

# The Cellist of Sarajevo



## INTRODUCTION

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF STEVEN GALLOWAY

Steven Galloway was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, then grew up in Kamloops. He realized at 20 years old that the books he loved to read were in fact written by living people and he decided to be an author. After attending the University College of the Cariboo and the University of British Columbia, Galloway became a Professor of Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia, as well as at Simon Fraser University. Galloway's first novel, *Finnie Walsh*, explored the friendship of two Canadian boys through a love of Hockey and was nominated for a Canadian First Novel Award. In 2002, Galloway began researching the Bosnian War and eventually wrote *The Cellist of Sarajevo*. Published in 2008, *The Cellist of Sarajevo* quickly became an international bestseller. Galloway continued to write and teach, publishing *The Confabulist* in 2014, before he was dismissed from the University of British Columbia in 2015 for allegations of sexual assault. He now lives in Westminster with his wife and children.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The backdrop of Galloway's novel is the Siege of Sarajevo, the longest siege in modern military history. In the wake of the fall of Yugoslavia, tensions arose between the Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks living in the new country of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The siege of Sarajevo, the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina, began on April 5, 1992 as the city was brutally shelled from the surrounding hills by Bosnian Serb forces. After almost four years, during which little aid was able to reach through the Republic Srpska blockade of the city, the siege finally ended on February 26, 1996. Intervention from NATO allied countries, such as France, the United States, and the United Kingdom, eventually forced a new peace agreement between the Bosnian Serbs and the other ethnic groups of the region. From an estimated population of over 500,000 before the war, more than 13,000 people were killed in the siege and Sarajevo's population was reduced to around 300,000 after the war. War crimes and atrocities had been committed on all sides, but the UN report of the war assigned 90 percent of the war-time abuses to Serbian forces. Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to recover from this conflict, and Sarajevo itself has been largely rebuilt, with amazing restoration of historic buildings. However, the culture and legacy of the city has been forever changed.

### RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Like Władysław Szpilman's memoir *The Pianist*, *The Cellist of Sarajevo* examines the place of art and culture in wartime through the actions of a musician. Galloway depicts everyday life in the besieged city, similar to works such as *Zlata's Diary: a collection of diary entries by a young girl*, by Zlata Filipovic, who was living in Sarajevo during the war. Barbara Demick's *Besieged: Life Under Fire on a Sarajevo Street* gives a similar perspective on Sarajevo under siege. Galloway's fictional novel also draws from historical texts about the Balkan conflicts and the Bosnian war, including *The Fall of Yugoslavia* by Misha Glenny.

### KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** The Cellist of Sarajevo
- **When Written:** 2002-2008
- **When Published:** 2008
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Historical Fiction
- **Setting:** Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Climax:** Arrow decides to defect from the Sarajevo militia, Dragan drags a man's body out of the street to protect the dignity of the dead and preserve the image of Sarajevo, and Kenan decides to go back into a risky part of town to help his neighbor get water—all inspired by the cellist's music.
- **Antagonist:** The Bosnian Civil War, hatred, hopelessness
- **Point of View:** 3rd person omniscient

### EXTRA CREDIT

**The Real Cellist of Sarajevo.** Galloway's cellist was inspired by the real Sarajevo cellist Vedran Smailović, who played Albinoni's Adagio for 22 days to commemorate those who were killed when a mortar shell hit a crowded market square. Smailović was not contacted or consulted as Galloway wrote this book, a fact which initially angered Smailović as he felt that Galloway was taking advantage of his life story. Galloway insists that he only meant to honor Smailović and did not mean to steal anything. The two men met in 2012 to smooth over this conflict.

**A Fictional Bosnia.** Galloway initially considered setting his novel in a nameless, fictional city. Doing so would have freed him to explore the themes of civilians in war and the place of art and culture without the added pressure of researching the real city of Sarajevo when the wounds of the war were still so fresh for the survivors. However, Galloway rejected that idea as making the novel "too universal," and kept the cellist in Sarajevo to give the book a concrete connection to the real world and

the real experience of the Bosnian War specifically.



## PLOT SUMMARY

A cellist in Sarajevo plays a piece called **Albinoni's Adagio** to help himself stay hopeful in the midst of the siege of Sarajevo during the Bosnian War. As he is playing, a shell hits the bakery outside the cellist's apartment building, killing 22 people who were in line to buy bread.

Meanwhile, a sniper who calls herself Arrow targets soldiers who are attacking Sarajevo. She never wanted to be a soldier and isn't comfortable with killing, but her hatred of what the men on the hill have done to Sarajevo fuels her rage. Changing her name to Arrow during the war allows her to distance herself from her old aversion to killing enough to make herself a weapon so she can defend her city. She shoots a soldier, for no reason other than that he is a soldier on the other side. On the other side of town, Kenan, a middle-aged Sarajevo father, wakes up and gets ready for the dangerous trip to get his family water at a brewery. He doesn't want to go out into the streets, but he knows he has to so that his family can survive. Furthermore, he has promised Mrs. Ristovski, his elderly neighbor, that he would help her make it through the war.

Out on the streets of Sarajevo, an older man named Dragan remembers the peace and happiness of the old Sarajevo as he walks to the bakery to get bread. He wishes they could all return to that past, but he suspects that the perfect Sarajevo he remembers never actually existed. His wife, Raza, and teenage son, Davor, escaped to Italy when the war began. Now Dragan lives with his sister and isolates himself from everyone in his old life. Dragan stops at an intersection and hides behind some boxcars as he waits for the right moment to go out into the street where snipers might shoot him.

Kenan tries to pretend that he is going for a normal walk to work in his old life. He greets an old friend Ismet, who has become a soldier for the Sarajevo militia. Kenan is ashamed that he has avoided the draft so far, but he truly wants nothing to do with death and killing. Kenan then passes the old Music Academy and the tram station, thinking of all the civilized things that the war has destroyed. He reaches the Miljacka River that runs through Sarajevo and decides to walk down to the Princip Bridge instead of braving the Cumurija Bridge that has been reduced to steel girders after multiple mortars. But the Princip Bridge is currently being targeted by snipers and Kenan has to walk all the way down to the Seher Cehaja Bridge.

Arrow goes to report to her commander, Nermin Filipovic. When Arrow first started as a sniper, Nermin promised that Arrow would be able to pick her own targets. But now Nermin has a special assignment for Arrow: protecting a cellist who has decided to play an Adagio for 22 days to memorialize the victims of a recent shelling attack.

Dragan remains stuck at the intersection, after seeing a couple get shot at as they crossed. He sees an old friend of his wife's, a woman named Emina. Emina strikes up a conversation though Dragan tries to stay distant. After chatting for a while, they wish together that the world would pay attention to what is happening in Sarajevo and that people could be kind and caring again. Dragan eventually decides to try to cross the street, but gets shot at before he makes it halfway. He runs back to the side where Emina is still waiting.

Back with the cellist, Arrow stakes out the area where the cellist plays in the street. She decides that the enemy sniper will likely hide in a building to the east, so she chooses an abandoned apartment in the southwest where she can counter if the sniper tries to shoot. She sets up a decoy apartment for the sniper to shoot at first, hoping to get the sniper to reveal his position before he targets the cellist. At four in the afternoon, the cellist comes out to play. Arrow thinks she sees the sniper in one of the apartments across the square, but the sniper never shoots.

On his way to the lower bridge, Kenan passes the burned National Library and mourns the loss of culture and civilization in the city. He reaches the bridge and runs across erratically, hoping to confuse any potential sniper. At the other side, Kenan drops Mrs. Ristovski's bottles, making him think again how much he resents having to help this woman who has always been mean to him and his family.

Dragan and Emina continue to talk, sharing their deep fears of being wounded or killed as they walk through their city. Emina tells Dragan about a cellist who is playing in the streets, doing what he can to keep hope alive in Sarajevo even if he can't accomplish anything to truly end the war. After watching a dog walk across the street safely, Emina decides to try to cross. As she does, a man with a hat crosses from the other side. A sniper shoots Emina in the arm, and man with the hat does not stop to help Emina. Dragan stays stuck on the side of the road while another young man leaps into the line of fire to carry Emina to safety. Emina and the young man make it back to the boxcar but the man with the hat gets shot in the stomach. The sniper then hits the man with the hat in the head, blowing the man's hat over to Dragan's feet.

Arrow goes back to the cellist's street the next morning. She sees a flowers placed on the street as a memorial to victims of the bakery attack and wonders when she stopped feeling anything for the dead. Arrow glances up at her decoy apartment and her hiding place, then realizes that the sniper is watching her. She hurries away, hoping the sniper hasn't figured out her plan. By four o'clock, Arrow is again hidden in the apartment waiting for the sniper to shoot at the decoy so she can kill him. The cellist comes out and begins to play again. Unfortunately, the sniper is hiding in the decoy apartment and shoots into Arrow's hiding spot before she can react. Arrow dodges the bullet, then waits for the second shot that will kill the

cellist. Yet the sniper still doesn't shoot the cellist.

Arrow reports to Nermin, who warns her that the Sarajevo militia will soon try to take control of Arrow's talents and use them for their own purposes. The next day, Arrow goes back to her hiding place and waits for the sniper to show himself again; he shows himself as soon as the cellist comes out to play. Arrow plans to shoot him, but stops when she sees that the sniper is genuinely listening to the cellist's music. Arrow struggles with the ethical dilemma of shooting this man, then sends a bullet into the sniper's head just as the cellist finishes. Arrow wishes the cellist would acknowledge what she just did for him, but the cellist goes inside without looking up at Arrow at all.

Kenan makes it to the brewery and waits to fill up his containers. As he gets to the front of the line, the brewery is hit by mortars. Kenan is shocked by the violence and suffering surrounding him, and he cannot move even to help the injured. All he can do is finish filling up his bottles and start the long journey toward home. With the lower bridges under attack from the shelling, Kenan is forced up to the precarious Cumurija Bridge. Finding it too hard to cross while carrying Mrs. Ristovski's bottles as well as his own, Kenan leaves Mrs. Ristovski's bottles behind.

At Dragan's intersection, people help Emina into a car to go to the hospital for her arm. All Dragan can do is hold her blue coat, cursing himself for not helping Emina get to safety and noticing how the color of the coat contrasts with the **gray** of the city. As the car drives away, Dragan thinks about how he gave up on Sarajevo in the hopelessness of war. Though dreaming of escaping to Italy to be with his family, Dragan decides he will stay in Sarajevo and try to remake the home he once had here.

Arrow has another meeting with Nermin to tell him she killed the sniper even though the sniper never shot. Nermin tells Arrow to disappear so that the Sarajevo militia will not force her to compromise her morals any further. Nermin himself is leaving the army now that the people in power are so focused on winning the war that they are destroying everything that Sarajevo once stood for. As Arrow leaves the office, Nermin's office building explodes from the inside. In her own apartment that night, three soldiers appear and force Arrow to report to Colonel Karaman. The colonel assigns Arrow to a new mission where she will not be allowed to choose her targets.

Kenan makes it through the city back to the market where he sees Ismet once again. As Ismet goes to barter for food, Kenan sees a well-fed man with a Mercedes accepting a shipment of water to sell on the black market. Kenan is so angry that people like this take advantage of the starving and trapped Sarajevans that he goes to confront this man. Kenan is then distracted by the sound of a cellist playing in the street. The music helps Kenan remember the old Sarajevo. He promises to himself that he won't let the war make him bitter, so that he can help restore Sarajevo after the war. Kenan decides to go back for Mrs. Ristovski's water bottles.

Arrow is taken to the bombed out Parliament Building, where a soldier named Hasan becomes her spotter. Hasan orders Arrow to shoot a civilian walking through enemy controlled territory in Sarajevo. Arrow wrestles with her conscience, feeling her rage at the enemy and her pain at all she has lost. But Arrow decides not to shoot the civilian and runs from the Parliament Building, though she knows this makes her a defector. Meanwhile, at his intersection Dragan sees a journalist setting up a camera to record the dead body of the man who tried to cross. Dragan suddenly realizes that he does not want this image of destruction to be what the world sees of Sarajevo. Before the journalist finishes, Dragan risks sniper fire to drag the body out of the street. He gets the body behind the boxcars and returns the man's hat.

Four days after Kenan got water, it is time for the journey to the brewery again. After hearing the cellist for the last four days, Kenan is far more hopeful. He faces the journey for water with new bravery as a way to keep Sarajevo alive. Dragan also decides to do what he can to restore the spirit of the old Sarajevo. He calmly walks across the street so that he can go hear the cellist play, and commits himself to connecting with the people around him, greeting people on the street instead of hiding. That night, Arrow waits in her apartment for the soldiers to come get her. She has protected the cellist through his 22 day memorial. She now reclaims her old name – Alisa – and accepts death rather than continuing to kill out of hatred.



## CHARACTERS

### MAJOR CHARACTERS

**Arrow (Alisa)** – A sniper for the Sarajevo Defense Corps, Arrow has “turned herself into a weapon” by taking a new name and focusing only on her mission to kill as many of the men attacking Sarajevo as possible. Under the command of Nermin Filipovic, Arrow is allowed to choose her own targets to ensure that she only kills men who she feels deserve to die. Arrow does not want to add to the hatred and violence of the war, but she cannot help but lash out against the men who she feels have taken everything from her. When Arrow is assigned to protect **the cellist** while he plays for the city, Arrow rediscovers her love for her city and the humanity of the other side. Arrow wants to stay relatively innocent in this conflict, refusing to shoot civilians and eventually leaving the Sarajevo Defense Corps when she is reassigned to Colonel Karaman and stripped of her ability to choose her targets. Through Arrow's defection, Galloway wrestles with the crimes committed by both sides of the Bosnian War, as all the soldiers must choose which lines they will and will not cross.

