use to set the scene or give a clue about a theme in the book. *Signal* has some foreshadowing passages early on in the book. On page 8-9 Owen describes how his mother got him all bundled up on a clear winter night when he was 8 years old, and they went out and lay down in the snow and stared up at the sky – he noticed for the first time how enormous the sky was. Their guide to the stars says: “the statistical possibility of other solar systems definitely exists.” How do Owen's discussions with his mother about life on other planets affect how he reacts to Cam's claim that she is an alien?
3. P. 21 Owen discovers the mysterious person he has been tracking is a girl – what is about the girl Cam that seems strange? P. 29 Cam says: It's no accident that you are the one who found me.” What do you think she means by this?
4. P. 38 Cam tells the story of how she became separated from her parents after the space ship landed and ended up being taken in by the blond woman Bobbi and her boyfriend Ray and how they locked her up. Did you believe Cam's story?
5. P. 42 Why does Cam cry when she looks at the tootsie rolls?
6. P. 68 The dog man and woman (Charlene and Ernie) have adopted a new dog from the shelter, Sidney, Couldn't let them put him down, could we?” What does this tell us about what kind of people they are? How is Sidney like Cam?
7. Cam's planet seems perfect. P. 71 Why do you think Cam describes her planet as a place where people are never cruel to animals and children?



8. P. 98. Owen says “Dad and I are like two planets spinning in separate orbits, and that an unexpected little wobble just caused our paths to intersect for a moment. I feel like I want to stop everything before we spin off in different directions again, but I don’t know how.” What do you think Owen means by this?

P. 110 Owen has conflicting feelings about leaving earth, but after his Dad doesn’t come home – he feels all alone and says, “If a space ship lands, I’m getting on it.” Do you think he made the right decision? Later lying in the field waiting for the spaceship Owen wonders if he is heading to something new or just running away – which do you think it is?

9. Preparing the signal – what are crop circles – are they caused by hoaxes or aliens? (show examples). Why is the book called *Signal*?
10. Do you think Cam really believed that her “real” parents from outer space would come back for her? P 143 When Owen realizes there is no spaceship coming for them, he says this makes him sadder than anything else. Why do you think this makes him so sad? Why did Cam make up such a story?
11. Owen helped cam by giving her food and being kind, but did Cam give anything to Owen?

Snack: Tootsie Rolls

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