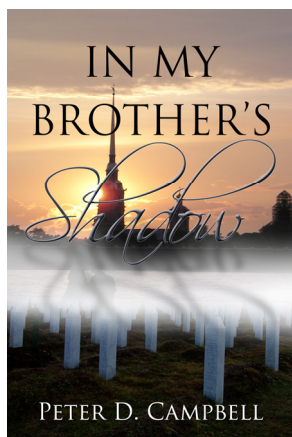


***In My Brother's Shadow* Reading Group Discussion Questions**

"For the first time in years a true example of Literature! Campbell should be forever proud of this work, a rose among dandelions. This novel should be read and taught in colleges all over the world." – Amazon Reviewer



In My Brother's Shadow is an absorbing and skilful story, exploring the attitudes of a younger brother who has grown up overawed by the image of his elder brother who went missing in Yugoslavia ten years earlier. In his attempt to break away from a monotonous middle-class lifestyle the main hero goes on pilgrimage to Bosnia and Serbia to explore the land that took his brother's life. The story takes him to the cold and imperial beauty of St. Petersburg, Russia, where events force him to re-examine the basis of his morality, the nature of war and peace, love and hate, and violence and submission. It explores the motivations behind these and how ordinary people can be pushed to do the unthinkable. *In My Brother's Shadow* explores the relationship of two brothers and how actions can be defined by their environment.

[Purchase it from Amazon](#)

About the author:

Peter D Campbell is a journalist and translator. Speaking fluent Russian, Peter has spent the last ten years watching Russia and has spent five years living in the capital of the Russian emperors, St. Petersburg. He is familiar with the contrasting worlds of corruption, brutality, high culture and education that make Russia such a confusing and intriguing country.

Many of the events and tales which he describes come from actual events in Russia – experiences he has either participated in, witnessed or heard of from eye-witnesses.

Spoiler Warning: These questions may reveal important details about In My Brother's Shadow. Finish the book before reading on.

- How did this book affect you? What was your emotional response? Did it discuss ideas or themes that were new to you or present them in a new way?
- Is the plot character or event driven? Do you think this is important for how you responded to the novel?
- What has this book told me about warfare? Has it changed the way I think about war in general, and one war in particular?
- How credible is the relationship between Dave and the writer? How does this speak to you about the relationship between brothers, especially where there is a large age difference?
- What about the depiction of Russians and Russian society? The writer is non-Russian but knows Russia well. Do you think that an outsider has a special advantage in conveying the essence of a society as it acts on individuals?
- How much of this book feels like it is based on the author's personal experience? How important do you think personal experience is for writing powerful literature?

- One of the themes developed in this book is the question of free-will. Were the individuals free to make the choices they made, or were they thrust on them by circumstances? Are the characters exceptional in this way?
- The two leading characters are men: what do you think of the author's portrayal of and use of female characters?
- One minor character (female) was an incidental acquaintance, but she changed the narrator's life irrevocably. Or did she? Do you think this encounter was critical to the outcome of the rest of the story?
- Was Dave psychologically disturbed by his wartime experiences. If so, how seriously? Is the idea of post-traumatic stress necessary to understanding the second half of the novel?
- When the narrator escapes from Russia, he has his dead brother's identity. What do you think would have happened to him next? Could he have returned to his former life? Could he have resumed his former identity? Would you agree that his problems were really only starting when he left Russia, not finishing?
- Who did you admire most in this book?
- Would you like to meet any of the characters in this book?
- Is there a passage which you found particularly profound or emotionally powerful?
- What aspect of the book made the deepest impression on you? Do you think that reading this book might have changed your life in some way? How do you think writing it might have changed (or been the result of a change in) the life of the author?
- If you could talk to the author what would you like to ask him?
- Consider the ending. Did you expect it or were you surprised? Was it manipulative? Was it forced? Was it neatly wrapped up--too neatly? Or was the story unresolved, ending on an ambiguous note?
- Would you recommend this book to anyone else? Who, or what sort of person? What particularly would you have in mind in making a recommendation – the characters? The plot? The setting? The author's reflections on profound questions? Something else?

If you liked *In My Brother's Shadow*, like Peter D Campbell's Facebook page, where you can also talk with the author www.facebook.com/PeterDCampbell.

Discussion questions for *In My Brother's Shadow* by Peter D Campbell, www.PeterDCampbell.com.