**Kenan** – A middle-aged father who attempts to protect his family during the siege, Kenan's mission during the novel is to get water for his household and for his elderly neighbor, Mrs.

Ristovski. Kenan does not see himself as a hero, as he has avoided becoming a soldier in the Sarajevo army and only wants to make sure that his family makes it through this crisis. Yet Galloway asserts that Kenan is heroic in his own way, doing the hard work of braving the dangerous city to make sure that others have the resources they need. Kenan works to maintain a brave face for his wife, Amila, and their children. He dreams of rebuilding Sarajevo after the war into a place where his children can thrive. Kenan decides that the only way to be worthy of rebuilding Sarajevo after the war is to keep struggling through these hard days.

**Dragan** – An elderly bakery worker, Dragan has become emotionally closed-off as a way of protecting himself from the trauma of war. After sending his wife, Raza, and son, Davor, to live safely in Italy, Dragan isolates himself in the city. He reawakens to his own emotions after running into his old friend Emina. Galloway points out that the harsh circumstances of the war have forced people to put up walls, but that a successful end to the war requires that people continue to connect with one another. Dragan hopes to be part of the group that rebuilds Sarajevo after the war. During the war, Dragan hopes to show a better image of Sarajevo to the world, acknowledging that the world should know of the atrocities that are happening in this city, but insisting that Sarajevo is not an abandoned wasteland with no chance of returning to its former state of tolerance and peace.

**Emina** – Emina is an old friend of Dragan's, who sees Dragan in the street and forces him to remember how life was in Sarajevo before the war. Emina has somehow remained optimistic during the siege, doing her best to help other people. Emina gets shot by a sniper, showing Dragan how hard it is to behave heroically, as he is unable to do anything to protect or help her.

**Mrs. Ristovski** – Kenan's elderly neighbor, a prickly woman who lived through World War II. Kenan realizes that her difficult demeanor is the result of the loss and grief of war, though he still struggles to sympathize with her, since she seems so ungrateful for his help. Mrs. Ristovski is determined to survive this next conflict, though Kenan sees that part of Mrs. Ristovski – her innocence and optimism – has already died.

## MINOR CHARACTERS

**Nermin Filipović** – Arrow's commander. Since Nermin was friends with Arrow's late father, he allows Arrow to maintain her sense of morality by choosing her targets. He eventually kills himself as the Sarajevo Defense Corps becomes more and more ruthless in their fight against the Bosnian Serbs.

**Colonel Karaman** – Arrow's second commander, a far more ruthless man than Nermin Filipovic. Karaman cares only about winning the war, no matter what damage the army must do to Sarajevo and the ideals Sarajevo once stood for.

**Hasan** – The spotter assigned to Arrow under the command of

Colonel Karaman. He wants revenge against the enemy so badly he is willing to kill civilians.

**Amila** – Kenan's wife.

**Raza** – Dragan's wife who is living in Italy to escape the war.

**Davor** – Dragan's 18 year-old son who has gone with his mother, Raza, to Italy so he can escape the war and the draft.

**Ismet** – Kenan's friend who works as a soldier but tries to escape the fighting whenever possible.

**Jovan** – Emina's husband.



## THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.



### WAR, CIVILIANS, AND HUMANITY

*The Cellist of Sarajevo* depicts three weeks during the Siege of Sarajevo, which occurred during the Bosnian War of the 1990s. Rather than primarily portraying soldiers, the novel focuses on civilians. In doing so, Galloway shows that war affects everyone—even those who aren't directly participating. War upends what people prioritize, how they act and behave, and it alters the most fundamental aspects of how they think.

The most obvious way in which the war changes the lives of the citizens of Sarajevo is by forcing them into a constant struggle for survival, through both the immediate threat of being shot by the army in the surrounding mountains, and through the longer term threat of limited food and water. The novel's three main characters have different ways of enduring and reacting to these constant threats: Arrow works in the Sarajevo militia as a sniper to try to protect her city, Dragan makes his way through the dangerous streets to get a hot meal, and Kenan travels miles to get clean water for his family and neighbor. Even the most quotidian of these tasks exposes them to mortal danger, as Kenan is nearly hit by an exploding shell when seeking water, and Dragan is standing right near two people who are killed by enemy snipers while crossing a street.

In addition to the physical danger, the novel shows the psychological and emotional damage of the war. Arrow gives up her old identity to become a "weapon" for the Sarajevo militia, going so far as to renounce her old name in order to make a clean break from her previously carefree self. With her father dead, she cares for nothing now but doing as much as she can to hurt the snipers on the hill. Kenan is consumed by worry for his children, and he is terrified that his family will be in danger if they ever leave the house, even though he resents that his

children cannot go outside and have normal childhood experiences. Kenan's instinct is to care for his family at all costs, but the dangers outside nearly cause him to lose his generosity: in his mission to get water, Kenan recognizes how much easier it would be if he only had to carry water for his own family, and not for an elderly neighbor whom he naively promised to take care of when the war started. Dragan, meanwhile, sent his family to Italy so that they would be safe from the war. He has since isolated himself from all his old friends and he tries not to engage with anyone because in his hopelessness he can't bear to remember what was normal in the streets before the siege began.

Ultimately, the novel portrays the journey of each character to prioritize emotional health over physical safety, since ensuring physical safety is impossible. Instead, the characters choose to reclaim and maintain their humanity despite the terrors of the war. After witnessing an old friend get wounded by a sniper, Dragan begins to reconnect to others. Likewise, instead of giving in to his impulse to close his heart to anyone but blood relations, Kenan forces himself to continue to get water for his neighbor and stay hopeful for his family. Arrow, meanwhile, leaves the Sarajevo militia when she is ordered to kill civilians instead of soldiers, despite knowing that she herself could be killed for desertion. The contrast between Arrow's moral compass and the utilitarian mindset of the other militia members suggests that the civilians' battle to maintain their humanity is more important than any aspect of the physical war. The Sarajevo militia, after all, has gotten to the point of engaging in immoral acts because it has lost its humanity. While war is a conflict between opposing sides, Galloway suggests that it is also an attack upon people's sense of individual and communal humanity. And so, the novel suggests that once the war eventually ends, it is only the civilians with their humanity intact who can have any hope of rebuilding Sarajevo.



### HATRED AND THE OTHER

Despite the immense damage done to the city in the war, Galloway argues that the primary cost of war is that it makes people hate each other.

Galloway is curiously inattentive to the racial and religious differences that underpinned the war in Yugoslavia, ignoring altogether the particular animosity that many Serbs and Croats had towards Bosnian Muslims. Instead, the hatred on which Galloway focuses is between opposing armies. He argues (somewhat simplistically) that the primary force that drove the Bosnian war to such an extreme was soldiers unthinkingly hating whomever their superiors told them to hate. Galloway uses the Bosnian War, which was a civil war between peoples who had previously lived together in peace, to show how hatred destroys the humanity of both those who are hated and those who hate.

Galloway does not include much information about the

political, legal, or international events that led to the start of the Bosnian War, choosing instead to focus on how Bosnian Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians began to feel about each other. Galloway suggests that the war started because each side felt that others hated them and therefore assumed that the "other" side was going to hurt them. They then preemptively lashed out to protect themselves, which escalated minor conflict into full-blown war, even though Sarajevo had previously been a place of tolerance among the many cultures and ethnicities that thrived there. The relationship between "othering" and violence is illustrated through Arrow, a sniper for the forces defending Sarajevo. Though Arrow had never wanted to be a soldier (and she even resisted becoming a part of the militia because her father had not wanted her to be involved in killing), she eventually rationalizes being part of the war by telling herself that she is only killing people who deserve it. For Arrow, the atrocities that the opposing soldiers have committed give her license to kill them in return, but by dehumanizing these soldiers in order to justify killing them, Arrow recognizes that she herself has been transformed from a human into a weapon. Arrow's refusal to recognize the humanity of the other side culminates when she sees an opposing sniper enjoying the music of **the cellist**, and shoots the sniper anyway.

However, the emotional journey of the novel's main characters suggests that there are ways to interrupt the cycle of hatred. Dragan remembers a time when Sarajevo was a place of peace and tolerance for the many cultures who called it home. He wishes the city could return to that point and, though he is unsure whether it's possible after the horrors of the war, by the end of the novel he has begun to act in ways that insist on the humanity of others. Arrow, for her part, ultimately refuses her commander's orders to shoot Bosnians she knows are non-soldiers, which is itself a refusal to allow her militia to turn all Bosnians into "others" that do not deserve to live. She wishes that her army could remember that the Bosnian Serbs are not "rabid animals," but also people with "mothers and fathers and sisters" who love them and want them to be safe and happy. Though her refusal to shoot ends up costing Arrow either her freedom or her life (it's never made clear which), it also allows her to remember her own humanity and reassert her given name Alisa. In doing so, Alisa interrupts the cycle of hatred, and suggests that there can be a future after the destruction of the war.



### ART, CULTURE, AND CIVILIZATION

In *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, Galloway portrays art and culture as the core of civilization. He treats them not as luxuries, but as necessities that offer access to a universal humanity that both makes life worth living and combats the hatred exacerbated by war. Galloway is explicit in his assessment that the loss of culture profoundly damaged the citizens of Sarajevo during the war. For instance, he describes

the burning of the city's main library and how that damage was worse for the Sarajevans than the loss of so many other buildings, since destroying the library metaphorically destroyed culture and learning in the city.

The most powerful symbol of art and culture in the novel is **the cellist** after whom the novel is named. In deciding to play his instrument in a public square for twenty-two days to honor Sarajevan citizens killed in a mortar attack, the cellist asserts the necessity and power of art at the risk of his own life. The cellist galvanizes the citizens to travel from across the city—braving possible sniper attacks at every street corner—to listen to his music. This suggests that the music is *just as necessary* to their survival as the food and water they traverse the treacherous city to obtain. The citizens seem to see the music as a statement of who they are, and as a symbol of the civilization and culture they had before the war.

In addition to its emotional and interpersonal value, culture is shown to be strategically important to the war effort. Nermin, Arrow's first commander, suggests that the cellist bolsters the Sarajevan cause, since the music reminds Sarajevans why the city is worth defending. If the Sarajevo militia forgets the humanity and soul of the city, he argues, they will be less motivated to defend it—as such, the cellist's music gives purpose and strength to the city's defense. Because of this, the cellist is a threat to the Bosnian Serb forces trying to seize the city, since they know that the city will be easier to take if its people are demoralized, and the cellist is giving Sarajevans a renewed sense of hope and community. Therefore, Arrow gets assigned to protect the cellist from Bosnian snipers, and she ends up in a game of cat and mouse with a Bosnian sniper sent to kill the cellist. This circumstance allows Galloway to highlight another important aspect of art and culture: not only does it bolster the war effort, but it points to moral possibilities beyond the war. As Arrow listens to the cellist from the place where she's staking out the other sniper, she is reminded of her emotions. She thinks of her own humanity, as well as the humanity of the enemy Bosnian Serbs who have families and loved ones, just like she does. Furthermore, Arrow notices that the opposing sniper has become so enraptured by the cellist's music that he has put up his gun—he's so moved by art that he has, for now, set aside his mission to kill.

In its ability to bridge the gap between Arrow and the opposing sniper, to connect them both through the beauty of music, the novel portrays art and music as offering a route out of the hatred of the war. However, Arrow rejects this bridge and kills the other sniper, which marks Arrow's descent into a moral abyss. This is apparent in Nermin's decision to relieve her of her duties, since he knows now that her willingness to take advantage of the sniper's vulnerable moment would lead her to other immoral acts. Further, just after she kills the opposing sniper, Arrow looks down from her location at the cellist, hoping the cellist will look up and acknowledge how she has

protected him. The cellist does not look up, showing that whether the cellist is aware or not of what Arrow has done is unimportant. The lack of acknowledgement from the cellist indicates that art and culture can't be defended through violence. Rather, by showing people from every walk of life in Sarajevo (even a Bosnian Serb soldier) enjoying the cellist's music, Galloway suggests that music and culture are uniting forces; they're the best antidote to the hatred of war.



## HEROISM

As is typical for a war novel, *The Cellist of Sarajevo* portrays acts of heroism. However, Galloway uses his focus on civilians to expand the definition of war heroism from soldiers' physical bravery under threat to the more quotidian activities of living life amid violence. Galloway begins his exploration of heroism by showing the way that his characters fail to meet the traditional ideals of heroism. Dragan, an older man who has lived his entire life in this city, is filled with such hopelessness that he struggles to even speak to those around him, much less react bravely when he sees an old acquaintance, Emina, get shot in the elbow on the street. Kenan, a middle-aged Sarajevan father, also finds himself helpless in the face of violence, standing in shock when a shell explodes at the brewery where Kenan collects water. Though he wishes he could be one of the people helping the injured in the aftermath, Kenan finds himself able to do nothing but stand and look at the wreckage and the dead, and then collect his water. Arrow, a former civilian who has joined the militia defending Sarajevo as a sniper, is the most conventionally heroic character in the novel. Yet Galloway complicates Arrow's heroism when she is assigned to protect **the cellist** and Arrow finds herself questioning if it is really heroic to kill other human beings who seem to appreciate the cellist's music as much as the Sarajevans do.

Over the course of the novel, as Galloway continues the stories of his seemingly unheroic characters, he begins to portray a different kind of heroism. After Emina gets shot on her way to see the cellist, Dragan decides to go himself to see the cellist so he can then tell Emina about it. Though Dragan has spent the war avoiding contact with others, he decides to put himself in danger of sniper fire in order to help his injured friend connect with the world. Kenan, for his part, decides to go back to the shelled brewery and get water for his crotchety elderly neighbor, even though it will be difficult for him. He decides to put his responsibility to care for others above his own personal safety and comfort.

