

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS for the January 29th, 2026, discussion of *Hotel Ukraine*

- 1.) It is February of 2022, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine is just underway. How does Arkady's adopted son Zhenya react to the invasion? How old is Zhenya, what is he like as a person, and what are his friends like? What action are Zhenya and friends engaged in as the novel begins, what does Zhenya do to get arrested, and how does Arkady get him released from jail?
- 2.) What kind of hotel is Hotel Ukraine? What infamous prison is located near the hotel? What horrific crime brings Arkady to the hotel? What does Arkady note as unusual about this crime? What does Arkady learn about deceased oligarch Alexei Kazaky that complicates his inquiry?
- 3.) What kind of person is Victor, and what is his personal/professional relationship with Arkady?
- 4.) What kind of person is Prosecutor General Zurin, and what is his relationship with Arkady? What kind of personal/professional relationship does Marina Markova have with Arkady?
- 5.) What symptoms of Parkinson's plague Arkady, and how does he cope with the problem?
- 6.) Though fictional, the “1812 Group” is based on the former mercenary “Wagner Group” led by rebellious Yevgeny Prigozhin (likely assassinated by Putin). What does oligarch Lev Volkov tell Arkady about the 1812 Group? What is Volkov like? What does Volkov say about his son Ivan?
- 7.) What kind of person is Tatiana Petrovna, personally & professionally? What is she to Arkady?
- 8.) What does Zurin do that results in Arkady being taken off the case? How does Arkady react?
- 9.) How does involvement by Zhenya & friends in the “Black Army” jeopardize their safety?
- 10.) How does what happened in “Bucha” allow Arkady to solve the case, and how are the lives of Arkady, Tatiana, and Zhenya jeopardized as a result? What does brave Arkady do in response?
- 11.) What did you think of the ending? What's your interpretation of the Anna Akhmatova quote?