Meanwhile, Galloway portrays Arrow's act of conventional war heroism—her assassination of the enemy sniper—as a moral failure, rather than heroic. Since she kills the opposing sniper while he is enjoying the cellist's music, the novel depicts Arrow's act not as protecting the cellist, but as betraying the ideals for which the cellist is playing. Instead, the novel

suggests that Arrow's moment of heroism is when she refuses to shoot at innocent civilians in defiance of her orders. Ultimately, Galloway portrays the cellist, who puts himself in danger to memorialize victims of an attack, as the most heroic of all. Kenan, Dragan, and Arrow all praise the cellist for his brave effort to restore a small bit of beauty to the devastated city. Further, the cellist inspires the other citizens of Sarajevo to see beyond mere struggles for survival and reconnect with the higher ideals of humanity that will eventually help Sarajevo recover. In other words, the cellist reminds citizens that true heroism comes with empathy.



### REALITY, IMAGE, AND MEMORY

As the characters in *The Cellist of Sarajevo* make their way through their devastated city, they are beset by memories of the city as it was before the siege. They find these memories of the old, beautiful city difficult to reconcile with the war-torn city in which they currently live. Even worse, they are faced with the possibility that their city will never return to the way it was before the war, which forces them to ask which vision of Sarajevo is the “true” Sarajevo. The novel presents such thoughts not just as key to the psychology of the citizens of Sarajevo, but as the key to the future of Sarajevo itself.

Through the beginning and middle of the novel, Dragan, Kenan, and Arrow have, each in their own way, accepted the “war-torn” Sarajevo as reality. Dragan has given up on human interaction, while Kenan is focused solely on the survival of his family. Most dramatically, Arrow has transformed herself into a weapon and is focused on killing as many enemy soldiers as possible. But as each character is affected by their own experiences (particularly by hearing the cellist), each of their views shifts and they begin to see the city as being a place worth saving and a place capable of being saved. The novel then suggests that by *acting* as if the city is both worth saving, they create that reality: Dragan, for instance, makes this image of a better Sarajevo a reality by refusing to let a foreign camera crew film a man who has been killed by a sniper. Dragan refuses to let Sarajevo be seen by the world as a city in which dead bodies are commonly on the street, even if that is the reality during much of the siege. In addition, he desperately wants to be one of the men “worthy of rebuilding Sarajevo” after the war, and he believes that only those who hold on to hope will be able to do that. Kenan also refuses to let the war make him into “a ghost while... alive,” or somebody who has no hope for the future. He protects his children's innocence, continues to support his neighbor even though it is an added burden, and jokes with his wife about going out to get the ingredients for a cake. That these characters maintain empathy and try to keep their lives enjoyable makes the city a place of life rather than death.

The novel portrays the citizens of the city as existing in a kind of war against hopelessness, and it suggests that the primary

weapon in that war is to create a different reality—one full of life, and dignity, and hope. At the same time, however, even as they refuse to bend to the hopeless reality of the war, the characters of the novel also hope that the terrible reality of the siege of Sarajevo is not forgotten. Even as Dragan stops the camera crews from filming the street with the dead bodies, he *wants* the camera crews to continue recording some aspects of the siege so that the world will witness the destruction in Sarajevo and not let such a thing happen again. Despite these hopes for remembrance, though, the novel puts the Bosnian War into a broader context that suggests that memories of the war are unlikely to have a positive effect. Kenan's elderly neighbor Mrs. Ristovski lived through WWII, after all, and now similar events are happening again. The novel itself, then, can be seen as a kind of call to avoid such atrocities in the future. Just as the characters work to maintain hope in the face of the despair of the war, the novel works to maintain hope in the ability of humanity to see the horrors of hatred and war and refuse to bow to them.



### SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.



### GRAY

Galloway relentlessly describes Sarajevo as being gray, which shows how the harsh circumstances of the war have sucked this city of all its joy and vibrant culture. Dragan and Kenan, both life-long Sarajevans, note how the city has turned gray during the siege, instead of the colorful place that they remember. Dragan calls gray “the color of war,” associating this color with weapons and violence. Rather than the red of blood, the gray represents the monotony and demoralizing power of the siege. Gray, a mix between the two extremes of black and white, also suggests the difficult morality of the war. There is not one right and wrong in this civil war; both sides descend into hatred and darkness while Sarajevo exists in a “gray space” between life and death.

Dragan also sees a gray cloud hanging over the city, which shows how the war hovers over everything, even mundane actions like walking down the street. But the cloud, as it slowly passes over the street, represents how the gray of the siege will someday disappear, if only the Sarajevans can maintain hope and vibrancy. The most significant place that Dragan sees color is in his startlingly optimistic friend Emina. Emina's brightness, shown in her blue coat, reawakens Dragan's faith that civilization in Sarajevo can continue. Similarly, the sniper Arrow also sees the warm brown of **the cellist's** cello as a contrast to the constant gray. Again, gray is the color of the war, while other colors invite the characters to think of happier times

before this conflict and the possibility of ending the siege and returning to their old lives.



## THE CELLIST

The Cellist, once the principal cello of the Sarajevo Symphony Orchestra, plays his cello in the street to commemorate the victims of a mortar attack. Listening to music is a frivolous activity that seems to have no place in the survival mindset of the besieged Sarajevans. Furthermore, the cellist plays in the open street, which exposes himself and his audience to the threat of sniper fire. Yet this music is necessary for the Sarajevans to keep their humanity and continue to look toward a time after the war when music will once again be a normal part of their lives. Choosing to make themselves vulnerable in order to listen to the cellist's music allows the Sarajevans a sense of control over their lives and community. Instead of letting the men on the hill control their actions, they choose to prioritize the beauty of the music instead. Dragan, Arrow, and Kenan all wonder privately why the cellist plays or what he hopes to accomplish with his music. Dragan eventually decides that the cellist plays because it is the only thing he can do to keep the ideals of civilization and culture alive in besieged Sarajevo. Thus, the cellist comes to represent all that Sarajevo seems to have lost during the war, and the possibility that beauty and joy could return to the city once the war ends.



## ALBINONI'S ADAGIO

After a mortar attack kills 22 people, [the Cellist](#) decides to play a piece of music called Albinoni's Adagio in the open square for 22 days to commemorate the victims. The piece is based on a fragment written in the eighteenth century by Tomaso Albinoni later housed at the library in Dresden destroyed during air raids in WWII. Thus, Albinoni's Adagio is inherently marked by violence. However, the music's reconstruction from a burned fragment of a manuscript in 1945 represents the possibility of rebuilding something beautiful from the ashes of Sarajevo. The melody is sad, but it evokes the passion that the novel's characters have for their city. Though Galloway's characters have become numb to some of their emotions after the long, tense months of siege, Albinoni's Adagio is able to reawaken their hope. If the fear, anger, and hatred of the war are sicknesses, the music is an antidote that offers to heal both the city of Sarajevo and the Sarajevans themselves by reminding all who hear it that they are capable of more than struggling to survive and kill.

2009.

## The Cellist Quotes

☝☝ The resulting composition, known as Albinoni's Adagio bears little resemblance to most of Albinoni's work and is considered fraudulent by most scholars. But even those who doubt its authenticity have difficulty denying the Adagio's beauty.

Nearly half a century later, it's this contradiction that appeals to the cellist. That something could be almost erased from existence in the landscape of a ruined city, and then rebuilt until it is new and worthwhile, gives him hope.

**Related Themes:**



**Related Symbols:**



**Page Number:** xv

### Explanation and Analysis

The cellist, a seemingly ordinary man, uses his musical talent to play Albinoni's Adagio, a piece that gains huge metaphorical significance as it is played over and over again throughout the novel. Galloway draws on the historical context of the piece, explaining how the Adagio was born from violence. After the library in Dresden burned in WWII, a composer used a found fragment of a piece by Albinoni to create his own work of art that let him process his pain at the many tragedies of WWII. Similarly, playing the adagio allows the cellist to honor his grief at the atrocities of the siege while also looking forward to a time when the city of Sarajevo might recover from the damage and be rebuilt even more beautifully.

All those who hear the adagio throughout Galloway's novel, such as Arrow, Dragan, and Kenan, also feel the same hope that one day Sarajevo might be a place of peace and tolerance after surviving all this hatred. The music soothes the Sarajevans' tired souls and reminds them that human life is worth more than all the hardships they are currently facing.

## One: Arrow Quotes

☝☝ To hate people because they hated her first, and then to hate them because of what they've done to her, has created a desire to separate the part of her that will fight back, that will enjoy fighting back, from the part that never wanted to fight in the first place. Using her real name would make her no different from the men she kills. It would be a death greater than the end of her life.



## QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Riverhead Books edition of *The Cellist of Sarajevo* published in

**Related Characters:** Arrow (Alisa)

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 6

### Explanation and Analysis

At the start of the Bosnian conflict, Arrow chooses to take a new name so that she can focus on becoming a weapon for the Sarajevo Defense Corps. Casting off her old name, Arrow metaphorically rejects the old emotions that make her too weak to do what is necessary to win the war and protect her city. However, Arrow's growing hatred of the enemy is a threat to her true identity. Even as she separates the hatred from her "true self," Arrow is in danger of letting that hatred consume her. As she says, killing people under her real name would make her a murderer like the enemy soldiers. But allowing her new identity to take control of her life also presents the insidious risk of permanently erasing the part that never wanted to fight. Arrow must be incredibly careful that her two sides stay balanced, or hatred will overpower her humanity.

### One: Kenan Quotes

☝☝ "You've never lived through a war. You have no idea what it will be like."

"It won't last long," he said. "The rest of Europe will do something to stop it from escalating."

She snorted. "That won't matter for me. I'm too old to do the things one must do in wartime to survive."

Kenan wasn't sure what she meant. He knew that she had been married just before the last war and that her husband was killed during the initial days of the German invasion. "It might not be that bad," he said, regretting it immediately, knowing it wasn't true.

"You have no idea," she repeated.

"Well," he said, "I will help you. Everyone in the building will help each other. You'll see."

Mrs. Ristovski picked up her coffee and took a sip. She didn't look at Kenan, refusing to acknowledge his smile. "We'll see," she said.

**Related Characters:** Kenan, Mrs. Ristovski (speaker)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 20

### Explanation and Analysis

At the very beginning of the siege, Kenan has hope that his

community will come together and help each other survive, even though the elderly Mrs. Ristovski is not so sure. Having lived through WWII, Mrs. Ristovski has seen that people become more selfish as times get tougher. As the siege stretches on, Kenan begins to fall into Mrs. Ristovski's prediction, resenting the fact that he has to get water for Mrs. Ristovski when he already feels that he is risking his life just to take care of his own loved ones. Yet, Galloway suggests that Kenan cannot give up on his desire to help other people. This spirit of community and sharing burdens is the only thing that can combat the bleak realities of war. While Mrs. Ristovski became bitter after seeing suffering, Kenan can choose to relieve the suffering of others in order to survive the conflict with his soul and conscience intact.

### One: Dragan Quotes

☝☝ Now, after all that has happened, Dragan knows that the Sarajevo he remembers, the city he grew up in and was proud of and happy with, likely never existed. If he looks around him, it's hard to see what once was, or maybe was. More and more it seems like there has never been anything here but the men on the hills with guns and bombs. Somehow that doesn't seem right either, yet these are the only two options.

**Related Characters:** Dragan

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 23

### Explanation and Analysis

Dragan has a difficult time reconciling the Sarajevo that he now sees in front of him with the Sarajevo he thinks he remembers. While it is true that Sarajevo likely never was as perfect as Dragan's nostalgic memories suggest, it is also true that the old Sarajevo upheld civilized values that no longer seem to be a part of this city under siege. However, the more Dragan gives up on those old ideals, the less likely it is that Sarajevo will ever return to its old values. Dragan has to hold on to the image of the wonderful city he wishes he lived in for that city to have any chance of becoming a reality.

●● He's stopped talking to his friends, visits no one, avoids those who come to visit him. At work he says as little as possible. He can perhaps learn to bear the destruction of buildings, but the destruction of the living is too much for him. If people are going to be taken away from him, either through death or a transformation of their personality that makes them into strangers, then he's better off without them.

**Related Characters:** Dragan

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 32

### Explanation and Analysis

Dragan, fearful of getting hurt by the atrocities of the war, chooses to isolate himself from everyone so that he will have no reason to mourn. Galloway presents this as an understandable choice, given how dangerous the city has become and the hardships that Dragan has had to endure. Dragan is even lonelier because he felt forced to send his wife and son to safety in Italy so they would be able to live freely. Yet however noble it was that Dragan stayed in a city that is being destroyed every day, Galloway also shows that Dragan has been a coward to avoid human interaction. In order to survive this conflict with his mental health and sanity intact, Dragan must continue to connect with other people. It does render him vulnerable to pain, but it also gives him the opportunity to share his burdens.

## Two: Kenan Quotes

●● Men who are much older, have larger families, and are less suited to combat have enlisted. But Kenan hasn't. He knows the real reason.

He's afraid of dying. He may very well die at any time, whether he's in the army or not, but he feels that as a civilian his chances are lower, and if he's killed it will be unjust, whereas for a soldier death is part of the job.

**Related Characters:** Kenan

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 40

### Explanation and Analysis

Kenan, a regular civilian simply trying to care for his family during the war, questions his bravery during the siege because he desperately does not want to be a soldier. While recognizing that soldiers face hardships that civilians do not

experience, Galloway takes seriously the difficulties that civilians also face. Yet even while Kenan does have a lot to deal with to keep his family afloat given the constant threat of sniper fire and the scarcity of resources, he still feels like a coward because he does not fit the traditional model of what a brave, decent man should do during a war. Galloway rejects that narrative, asserting that Kenan is not a coward for hoping to avoid the draft. His desire to avoid signing up for possible death is a normal human response to unimaginable violence. As a civilian, Kenan has the right to hope that death and murder will not be a commonplace part of his life.

●● As a schoolboy, Kenan had been made to visit the small museum, now destroyed, that commemorated the assassination. He has always been slightly ashamed that, for a generation, when the world thought of Sarajevo, it was as a place of murder. It isn't clear to him how the world will think of the city now that thousands have been murdered. He suspects that what the world wants most is not to think of it at all.

**Related Characters:** Kenan

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 49

### Explanation and Analysis

Kenan considers how the world views Sarajevo, both before and after this conflict. He eventually decides that the world would rather ignore the conflict altogether and assume that Sarajevo will never be capable of rebuilding from this tragedy. Kenan worries that the city will be forever marked as a place of violence, a reputation that started with the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand that sparked the beginning of WWI. Kenan's wish for the world to see Sarajevo differently mirrors Galloway's own hope that the world will finally see all that has happened in Sarajevo, rather than turning away from this crisis. Sarajevo contains so much more than death and killing, something that Galloway hopes to show even as he bears witness to the terrible things that happened during the siege.

## Two: Dragan Quotes

☞☞ "The last time I saw him, he told me, 'What is coming is worse than anything you can imagine,'" Dragan says. "He killed himself the day the war began."

Emina shakes her head. "This cannot be as bad as what happened in those camps."

Dragan considers this, wonders how relative suffering is. "No, it's not. I don't think he thought it would be. But I think he believed that what he and others suffered there meant something, that people had learned from it. But they haven't."

**Related Characters:** Emina, Dragan (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 74-75

### Explanation and Analysis

Dragan and Emina compare this conflict to other wars after speaking to survivors of WWII who are now experiencing this siege. Dragan comments that people rationalized this past suffering by hoping that it would at least prevent similar conflicts in the future. Even if the siege of Sarajevo has not yet reached the awful heights of crimes against humanity during WWII, the very fact that people are once again fighting over questions of ethnicity and religion is a failure in the eyes of those who hoped that something like WWII would never happen again. The incredible lack of hope during the siege comes partly from disappointment that no one has taken any lessons from the atrocities of World War II. Galloway has written *The Cellist of Sarajevo* partly in the hopes that readers will finally acknowledge this pain and carry the lesson into the future. Without knowing what happened in Sarajevo, no one can learn from these mistakes.

☞☞ "I can't remember if we were like that, or just think we were. It seems impossible to remember what things were like." And he suspects this is what the men on the hills want most. They would, of course, like to kill them all, but if they can't, they would like to make them forget how they used to be, how civilized people act. He wonders how long it will take before they succeed.

**Related Characters:** Dragan (speaker), Emina

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 77

### Explanation and Analysis

Dragan meets an old acquaintance, Emina, in the street and begins to discuss the old values of sharing and the sense of community that people used to uphold in Sarajevo. The old trappings of civilization, in which the citizens of the city cared about others and acted to improve others' well-being has become a rarity in the war. Dragan especially feels that ensuring his own survival means isolating himself from others so that he will not be hurt if people he cares about disappear. Yet even as Dragan has pulled himself away from interacting with other people, he also sees how the very lack of community bonding is part of the attack that the men on the hill are advancing on the city. Even worse than the destruction of the buildings is the way that living in siege conditions is wearing down any attempts at good moral action in the city. Dragan hopes that he can maintain the old sense of civilization in the city, despite how difficult it is to care about other people when his own life is constantly in danger.

## Two: Arrow (Part 2) Quotes

☞☞ The cellist confuses her. She doesn't know what he hopes to achieve with his playing. He can't believe he will stop the war. He can't believe he will save lives... She can't tell what he believes, and it bothers her that she can't say exactly what it is, or whether she wants to believe it too. She knows it involves motion. Whatever the cellist is doing, he isn't sitting in a street waiting for something to happen. He is, it seems to her, increasing the speed of things. Whatever happens will come sooner because of him.

**Related Characters:** Arrow (Alisa)

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 83

### Explanation and Analysis

After her assignment to protect the cellist from possible attacks, Arrow wonders about the motives of this man who is putting himself in harm's way just to make music in the open street. No one, and least of all a member of the city militia, believes that beautiful music will make the men on the hill put down their guns or decide to leave the city alone. Neither can the music act as a force-field that will protect the people who listen to the cellist—in fact, it puts the

cellist's neighbors in more danger by making that location a target. Yet, though the cellist's music might seem useless in terms of physically defending the city, Arrow values the "motion" inherent to the cellist's performance in the street. His music is a call to action for other Sarajevans that reminds them why they continue to fight and rallies them into acting to bring back the old Sarajevo where music was not a dangerous and foolhardy mission.

☝ She hopes that the girls, and the rest of the city hate the men on the hills for the same reason she does. Because they made her hate. They started a war, saying that the people of Sarajevo hated each other, and the people fought back, saying they didn't, that they were a city without hatred. But then the men on the hills started to kill and mutilate and destroy. And little by little they got what they wanted, a victory as clear as it would be if they could drive their tanks through the town. They made her, and people like her, hate them.

**Related Characters:** Arrow (Alisa)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 95

### Explanation and Analysis

While keeping the cellist under her protective watch, Arrow sees two girls listening to the cellist's music and she wonders about these strangers' feelings about the siege and the enemy. Arrow, a member of the militia, has turned her pain and hatred into a weapon. Because Arrow lost her father and her old carefree way of life due to the actions of the men on the hill, she now feels justified in hating these men and doing whatever she can to hurt them. However, Arrow sees a difference in her own hatred and the hatred of the men on the hill that started the war in the first place. The men on the hill hated first, targeting those of different ethnic and religious backgrounds because they saw that difference as harmful or evil.

Arrow blames this hatred for starting the war, and for causing the hatred in herself that keeps the conflict going. Arrow's hatred, and the hatred she thinks all Sarajevans should rightfully feel after the damage done to their city, allows her to keep fighting. The conflict thus escalates as the hatred of the other side becomes more justified with each violent act they all perpetrate. Even as the men on the hill win by destroying the city, they also claim a victory in destroying the inner lives of the Sarajevans who become consumed in hatred.

## Two: Kenan (Part 2) Quotes

☝ The men on the hills made the library one of their first targets, and they took to their task with great efficiency. Kenan didn't know if it was shells that started the fire, or if someone smuggled in a bomb as they did in the post office, but he knew that as it burned they fired incendiary shells at it. He went there when he heard it was burning, without knowing why. He watched, helpless and useless, as this symbol of what the city was and what many still wanted it to be, gave in to the desires of the men on the hills.

**Related Characters:** Kenan

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 98

### Explanation and Analysis

While on his way to get water, Kenan passes the library and remembers how terrible he felt as he watched that lovely building be destroyed in the early days of the siege. Though the library itself is not an important strategic target in terms of the city's function (as targeting the train station or power plants might be), the library is an important site for both sides of the conflict because it represents the wider civilized values of the old Sarajevo. A library, full of books from authors of all ethnicities, religions, and creeds, can be a place where knowledge is exchanged and people's mindsets become more accepting and tolerant. Galloway sees one purpose of civilization as helping people reach across difference and resolve conflicts peacefully. Bombing that place thus becomes a statement against that viewpoint which once allowed all of Sarajevo to coexist. Kenan, still clinging to the old civilization of Sarajevo is very affected by the library burning, not because he loves books or because he needs this place for physical survival, but because it is an attack on all that he once felt made Sarajevo good.

## Two: Dragan (Part 2) Quotes

☝ "Who is he playing for?" she asks again, and suddenly Dragan thinks he knows. "Maybe he's playing for himself," he says. "Maybe it's all he knows how to do, and he's not doing it to make something happen." And he thinks this is true. What the cellist wants isn't a change, or to set things right again, but to stop things from getting worse. Because, as the optimist in Emina's mother's joke said, it can always get worse. But perhaps the only thing that will stop it from getting worse is people doing the things they know how to do.

**Related Characters:** Emina, Dragan (speaker)

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 110

### Explanation and Analysis

Dragan and Emina meet on the street while risking their lives by doing mundane tasks amid sniper fire, and Emina tells Dragan about a mysterious cellist who has chosen to risk his life simply to play music in an open square. While Emina muses on the possible reasons why the cellist would do this, Dragan suggests that the music is the best he has to offer in order to keep the violence of the siege from taking over the city completely. Art and culture in Sarajevo is not an unnecessary luxury that the residents should give up during the siege, but an important component of keeping Sarajevo from dying completely under the pressure of war.

☝ She is the person he once knew: Affected by the war, changed, but the woman he knew is still in there. She hasn't been covered in the gray that colors the streets. He wonders why he hasn't seen this before, wonders how much else he hasn't seen.

**Related Characters:** Emina, Dragan

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 116

### Explanation and Analysis

When Dragan truly connects with an old acquaintance on the street, he finally sees that the city still has life within it, even when everything seems covered in the gray of war. Galloway captures the drudgery of the siege in this drab color, showing how Dragan has gradually been worn down until he can no longer see any beauty or color in the world. Emina, on the other hand, has been able to retain her color—that is, she still connects with the world around her instead of focusing only on her own personal survival. Dragan is shaken out of his single-minded determination to keep himself safe. Emina reminds him that Sarajevo is more than the gray that he has seen during the war. Emina's influence allows Dragan to regain his humanity and fight to keep civilized life alive even in war-torn Sarajevo.

## Two: Arrow (Part 3) Quotes

☝ Do the men on the hills hate her? Or do they hate the idea of her, because she's different from them, and that in this difference there might be some sort of inferiority or superiority that is hers or theirs, that in the end threatens the potential happiness of everyone? She begins to wonder whether they fight against an idea, and that fight manifests itself as hatred. If so, they are no different from her. Except for one key detail that simply can't be ignored or pushed aside. The idea she felt prepared to give her life for was not one that could include the hatred she feels for the men on the hills. The Sarajevo she fought for was one where you didn't have to hate a person because of what they were.

**Related Characters:** Arrow (Alisa)

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 133

### Explanation and Analysis

Arrow, a sniper for the Sarajevo Defense Corps, muses on the feelings of her enemy as she tries to reconcile her actions as a sniper with the knowledge that violence is wrong. She blames a pervasive hatred for anything “other” for both starting the war (by driving the ethnic groups of Sarajevo to hate each other) and for keeping the conflict going. Arrow fights in order to keep hatred from spreading in Sarajevo, though she also begins to hate the men on the hill for all the pain they have brought to her personally and to the city of Sarajevo as a whole. Arrow feels that she is in the right because her hatred of the men on the hill stems from the actions of these men rather than their identities, but Galloway still shows how hatred on both sides escalates the conflict again and again.

☝ She wonders whether he can hear the music. He's not much farther from the cellist than she is, so he must. Does it sound the same to him? What does he hear? What does he think about this man who sits in the street and plays?

**Related Characters:** Arrow (Alisa)

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:**  

**Page Number:** 134

**Explanation and Analysis**

While protecting the cellist from a sniper, Arrow notices that the man sent to kill the cellist seems to be paused as if he's listening to the cellist's music. The cellist's adagio awakens Arrow's emotions, which she had ignored during the bleak and difficult days of the siege. In order to be a good sniper, Arrow had to turn herself into a weapon that could do what needed to be done to win the war without letting guilt at the blood on her hands overwhelm her. Galloway shows how the music allows Arrow to thaw a little and embrace her humanity once more. However, it also forces her to remember that the enemies are also human. Listening to the music together ties Arrow and the sniper together in their shared appreciation for that beauty. If war and violence are a sickness, the art of music acts as medicine for both Arrow and the sniper to move away from violence and back to harmony.

☝ Arrow lowers her rifle and looks down at the street. The cellist has finished. He picks up his stool and cello and heads for his door. He pauses just before he enters, and she wonders if he will look in her direction. Even though he can't possibly see her, she wants him to turn toward her, to acknowledge her in some way. The cellist adjusts his grip on his instrument and disappears into the building.

**Related Characters:** Arrow (Alisa)

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 136

**Explanation and Analysis**

Arrow has been charged with protecting the cellist from any attack by the men sieging the city and thus she feels forced to kill the sniper who threatens the cellist, even though he is only listening to the cellist play his adagio. Arrow feels guilty for shooting a man who was not actively trying to harm anyone, but she tries to justify her actions by searching for the approval of the cellist. The cellist, far from being grateful to Arrow for protecting him, seems completely unaware that Arrow is even there. As the cellist represents the power of arts and culture in the face of Arrow's newfound violence, the cellist's refusal to look at Arrow shows how art will always be in opposition to hatred. Violence is completely anathema to the values that the cellist's music stands for, connecting the Sarajevans and the enemy alike to

their shared humanity outside the hatred and crimes of war.

**Two: Kenan (Part 3) Quotes**

☝☝ Kenan is able to identify three types of people here. There are those who ran away as soon as the shells fell, their instinct for self-preservation stronger than their sense of altruism or civic duty. Then there are those who didn't run, who are now covered in the blood of the wounded, and they work with a myopic urgency to help those who can be saved, and to remove those who can't to go to whatever awaits them next. Then there's the third type, the group Kenan falls into. They stand, mouths gaping, and watch as others run for help. He's surprised he didn't run, isn't part of the first group, and he wishes he were part of the second.

**Related Characters:** Kenan

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 144

**Explanation and Analysis**

When a mortar shell strikes the brewery where Kenan is collecting water for his family, he is forced to confront the fact that he is not a conventional hero who works to help others in this time of crisis. In shock from the force of the explosion, Kenan is unable to do any of the helpful things that he wishes he could do. Though Kenan admires those who are able to work through their own trauma to help others, Galloway does not demonize Kenan for not being one of them. Galloway suggests that reacting as Kenan does—by staring at the sheer destruction—is a natural human response to the horror of war. While the people who can help are amazing, Galloway does not argue that everyone should be like that. Kenan is a hero in his own small way for simply not giving up on life altogether.

**Three: Arrow Quotes**

☝☝ "The men on the hills have created many monsters," he says, "and not all of them are on the hills. There are those here who believe they are in the right simply because they oppose something that is evil. They use this war and the city for their own ends, and I won't be a part of it. If this is how the city will be once the war is over, then it's not worth saving."

**Related Characters:** Nermin Filipović (speaker), Arrow (Alisa)

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 167

### Explanation and Analysis

Arrow's commander, Nermin, explains what makes the task of protecting Sarajevo from the siege so difficult—the defense must do their best to protect the physical buildings and land of Sarajevo, and they must simultaneously retain the ideals and values of tolerance and peace that the multi-cultural city of Sarajevo once stood for. Even as they fight against the enemy on the hills, the defense corps cannot fall into hatred without seriously damaging their mission to preserve their city. A win-at-all-costs mentality might annihilate the enemy and end the siege, but it would also strip the city of Sarajevo of what made it worth fighting for. Furthermore, the people who exploit the rationale of the war simply to add more violence to the world are damaging the defense just as much as they are damaging their so-called enemy. By falling into hatred and selfishness, Nermin sees the Sarajevans as destroying the city just like the men on the hill. Nermin decides that winning the war for Sarajevo means not only freeing Sarajevo from the threat of enemies outside its streets, but also protecting the values of the city and its civilization from internal attacks.

### Three: Kenan Quotes

☝☝ The building behind the cellist repairs itself. The scars of bullets and shrapnel are covered by plaster and paint, and windows reassemble, clarify, and sparkle as the sun reflects off glass. The cobblestones of the road set themselves straight. Around him people stand up taller, their faces put on weight and color. Clothes gain lost thread, brighten, smooth out their wrinkles.

Kenan watches as his city heals itself around him. The cellist continues to play...

**Related Characters:** Kenan

**Related Themes:** 

**Related Symbols:**  

**Page Number:** 187

### Explanation and Analysis

When Kenan hears the cellist play, he is able to remember that Sarajevo was once not a place of death and difficulty, and he gains hope that the city can one day return to that

former peace and prosperity. Galloway uses music, specifically the cellist's adagio, as a reminder of the beauty of human civilization even when it seems like all that beauty has been destroyed. Reconnecting with the part of his spirit that appreciates the haunting melody of the adagio allows Kenan to escape the bleak reality of his life in besieged Sarajevo, and look to a future where Sarajevo can once again match the city that Kenan would like to live in. In this time of trouble, Galloway sees music, art, and culture, as incredibly necessary. Without the music, Kenan might forget the possibilities for happiness that still exist for Sarajevo in the future, which is his reason to live. Kenan may not need the cellist's music to live physically, but he does need the music to maintain his emotional health and well-being.

☝☝ He thinks of Mrs. Ristovski. He doesn't know what made her the way she is, but something has killed her, he can see now that she is a ghost as well. She has been a ghost for a long time. And to be a ghost while you're still alive is the worst thing he can imagine.

**Related Characters:** Mrs. Ristovski, Kenan

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 192

### Explanation and Analysis

Kenan's elderly neighbor, Mrs. Ristovski, survived World War II—but at the cost of becoming a bitter shell of a woman who seems incapable of feeling true happiness. Widowed in WWII, Mrs. Ristovski chose never to remarry or start a family in her grief. Mrs. Ristovski may still be alive, but she is not truly living. Her pain and loss from the previous war kept her from appreciating life once times of peace returned. Through Mrs. Ristovski, Galloway shows the effect that war can have even on civilians. Conflicts like this can completely ruin someone's life, even if the physical hardships of wartime do not actually kill them. Now living in the Bosnian crisis, Kenan sees how the horrors of civilian life during wartime would convince someone to give up on life, but he firmly rejects this possibility. Kenan's hope of avoiding that fate is his small act of heroism. He resolves to be someone who both survives the war and lives past it by keeping his spirit alive rather than giving in to the temptation of hopelessness.

### Three: Arrow (Part 2) Quotes

☞ “He’s one of them. They are his sons, he is their father, or grandfather, or uncle. They have killed our fathers and grandfathers and uncles.”

“We’re better than this.”

“Of course we are. They’re rabid animals. Killing them does the world a favor.”

Arrow thinks about this, wonders how many of the men on the hills she has killed. Their deaths saved lives. She knows this is true. And she knows that she has nothing but contempt for the ones who murder. But they’re not all like that. Their mothers and fathers and sisters are not all like that. “Some of them are good.”

**Related Characters:** Hasan, Arrow (Alisa) (speaker)

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 201-202

#### Explanation and Analysis

As Arrow is pressed into the service of the Sarajevo Defense Corps and stripped of her ability to choose her own targets, her spotter picks out a civilian man living in enemy controlled territory. Having previously taken a vow only to kill soldiers, she is also forced to grapple with the fact that her “side” of the war is not blameless. The Sarajevans also began to kill innocent people as the conflict escalated and certain factions of the Defense Corps became consumed with revenge against those who had harmed the city. Galloway points out the tricky nature of a civil war, in which people who formally lived and worked together in peace are forced to see each other as enemies rather than fellow human beings.

Arrow’s discomfort with shooting people who have “mothers and fathers and sisters” allows Galloway to show how blind hatred only escalates conflicts such as the Bosnian War. Though Arrow has certainly been wronged by the men on the hill who attack her city, the appropriate response is not to meet violence with violence. Were Arrow to start shooting civilians, she would become no better than the soldiers who she claims deserve to die. Arrow must remember that those men are human in order to retain her own humanity.

### Three: Dragan (Part 2) Quotes

☞ He looks across the street and sees the cameraman staring at him, his mouth open. His camera is in his hands, but not on his shoulder. It hasn’t captured him, or the body of the hatless man.

Good, he thinks. I will not live in a city where dead bodies lie abandoned in the streets, and you will not tell the world I do.

**Related Characters:** Dragan

**Related Themes:**  

**Page Number:** 211

#### Explanation and Analysis

When Dragan sees a cameraman filming an intersection where a man was recently shot by a sniper, he risks his life to drag the body out of the street rather than allow the journalist to broadcast the image of a corpse left in the middle of a Sarajevo road. Dragan continually walks the line between remembering Sarajevo as it was and dealing with the reality of Sarajevo as it is during the siege. Though it is true that a dead body was left in the street, that kind of environment is not the type of place that Dragan wants to live, or that he wants Sarajevo to be. Despite the harsh reality of the war, Galloway uses Dragan’s determination not to let Sarajevo be broadcast in that light to show how the Sarajevans love their city. They will not give up on making Sarajevo a better place, even when making it better involves risking one’s life for a corpse. By moving the body out of the view of the journalist, Dragan ensures that Sarajevo will not be branded forever as a place of death and destruction. While Sarajevo may be in trouble now, Dragan wants the world to be aware that this war is not all that Sarajevo is. In writing this book, Galloway also endeavors to educate the reader about the truth of Sarajevo and not just the media representation of the Bosnian War.

### Four: Kenan Quotes

☞ He knows that if he wants to be one of the people who rebuild the city one of the people who have the right even to speak about how Sarajevo should repair itself then he has to go outside and face the men on the hills. His family needs water, and he will get it for them. The city is full of people doing the same as he is, and they all find a way to continue with life. They’re not cowards, and they’re not heroes.

**Related Characters:** Kenan

**Related Themes:** 

**Page Number:** 220

### Explanation and Analysis

Kenan, the middle-aged father of three, exemplifies the everyday heroism that Galloway portrays in his novel. While the bravery of soldiers like Kenan's friend Ismet is not to be ignored or discredited, Kenan's dogged determination to risk his life to get water for his family each week is just as important to the ultimate survival of the city. Soldiers may be necessary to winning the war, but Kenan finally understands that his efforts to "continue with life" during this difficult time are also instrumental to ensuring that there will be a Sarajevo that survives to see the end of the war. Without brave civilians like Kenan, the soldiers would have nothing worth saving in this city. Kenan looks to the time when he will be rebuilding the city, projecting forward the work and strength of will that will be needed to bring Sarajevo back to life after the years of death and injury. Galloway thus sees Kenan, and his dedicated search for clean water, as an admirable role model, even if he is not a traditional hero.

### Four: Arrow Quotes

💡💡 The men on the hills didn't have to be murderers. The men in the city didn't have to lower themselves to fight their attackers. She didn't have to be filled with hatred. The music demanded that she remember this, that she know to a certainty that the world still held the capacity for goodness.

**Related Characters:** Arrow (Alisa)

**Related Themes:**  

**Related Symbols:** 

**Page Number:** 228

### Explanation and Analysis

At the end of the novel, Arrow gives up her place as a sniper for the Sarajevo Defense Corps after realizing that she can no longer take part in hatred and killing. Throughout her journey, Arrow struggles to understand her own hatred for the "men on the hill" – that is, the members of the opposing army that is bombing Sarajevo. She finally decides that even her justified hatred of those who have completely destroyed her former way of life is still wrong. Galloway argues that hatred of the other is a fundamental driving force of the Bosnian War. By participating in this hatred, even from a standpoint of righteous anger, Arrow contributes to make the world worse rather than bringing an end to the suffering. It is only by rejecting hatred and insisting on the goodness and rights of all humankind that Arrow can again be a force for good and life.

The music of the cellist reawakens that hope within Arrow, as Galloway suggests that the universal beauty of music has the capacity to bridge the gap between peoples who have otherwise chosen to hate each other.



## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

## THE CELLIST

**The cellist** thinks about the origins of a piece called **Albinoni's Adagio**, reconstructed in 1945 when an Italian musicologist found a charred manuscript after the bombing of the Dresden Music Library. The cellist likes how something can be rebuilt from ashes, hoping that the same thing can happen to his beloved Sarajevo, the city where he lives. The cellist sits in his window and plays anything he can to reawaken his hope, saving the Adagio for the days when other music doesn't help.

**The cellist** thinks about his life just five years ago at his sister's wedding. His family was happy and he believed the world was a good place. He tries to capture that feeling as he plays at his window, watching people line up for bread in the market outside his building. Though he can no longer play at the Sarajevo Opera Hall, as that building has been destroyed by mortars, the cellist still wants to play for himself.

Sarajevo is surrounded by hills, which now house snipers who are gradually destroying the city with mortars, grenades, and bullets. On this afternoon, the market outside the cellist's building is hit by a mortar, killing many of the people who had been in line. **The cellist** stands by his window in shock for a full day, then carries his cello down to the street and plays **Albinoni's Adagio**. He plans to do this for 22 days, once for each person killed in the mortar blast.

## ONE: ARROW

Arrow, a sniper for the Sarajevo militia, watches three soldiers through the scope of her gun. She considers which one to kill, knowing that the soldiers think that they are safe. For most snipers, the soldiers would be too far, but Arrow is skilled at hitting her targets. Arrow wants to believe that she is different from the soldiers, since she only uses her skills to shoot soldiers, rather than innocent civilians. With each person the soldiers are able to kill, a bit more of the Sarajevo that Arrow remembers dies.

*Galloway ties the Bosnian conflict to WWII through Albinoni's Adagio. He shows how history seems to be repeating itself in the destruction of Sarajevo, though many in Europe thought that the pain of WWII would help all nations learn to avoid violence. Galloway also relates the cellist's music to both emotional healing – giving the cellist hope in awful circumstances – and physical healing by reminding the cellist that other cities have rebuilt after such destruction.*



*The siege of Sarajevo harms both the city itself and the mindset of those within it who fall into despair and hopelessness at the destruction around them. The cellist's music is a way to keep those harmful reactions away and ensure that some of the old values of civilized Sarajevo stay alive.*



*Civilians simply trying to buy bread become another casualty of the siege. The men on the hill, as Galloway calls those who are attacking the city, seem merciless in their targeting of ordinary people. Through the cellist's shock and pain, Galloway shows the response of an average person to the mindless violence of war.*



*Arrow has a complex relationship with hatred, feeling both that the soldiers she targets are wrong to hate her and that she is right to hate the soldiers for the terrible things that they have done to her city. Yet Arrow's discomfort with the death she causes is a reminder that hatred for any reason is a poisonous force that brings only suffering.*



Arrow thinks back to a day when she was 18 and took her father's car for a ride in the countryside. With her favorite song on the radio and beautiful weather, Arrow felt an intense joy about being alive, which was made even more potent by her sudden realization that life would eventually end. Now, in the present, Arrow thinks about what it means to end someone else's life.

Arrow's targets bomb the city from a fortress called Vraca in the middle of Sarajevo, a place where fighters in WWII carved their names into the steps after being captured by Nazi forces. These fighters took on new names, allegedly to protect their families, but Arrow thinks they took on new names to separate themselves from the violence they had to enact. Arrow herself does not want to use her own name, as she has made herself hate the men on the hill enough to kill them. Arrow corrects anyone who still uses her old name, explaining that her old self no longer exists because that girl did not hate.

Arrow turns her attention back to the three soldiers. As soon as she fires, the sound of her gun will make her a target. Arrow knows exactly how long she has to get out of the building where she is hiding, having turned herself into a weapon for this war. One of the soldiers moves and Arrow tenses to see if she should shoot. The soldier moves out of Arrow's line of fire, and Arrow refocuses on the other two. There is no clear reason why she should shoot one rather than another, and Arrow wonders at the small actions that determine life and death in Sarajevo today.

The two remaining soldiers look up as if hearing new orders, and Arrow knows it is her time to shoot. She chooses one soldier to shoot first, with no reason other than that she must shoot one of them. Yet before Arrow can make a second shot, she feels that she is being watched. She rolls out of the way as a bullet hits where she had been laying. Arrow then runs out of the abandoned apartment where she has been hiding, flying down two flights of stairs then hiding in the stairwell. A mortar explodes to her side, destroying part of the stairs, but Arrow manages to make it down to the ground level.

Arrow makes it out of the apartment building and begins to walk before her eyes adjust to the bright light. A quick inspection reveals that she has just one small cut on her side. Arrow walks to her unit's headquarters as it begins to rain, unable to feel any relief that she hasn't been killed.

*Arrow remembers her old life, but sees it as completely separate from her current circumstances. The Sarajevo in which she grew up was a place where she could appreciate life, while the Sarajevo of today is a place where death is commonplace and unremarkable.*



*Galloway again deliberately invokes the tragedy of WWII as a reminder that violent periods in history should teach the world to avoid such violence in the future. Arrow, following in the footsteps of those fighters instead of avoiding their mistakes, splits her identity in two. By creating a new persona, she leaves behind her old humanity and creates a being who is capable of immense hatred and violence. This split life suggests that Galloway sees hatred as the enemy of human emotion and life.*



*Arrow's cool, mechanical analysis of a situation in which her very life is in danger shows how becoming a "weapon" for this war has damaged her capacity for emotion and empathy. Arrow considers all the enemy soldiers to be the same, easily interchanging them as targets rather than remembering that these are individual humans whose lives she will be ending.*



*Despite Arrow's feelings that she is in the right because the men on the hill committed the first violent acts of the siege, it is important to note that Arrow is the aggressor in this specific situation. Arrow shoots first, making herself just as bad as the soldiers whom she claims to hate. Her desire to harm the people who have harmed her puts both herself and her city at risk from counter fire.*



*Arrow no longer sees her life as valuable, since she is accustomed to killing others without consequences or emotion. Her hatred for others has damaged her ability to feel for herself.*



## ONE: KENAN

Kenan wakes early, going to his kitchen to use his family's final quarter-liter of water to wash his face. Though Kenan is only 40, he already feels like an old man. His wife, Amila, has also aged before her time. Kenan does all he can to ensure that his children will not be forced to age the same way. The kids don't fully understand why or how Sarajevo has changed.

Now that the city's infrastructure is so damaged that electricity and water no longer run consistently, Kenan must go every four days to get water. Usually, the best source for clean water is a brewery on the other side of the city. Kenan flicks on the light switch out of habit, then quietly lights a candle in the bathroom and begins to shave. When he blows out the candle, he is surprised to notice that the electricity is on.

Kenan goes to wake his wife so that his family can take advantage of this rare moment of electricity. But before he can give his family that small happiness, the electricity pops back off. Kenan gathers the water jugs he will fill at the brewery, making sure there are no cracks. He considers how many containers to take, settling on six—that way, Kenan can take two extra bottles for his elderly neighbor Mrs. Ristovski.

Amila gets up to tell Kenan goodbye. She tells him to be careful, though both Amila and Kenan know that there is no such thing as "careful" anymore. Kenan's life depends on luck, though he is comforted by his wife remembering a time when he could be careful. Kenan goes out the door, then stops in the hallway. He wishes he didn't have to go get water, that he could take his children to a carnival or a movie and never have to worry about war again. Hearing his children wake up inside the apartment, Kenan forces himself to walk away from the door.

Kenan walks down a flight of stairs, worrying about the day when he will be too weak to carry all the containers. He doesn't want his son to come with him, since he is more terrified about his children dying than about himself. Kenan makes it to Mrs. Ristovski's door and knocks. Mrs. Ristovski has lived here for years, since the end of the Second World War. Mrs. Ristovski complains incessantly, but Kenan somehow respects the old woman's ferocity.

*In Kenan's storyline, Galloway more fully examines the effects of war on civilians. Though he is not in as much danger as Arrow is, Kenan feels prematurely aged by the suffering of living in a city that can no longer function properly. His biggest concern is that his children will be robbed of their innocence by this conflict, since he doesn't want them to grapple with trauma throughout their adult lives.*



*Life in Sarajevo has been reduced to nothing more than a search for the basic elements of survival. Kenan's focus is water, which he used to take for granted. Now, instead of turning on a tap, he makes an hours-long journey through possible sniper fire. The city has become so damaged that even electricity – ubiquitous in modern cities like Sarajevo – is now a luxury.*



*Kenan desperately wants to provide for his family, hoping that he can give them small pleasures in an otherwise bleak daily life. Getting water is a huge endeavor, and Kenan feels that even the two bottles of water he gets for a neighbor could hurt his family's chances of survival.*



*Sarajevo has changed so much that even the concept of being careful has no place in the lives of its citizens. Kenan has no control over his own life, as he could be killed at any moment, and he has no control over how he spends his day, since his entire life has been taken over by the tasks of survival.*



*Kenan feels that every choice has life and death stakes now. His children cannot even go outside for fear of the snipers. His respect for Mrs. Ristovski comes as a reminder that people can survive such conflicts, though Mrs. Ristovski's prickly personality is a reminder that suffering marks people.*



After the war started, Mrs. Ristovski barged into Kenan's apartment, declaring that Kenan's family had no idea of what people had to do to survive in wartime. Kenan promised to help Mrs. Ristovski survive, and now he must bring her water. Mrs. Ristovski opens the door, looking annoyed at the interruption. She harshly shoves two bottles into Kenan's hands, though Kenan has been asking her for weeks to switch to bottles with handles. Mrs. Ristovski then closes the door, leaving Kenan to wonder why he doesn't just give up on her. He rearranges his own bottles so that he can hold Mrs. Ristovski's as well, then steps out into the street.

*Kenan's promise to help Mrs. Ristovski, an admirable pledge before the siege took effect, is now a much larger burden on his life than he expected. Living in siege conditions has stripped both Kenan and Mrs. Ristovski of any pleasures they might once have exchanged. Kenan now feels that he was naïve to promise assistance to anyone, and he considers giving up on any connection with others for the sake of putting the survival of his family first.*



## ONE: DRAGAN

Dragan remembers the old Sarajevo, wondering how much of that happy, peaceful city is a figment of his imagination. Yet the current **gray** Sarajevo of bombs and guns doesn't seem right either. He runs through the old neighborhoods of Sarajevo in his mind, remembering when he could walk for miles along the river, stopping in cafes when he got tired. Now, the middle of Sarajevo, a district called Grbavica, is controlled by the men on the hills and walking along the river is tantamount to suicide. As more and more of Sarajevo falls, Dragan wonders how long he will be able to remember that other city of light and hope.

*Gray overwhelms Galloway's descriptions of the city, showing the bleak hopelessness of the current siege conditions. Dragan, an older man, even questions his memories. He cannot reconcile the Sarajevo he once knew with the terrible place it has become. In another view of civilian life in this changed place, even walking along the river is a dangerous act. For Dragan, it is almost impossible to maintain hope.*



On this day, Dragan is walking to the bakery where he works. He has worked there for almost 40 years, and he knows that he is lucky this job keeps him safe from the draft. He is lucky to have the food, as well, when so many of the city's residents are unemployed and the prices of all resources are rising. Dragan now lives with his sister and her family, though he doesn't get along with his sister's husband. Dragan's old apartment has been destroyed and he sent his wife and his 18-year-old son to Italy to wait out the war.

*Dragan's mission for the day is food, another basic survival element that has become much more difficult in the ruined city. Dragan's living situation at first seems like his family is coming together in a time of crisis, but the strife of the siege conditions is actually pulling the family apart. The war conditions have separated Dragan's family physically, leaving Dragan incredibly isolated.*



The bakery is about three kilometers from Dragan's sister's apartment, which now takes Dragan an hour and a half to walk. Dragan walks slowly, except when he runs across the intersections. The main road of Sarajevo is now called Sniper Alley, though Dragan thinks that name is appropriate for any street in the city. This street just receives special attention because it takes foreigners from the airport to the Holiday Inn.

*Dragan comments on how foreigners come to Sarajevo pretending to care about the state of the city, but end up caring only about their own survival. They focus on the main avenue, while the residents of Sarajevo know that the city is in far more trouble than the foreigners can see.*



Dragan continues on, skirting the main road to avoid getting too close to enemy territory. At another intersection, Dragan rests behind a few boxcars now lining the street next to the railroad. The whole street looks **gray**, while about 20 people wait behind the boxcars for the right moment to run across the intersection. A few people step out every couple of minutes and run frantically across the street as if it is raining and they do not want to get wet.

*All the people walking through the streets keep to themselves, despite their shared struggle and close proximity. The war has isolated everyone. Dragan compares the awful circumstances of having to run for their lives in the streets of their city to the mundane experience of running through the rain. He has become desensitized to the violence of the war.*



Dragan waits until he feels right to cross, never knowing what moment feels correct. He has seen three people killed by snipers so far, always surprised at how fast a life can be ended and the street can return to “normal.” Dragan is afraid of dying, but he is more afraid of the pain between getting shot and dying.

A man starts to run from the other side of the intersection. Dragan realizes it is an old acquaintance, Amil, with whom Dragan hasn’t spoken since the war began. Dragan looks away so that Amil will not recognize him, then feels guilty for avoiding this link to his past. He knows that speaking to Amil would just remind him of all that he has lost from his old life. Dragan no longer visits any of his friends, or speaks to any of his coworkers. He has decided it is best not to be attached to anyone when people can die at any moment.

A couple ahead of Dragan decides to cross. When they are about a third of the way through the intersection, a bullet skids off the asphalt in front of them. The couple hesitates, then starts running for the other side. The sniper fires again but misses, and the couple makes it to safety. Everyone on both sides of the street sighs in relief, both because the couple survived and because they now know that this intersection is being targeted. Oddly, it is easier to cope with a known danger than with the constant uncertainty. Dragan knows that more people will brave the intersection in a few minutes.

## TWO: KENAN

Kenan walks down the street in the same direction he would if the building he used to work in were still standing. He pretends he is just going to work, and that he’ll have an ordinary day. But too soon, Kenan must pass the neighborhood trash bins, overflowing with refuse, and remember that nothing is as it should be. Kenan wonders if the men on the hill can see him, and he wonders what makes someone a target in their eyes.

Kenan walks up to the grocery store hoping to see news about the next relief convoy. There is nothing posted, though it has been more than a month since aid has reached the city. Kenan then sees an old friend, Ismet, who has joined the army. Ismet has told Kenan about the fighting at the front, about nights of praying not to die as mortar shells rain down.

*In the Sarajevo of the siege, “normal” is a relative term. Dragan is so worn down by living in constant fear that even seeing a person die cannot affect him for long. He finds that he can only care about his own well-being and survival.*



*Dragan’s isolation seems deliberate, since he chooses not to speak with someone he once knew. This silence and disconnection increases the suffering of the war. Rather than sharing the burdens of the siege, Dragan chooses to insulate himself from further suffering by refusing to care about anything or anyone. This viewpoint robs him of whatever small happiness he could have.*



*One of the biggest risks in the Sarajevo is simply crossing the street. Any semblance of normal life disappears as normal people are shot for doing nothing other than walking in the city where they live. Yet the siege has worn Dragan down so much that he feels no outrage about the circumstances, but is just relieved to know for certain that he is in danger in this moment.*



*Despite Kenan’s attempts to pretend that the war is not happening and that his life is normal, the poor reality of city functions in Sarajevo does not allow him to maintain that illusion. Kenan’s uncertainty about what makes someone a target highlights the fact that Galloway sees the cause of the war as senseless hatred.*



*As the conflict stretches on, the outside world seems to forget about Sarajevo. The lack of aid means that the civilians of the city suffer in their own ways just as the soldiers on the front lines suffer.*



Kenan wonders why he can't force himself to join the army, though he knows it's only a matter of time until he is forcibly drafted. At the bottom of his heart, Kenan knows that he is afraid to die, but even more afraid to kill. Ismet is a far braver man, and Kenan feels guilty that his friend has seen so much while Kenan stays relatively safe.

Today, Ismet looks particularly worn and has a slight limp from a recent injury. Kenan hugs Ismet and they joke about buying meat at the grocery store. Ismet gives Kenan a cigarette, his pay from the army, and wishes Kenan luck getting water. Kenan smokes, then continues on with his water canisters. Kenan laughs when he sees an unbroken traffic mirror, one of the few undamaged things on the Sarajevo streets.

Kenan keeps walking, passing by the Music Academy. Several people are inside playing pianos, making a cacophonous sound that is sometimes recognizable as music. Another block farther, Kenan comes to his old tram stop. For Kenan, the tram is a sign of civilization and the war will only be over once the trams begin to run again. Two blocks to the west is the marketplace, where food is now sold at ridiculously high prices. Kenan is quickly running out of money, as he watches others get rich from smuggling goods onto the black market through a tunnel that goes through the airport.

Kenan puts the black market out of his mind and continues his journey. He can't help but wonder how Sarajevo will rebuild when the fighting finally stops. He remembers taking Christmas trips to this street to look at the holiday decorations, but he can't reconcile that memory with the reality in front of him. He refocuses on his journey, hoping to cross the Miljacka River over the Princip Bridge instead of the Cumurija bridge that has been shelled.

Kenan passes the Hotel Europa, once the Stone Inn before it was destroyed by the Great Fire. Kenan wonders if the aftermath of the Great Fire looked like Sarajevo does now. Kenan wants to be one of the people who reconstructs Sarajevo after the war is over, but he doesn't know how to keep the men on the hill or the black-market abusers from being a part of that.

The Princip Bridge used to be called the Latin Bridge before 1914 when Archduke Franz Ferdinand was killed by Gavrilo Princip. Kenan has always been ashamed that this assassination is what Sarajevo is known for by the international community, but he now thinks that the world is trying to ignore Sarajevo.

*Kenan struggles with guilt that he is "safe" as a civilian, though no one is truly safe in Sarajevo. Galloway begins to explore what makes someone a hero, starting with the conventional hero, such as a soldier who kills to protect others.*



*The Sarajevo Defense Corps is so underfunded that they can only pay soldiers in cigarettes. Similarly, Kenan knows that there will be no food at the grocery store. The unbroken mirror gives a view of just how much Sarajevo is suffering under the siege.*



*The music of the pianos is a small attempt to keep art alive in the city, but the noise of it all shows how the art suffers in the chaos of the war. Similarly, normal city functions have fallen into chaos. Kenan seems to see the loss of the music conservatory and the trams as a sign of declining civilization in the city. Galloway suggests that the music is just as important to the overall well-being of the city as running trams or even the proper delivery of food.*



*Kenan projects to a future after the war, but is unable to connect that back to his memory of Sarajevo as a peaceful place. The war-torn reality overcomes Kenan's ability to either imagine or remember anything better for his life.*



*Kenan tries to take hope from the idea that Sarajevo has come back from previous tragedies, but this crisis feels different because city is not working together. The men on the hill have enforced a separation between different groups, and this process of othering those who are different could keep the city from ever recovering.*



*Sarajevo, as seen by the world, is a place of tragedy, first because of the assassination and now because of the siege. Through Kenan, Galloway hopes to show how there is more to Sarajevo than this suffering.*



Kenan meets a man running around the corner who warns him that snipers are targeting the Princip Bridge. Kenan decides to continue down to the Seher Cehaja bridge instead, though that will double the distance of his trip. Kenan enters the old Turkish neighborhood, feeling like he is re-entering the scene of a crime. The library burned months ago, but Kenan cannot get that sight out of his mind.

Staying under the cover of the buildings, Kenan notices an old man fishing for pigeons by dangling bread on a pole. Kenan jokes with him about getting a license for this hunting, as the man explains that he has caught six and will stop for the day so that the pigeons will still be here tomorrow. Kenan wonders if that's what the men on the hill are doing – killing just enough Sarajevans each day so that people will continue going out into the street.

## TWO: ARROW

Arrow considers her unit commander's office, a sparse room with little but a desk and a naked lightbulb. Arrow's commander puts a hand on Arrow's shoulder and the touch is comforting at first and then turns malevolent as Arrow remembers her close shave with death that morning. Her commander, Nermin Filipovic, congratulates Arrow on her impressive abilities. He is a career soldier, rare in the Sarajevo militia. Arrow is not even sure if she is recorded as a part of the army.

Nermin has a special assignment for Arrow, something Arrow has expected for a while. She had arranged with Nermin when she first started working for the militia that she would be allowed to pick her own targets, to which Nermin agreed because he was an old friend of Arrow's father. Arrow's father had never wanted Arrow to be involved in the fighting, but Arrow's skill with a gun is too valuable for her to sit out. After so long under siege, Arrow finds she cares less about her initial desire to only kill the guilty, but that very apathy frightens her so much that she is determined not to get her hands dirty. Still, Nermin assures her that this assignment will only be good.

Nermin takes Arrow to a street in the heart of the city where a mortar shell destroyed a bakery and killed 22 people not long ago. Arrow sees a musician with an incredibly sad face walk out of a nearby apartment building holding a cello and a stool. Arrow is transfixed by the instrument, looking rich and warm against the **gray** of the pavement. **The cellist** sits and begins to play, and Arrow is transported to memories of joy and cheer in another time, mixed with the blood and violence of her life now.

*All of Kenan's actions are determined by the enemies on the hill. In addition to taking away the freedom of Sarajevo's citizens, the men on the hill also target the hope and culture of the city by destroying monuments to knowledge and civilization such as a library.*



*Civilian life in Sarajevo continues to have the illusion of normalcy, as everyone fights to pretend that they are not being slowly hunted. The men on the hill turn the human residents of Sarajevo into hunted animals, stripping them of their agency and humanity.*



*Arrow's status as a weapon for the militia isolates her from feeling companionship even with those who are fighting alongside her to protect the city. Furthermore, Arrow is not officially part of any army, so she cannot have that camaraderie either. Being an instrument of violence in this civil war forces Arrow to be alone and cut-off from the rest of humanity.*



*Though Arrow desperately wants to protect her city, being a soldier is, in some ways, a betrayal of her past and her family. Arrow's father did not want her to know the hatred and pain that come from being a weapon. Arrow has not yet crossed the boundaries she set for herself, but her proximity to violence and hatred have started to chip away at her moral code. For now, Arrow clings to her rules so that she does not have to consider what is right and wrong.*



*In the gray of besieged Sarajevo—which represents the bleak monotony of wartime—the cellist's colored instrument reminds Arrow of the past emotion and happiness of the city. The cellist's music reawakens all of the emotions that Arrow has been trying to keep out, both good and bad.*



The cellist stops playing and Arrow wills herself not to cry as the musician disappears back into his building. Nermin turns to Arrow, telling her that her new assignment is to keep the cellist alive. Nermin explains that the cellist has vowed to play here at 4 o'clock for 22 days to commemorate the 22 deaths at the bakery. After eight days, the cellist has caught the attention of the world, and the attention of the men on the hill. Nermin believes the enemy wants to shoot the cellist as a statement, and it is Arrow's job to kill any snipers who appear so that the cellist will survive.

*Arrow does not want to reconnect with her past emotions, finding it easier to shut out all her feelings rather than risk getting hurt. In contrast, the cellist is risking his life to make an emotional statement. His playing is both a memorial for the dead and a powerful declaration that the Sarajevans will not forget their art, culture, or civilization.*



## TWO: DRAGAN

It has been ten minutes since the sniper fired and several people have crossed the intersection with no problem. Dragan is hungry, wanting to cross and get to the bakery. But another part of him urges caution and Dragan shifts back further behind the railway car. A woman approaches, and Dragan recognizes an old friend of his wife's, Emina. Dragan dreaded dinners with Emina and her boring husband Jovan before the war and he hopes to avoid her now.

*Though Dragan is surrounded by people in the street, he feels profoundly alone. He seeks to continue that isolation by avoiding Emina. In the stress of war, Dragan wants to focus only on the physical needs of survival. He feels that he has no energy for pleasantries with a woman whose company he has not enjoyed in the past.*



Emina sees Dragan and rushes toward him. Dragan briefly considers rushing into the street to avoid saying hello, but keeps himself from risking his life that way. Dragan greets Emina, as Emina asks after Dragan's wife Raza. Dragan explains as much as he can, but there is so much sadness in his life now that he cannot bring himself to talk about. Dragan worries over whether to ask about Jovan, unwilling to bring up possible tragedy in Emina's own life. After standing in awkward silence, Dragan finally asks. Emina explains that Jovan joined the army.

*Dragan's fear of caring about other people almost goes so far as to endanger his own life. Though he keeps himself back from that edge, he still cannot bring himself to fully share the burdens of the war. Dragan and Emina are less alone than before, but Dragan still insists on carrying all his pain by himself rather than splitting the load with his community.*



Dragan tells Emina that a sniper has fired at this intersection, and Emina seems genuinely concerned that people may have been hurt. Dragan can't remember the last time he allowed himself to truly care about the violence. Emina decides to wait a bit before crossing, as she is in no hurry on her errand to deliver medicine across town. Now that the hospital has few supplies, Radio Sarajevo advertises for drugs that the hospital needs, and people with expired or unnecessary prescriptions respond. Emina has heart medicine from her late mother who died before the war started.

*Emina has somehow avoided the apathy and insulation that marks Dragan. While Dragan has disconnected from the rest of the city to protect himself, Emina still cares about other people. Now that the city services cannot help the Sarajevans, Emina is part of the group trying to rally together to help each other through this crisis.*



Emina asks Dragan if he has heard about a new production of *Hair* that is trying to get many Sarajevans out of the country. Dragan remembers when all one needed was a visa to travel the world, but now it is almost impossible to leave the city. He had originally stayed to keep his family's apartment and his job, but now he wishes he had left with Raza and Davor.

*Just as Dragan feels isolated within the city, the siege has also caused a blockade that keeps the city isolated from the rest of the world. Dragan feels as though no one is reaching out to Sarajevo in their time of need, leaving them alone to wait out the war. The distance of Dragan's family increases this feeling.*



Emina firmly claims that the world will have to send help soon, but Dragan knows that Sarajevo is on its own. For months at the beginning of the war, Dragan tried to act as though life would return to normal. He finally had to accept that this was his life now, after an old bakery client who lived through Auschwitz killed himself rather than experience another war. Dragan wonders when people will learn from suffering, rather than causing more of it.

*Those in Sarajevo who survived WWII once hoped that the violence they suffered would at least have some influence over people's choices in the future. Instead, it seems that the world has learned nothing from the past and Sarajevo is doomed to be nothing more than another sad chapter in history. Galloway points out that the world did not help during the siege, but he hopes that his book will at least educate readers about these events so that they might help others in the future.*



Dragan and Emina look around at the **gray** streets, and Emina comments that the war has made her walk down many streets she had never been down before. On one of these new streets, Emina met a woman who was picking cherries from a tree in her yard. When Emina found herself with extra salt, she decided to share it with the woman. In return, the woman gave Emina two pails of cherries. Emina longs for the days when that kind of sharing and kindness was routine in Sarajevo. Dragan thinks that the men on the hill would be content to make them all forget how to act civilized, if they cannot kill everyone in the city.

*Where Dragan sees nothing but gray, Emina sees opportunities to find out more about her city than she knew in her old life. Emina forms communities that help each other, something that has sadly become a rarity as all the civilians of Sarajevo become consumed with looking out for themselves. Dragan connects this spirit of care with civilization, seeing Sarajevo as a place that once hoped to uphold and increase these values. The men on the hill destroy the city just as much by attacking those ideals as by physically dismantling the buildings.*



Dragan decides it is time to cross. About a quarter of the way across, Dragan feels a bullet rush by his ear. He is stunned that the sniper missed, and rushes back to safety behind the boxcar. Emina hugs Dragan as he falls to the ground. He can't believe that he has finally been targeted, or that he has survived. After a few calm minutes, Dragan jokes that the sniper isn't a good shot. Emina laughs about Sarajevo roulette as Dragan counts his blessings that he is alive.

*In the aftermath of the attack on Dragan's life, he seeks human connection from Emina. The humor, rather than showing that Dragan doesn't care about his brush with death, helps Dragan remember that his life truly is worth living because he has the chance to feel kinship with other people.*



## TWO: ARROW (PART 2)

Arrow grabs her rifle and leaves her apartment. Her footsteps echo in the stairwell and Arrow is grateful that she can hear when others are there, even if it exposes her own movement. On the street, Arrow passes an ice cream shop she used to love. Now, there is little she wouldn't give to have an ice cream. In the Sarajevo Arrow remembers, the street would be abuzz with people going to work and preparing for the day at this time of the morning. Now, Arrow passes few people and she does not meet their eyes.

*Arrow struggles between her new role as a weapon – caring only for survival – and her old life in which she could care about simple pleasures like ice cream. She also shows the isolation of living in wartime Sarajevo. The war conditions have stopped all normal activity in the city and greatly reduced normal human interaction.*



Arrow arrives at the street corner where **the cellist** played yesterday and begins to scout out the area. She thinks of all the tiny choices that brought people to buy bread at this specific bakery on that fateful day, choices that mean they are now dead or injured. She ponders whether there are truly any life-defining moments, or if all life is just made up of these tiny choices. Before becoming a sniper, she had assumed that pulling the trigger would be a clear cut moment that defined her life. Now, Arrow thinks that it is another small motion like any other.

Arrow cannot understand why **the cellist** is doing something so useless as playing. It is possible that the cellist no longer cares about life at all, like so many who walk the streets with no will to survive. Yet the cellist doesn't appear like these ghosts. Arrow commits herself to keeping the cellist alive, even if she doesn't understand why he plays.

The surrounding buildings have plenty of good sites for a sniper to hide. The best place for a sniper to shoot from is the southwest side of the street, so that the sniper can escape across the river into the enemy controlled neighborhood when he is done. A mission this difficult will require an army trained sniper, however, who will know that the southwest is the most likely place for the Sarajevo militia to expect.

Arrow looks east and sees the one place that the sniper would hide. Now she needs to find a place where she can target the sniper without being in an obvious position for a counter sniper. A less skilled sniper would camp out in an apartment building directly above where **the cellist** plays. Arrow comes up with a plan, selecting a building to the west where she will be able to see the cellist and the potential sniper. She confirms the logistics of his plan, then wonders if the cellist knows that anyone is protecting him at all.

Hours later, Arrow has set up her position in the southwest building, cutting holes in the plastic covering the window so that she can see the cellist and stretch her rifle just slightly out her window to kill the sniper. In a building to the north, Arrow has set up a decoy sniper camp, with a rifle stretched out of the window to lure the sniper into firing so that Arrow can get a lock on his position. Arrow worries that she has assumed too much about the sniper's general location, or that other people may live in the decoy apartment.

*The war reorganizes Arrow's priorities, so much so that even the act of killing another person seems like a necessary choice instead of a huge moral dilemma. Arrow's status as a weapon stops her from properly feeling the consequences of her actions on herself and others. Her hatred of the men on the hill numbs all her feelings.*



*Even as Arrow does not understand the practical use of the cellist's music, Galloway still makes it clear that the cellist's commitment to art in this time of trouble is incredibly important. Art is not useless, even if Arrow is still too damaged to see that.*



*Arrow considers the tactics of her mission, feeling more comfortable with those considerations than the emotional questions of why she is protecting the cellist. Though Arrow is still a "civilian," at least in name, she has developed the outlook of a veteran soldier through the months of the siege.*



*Despite all the care that Arrow puts into her plan to protect the cellist, she does not know if the cellist even knows that she is there. Galloway introduces the possibility that the cellist doesn't care if she is there—perhaps he cares more about playing music than his physical safety. Even though Arrow's plan is meant to save the cellist's life, the cellist perhaps would not support a plan that uses violence.*



*Though Arrow prides herself on being a weapon, this job protecting the cellist has reminded her of her obligation to care for other people. Whereas she was certain of her plan earlier, doubts have begun to creep in as Arrow considers how her decoy sniper might affect others.*



Arrow's own camp is in an abandoned apartment, which used to be a nice home. Arrow settles in to watch the general atmosphere of the cellist's street corner, so that she will notice any sudden changes that mark the arrival of the sniper. She has isolated three windows to the east that present the best location for the sniper and she scans them with growing confidence. Out of the corner of her eyes, Arrow sees **the cellist** leave his building and sit in the center of the street.

Arrow thinks she sees a shadow of movement in one of the windows to the east. She calms herself, trying not to succumb to the temptation to second guess herself. **The cellist** begins to play, and Arrow sees a small hole in the plastic of the east window. Arrow could shoot now, but she doesn't yet know if this is actually the sniper. She is distracted by two teenage girls who have walked up to listen to the cellist. Arrow panics, knowing that the sniper could shoot the girls if she fires at the wrong window too soon.

**The cellist** stops playing and Arrow keeps her attention on the east window. The cellist goes back inside and Arrow wonders why the sniper never took his shot. She feels as though she has failed, though the cellist is alive and her mission continues. Arrow thinks back to the teenaged girls, wondering if they hate the men on the hills as much as she does. Arrow hates the men for making her hate them with their violence and killing. Arrow goes down to the street and sees that there is a whole pyre of dried flowers left by the cellist's stool.

## TWO: KENAN (PART 2)

Kenan looks up at the ruins of the National Library, thinking of how this building used to represent the society he was so proud of in Sarajevo. The men on the hills destroyed the library early in the siege, then shot at the firetrucks that arrived to try to put out the blaze of mortar fire. Kenan remembers seeing a fireman crying in front of the building, unable to slow the destruction. He feels like that firemen whenever his own children ask why the war has started. All he can say is that the war will end someday and they will all survive.

Kenan reaches the Seher Cehaja Bridge and hides behind one of the library's arches while a couple begins to cross the bridge. They make it across without incident, though Kenan is sure that they are still in danger. Another woman approaches behind Kenan and asks if the bridge is safe. Kenan shares that a couple just made it across, though that is no guarantee there is no sniper. The woman lifts her own water bottles and asks if Kenan is headed to the brewery. Kenan nods and decides it is time to go. The woman stays behind to rest.

*The war has turned what used to be a beautiful home into a camp for a sniper. The normal luxuries of civilian life are a distraction for a sniper like Arrow. She tries to care about nothing but her mission and in order to succeed she needs to slip back into the mindset of a weapon instead of caring too much about the cellist on a personal level.*



*Arrow's status as a weapon is threatened by the emotional concerns that the cellist awakens in her. Arrow cannot continue to be a passionless weapon while the cellist plays, showing how music and art connect to the human soul. This is good for Arrow on an emotional level, but it unfortunately distracts from her military concerns.*



*Technically, Arrow has done the correct thing by not shooting the sniper as long as he wasn't a threat. Yet after so many months committing violent acts, she now feels like a failure if she does not cause death. Arrow's hatred for the enemy gives her a thirst for violence that supersedes her original desire to protect her city.*



*The library isn't essential to the city's survival, but the men attacking the city know that the library is an important site for the morale of the Sarajevans. If the men on the hill can destroy the library, they symbolically disrupt the spread of culture and knowledge in the city. Kenan mourns the loss of these ideals, wondering how to raise children in a world where the values of civilization are under attack.*



*As Kenan watches the other couple cross the bridge, Galloway again emphasizes how alone all the Sarajevans are in their desire for survival. The safety of the other couple, for the moment, does not mean anything for Kenan's own survival. In the same way, Kenan and the woman do not work together towards their shared destination.*



Kenan is glad to be moving, oddly unnerved by his short conversation with the woman by the library. He jogs to the bridge, zigzagging randomly. His water bottles thump, making Kenan even more paranoid at the loud sound. He makes it to the end of the bridge, stumbling on the pavement before finally making it to a sheltering building. He looks back across and thinks he sees the woman laughing at him, as if he had been the woman's guinea pig for the safety of the bridge.

Kenan sees a café that legend says was rebuilt across the river when the city diverted the flow of the Miljacka. Kenan wishes the men on the hill would come down and rebuild all the buildings they have destroyed. Kenan picks up his bottles and grabs Mrs. Ristovski's containers, again cursing their lack of handles.

Kenan remembers first meeting Mrs. Ristovski when she came over to the apartment the first day that Kenan and Amila moved in. Mrs. Ristovski brought a fern and a long list of do's and don'ts for living in the building. When Mrs. Ristovski's loud voice woke Kenan's young baby, Mrs. Ristovski sniffed at the noise. After that first visit, Mrs. Ristovski visited every couple of days, as the fern gradually died. Others in the building said that Mrs. Ristovski poisoned her gift ferns, but Kenan defended the old woman. Mrs. Ristovski lost her husband in WWII and Kenan knows that grief marked her permanently.

Kenan sighs, wondering why he still deals with Mrs. Ristovski's prickly personality. He gets up and starts toward the brewery, climbing the final hill alongside more people with bottles and containers. A large truck with a water tank forces Kenan to the side of the road as he approaches the water spouts. He already dreads the trip back home.

## TWO: DRAGAN (PART 2)

Dragan asks Emina if she would rather be wounded or killed. She answers wounded, rationalizing that any chance at life is better than none. Dragan argues, questioning the sad state of hospitals until Emina is forced to give up her optimism. Dragan sighs, sorry that he took his own fear out on Emina. He apologizes, asking Emina how she stays hopeful. Emina says that there is **a man who plays cello** for the people who died lining up for bread.

*In the high-stakes atmosphere of the war, Galloway shows how the civilians of Sarajevo cannot afford to unite with one another. The woman did not truly care about Kenan's safety—she simply needed to know if she would be safe making the same crossing. Her concern is only for her own well-being.*



*Kenan again thinks of past tragedies that Sarajevo has survived, hoping that the old Sarajevo will be resurrected. Yet Kenan still does not see that his responsibility in rebuilding is to begin to help others instead of focusing on himself and his family.*



*Mrs. Ristovski is an example of one possible future for all those who survive the Bosnian conflict. She has permanently lost the ability to interact compassionately and kindly with other people. Though Kenan excuses her behavior because of what she has suffered, Mrs. Ristovski is a sad fate for anyone. She looks out only for herself, finding that the easiest way to ensure physical survival even as her emotional relationships suffer.*



*Kenan's own compassion for other people has been stretched thin by the long, hard days of the war. The drudgery of simply surviving has exhausted Kenan so much that he finds it hard to care for other people.*



*Dragan has become so embittered by the siege conditions that he would rather accept death than the added hardship of being wounded. However, Dragan is not yet so cut-off from other people that he doesn't care about Emina's feelings. Emina, for her part, attributes her continued optimism to the cellist's music. Galloway again ties emotional well-being to the presence of art and culture in the city.*



Emina has gone every day to listen to **the cellist**, but she still doesn't know what the cellist hopes to accomplish with his music. Dragan thinks that the cellist plays for himself, doing the only thing he knows to make something happen in the damaged city. Emina laughs, saying that her husband Jovan thinks the cellist is just a crazy man who will get himself killed.

*Galloway suggests that one way to fight destruction is to continue prioritizing creative acts. Art, music, and culture are all ways to rebuild the values of civilization, even if they cannot actually fix the buildings. Emina and Dragan trust in this power of music, showing that they still have the capacity for kindness in a way that people like Jovan do not.*



Emina confesses that she is afraid that this is how life will be forever in Sarajevo. Dragan shares her fear, looking up to see a large **gray** cloud that hovers over the city. The cloud does seem to be moving, but it is traveling very slowly. A man decides to brave the intersection and he crosses the street safely. Others follow his example, until it is only Dragan and Emina left on their side of the street.

*The gray cloud over the city offers a metaphor for the war overshadowing all other concerns in Sarajevo. Yet the movement Dragan notices gives hope that the siege will in fact end at some point. Civilians continue to live their lives as best they can, crossing the street despite the danger.*



Dragan thinks of his son, Davor, now nineteen. Davor would be conscripted into the army if he were still in Sarajevo. Dragan wishes his son lived in a better world, but he has no idea what he can do to make that happen. A dog approaches Dragan and Emina, clearly on a mission, with its nose to the ground. The dog does not acknowledge anyone on the street, and no one seems to notice it. The dog crosses the street without fuss and Dragan wonders if dogs can smell bullets coming toward them, or if a sniper would shoot at a dog.

*Dragan feels hopeless about the future, unable to see a way forward for his son after the terrible experiences of the war. His concerns are entirely focused on survival. Even when other strange things appear, such as the dog, Dragan only thinks about the dog in terms of what advantages it may have in surviving snipers.*



The dog disappears down the street and Emina asks Dragan where the dog is going. Dragan has no answer, but he realizes that he has been like that dog these past months. His only concern has been to survive. Dragan decides he has waited long enough to cross, joking with Emina about Sarajevo chickens crossing the road. Emina decides to go too, so that she can make it to hear **the cellist** this afternoon.

*Dragan's realization that he has been no better than a dog these past months inspires him to take action to actually make his life better in the moment. Joking with Emina and moving toward his goal of getting to the bakery are ways for him to return to the normalcy of life before the war.*



Emina and Dragan move toward the street, but Dragan suddenly loses his nerve. Emina decides to continue, hugging Dragan, and Dragan briefly notices how colorful Emina's blue coat is against the **gray** street. Emina steps into the street as a man with a brown hat and a woman begin to cross from the other side. Another young man passes Dragan to follow Emina when Emina is suddenly hit by a bullet.

*Emina's desire to get to the cellist is stronger than Dragan's mission to get food, showing how important the cellist's music is to the suffering people of Sarajevo. Emina's colored coat shows how she has maintained her personality from before the war. Yet this cheerfulness does not render Emina immune from harm.*



The crowd behind the boxcar rushes forward to see if Emina is alive and to yell at the other people in the street to run. The young man runs into the street to help Emina as the man with the brown hat approaches Emina from the other side. The man in the hat passes Emina without stopping to help, then is hit by a bullet in the stomach. The hat lands at Dragan's feet. Everyone behind the boxcar ducks as the young man in the street picks Emina up and carries her back to safety, despite the bullets skidding on the asphalt.

Emina and the young man reach Dragan behind the boxcar. Emina's arm is wounded. Meanwhile, the now hatless man tries to crawl toward the boxcar though he cannot stand. Dragan starts to count, thinking the sniper must be reloading his gun. When Dragan reaches eight, a bullet hits the hatless man in the head. Dragan looks down and picks up the man's hat.

*The man in the hat seems to "deserve" his death for refusing to help Emina in her time of need. However, Dragan also does nothing to assist Emina, too shocked by this sudden outburst of violence. The young man gives an image of heroism by helping Emina to safety, though he remains anonymous as Galloway focuses on other kinds of heroics.*



*Emina and Dragan's conversation about being wounded vs. being dead now has immediate resonance. No one steps up to help the wounded man in the street, leaving him to die because he didn't help Emina when she was hurt.*



## TWO: ARROW (PART 3)

Arrow gets little rest that night, going over what happened with **the cellist**. She can't understand why the sniper wouldn't shoot when he had a clear shot. At 9 the next morning, she goes back to where the cellist plays and sits in front of the flower memorial. She thinks about the most recent funeral she attended, for an old neighbor. When the war first started, she used to go to all the funerals for the people she knew, but she has been going to fewer and fewer lately. She finds that the intense grief of others just makes her angry when she has become so numb to everything.

Arrow went to her neighbor's funeral because she had liked him before the war. He had been an interesting man who told Arrow about bugs when she was a child and played football with the neighborhood kids in the street. Her neighbor's wife invited her to the funeral, at the old football arena. At first, Arrow was glad to mourn this man with his family, but as the service continued she started to feel rage again.

Arrow noticed another man at the funeral, still fat despite the lack of food in the city, just before the whistle of shells forced everyone to the ground. Arrow lay on her stomach until the shelling stopped, then looked up to see that all the mourners except the fat man were gone. She wondered if the men on the hill had found some new way to make people disappear, then she saw people crawling out of the freshly dug grave. Arrow asked the fat man why he didn't hide in the grave. The fat man answered that he was afraid that he wouldn't be able to get back out. Arrow laughed at this, secretly thinking that she did not go into the grave because she didn't want the men on the hill to dictate when she went below ground.

*Arrow is so focused on killing the sniper that she cannot fathom what might distract the sniper from his own mission. Rather than being happy that the cellist is still alive and safe, Arrow is upset that she doesn't understand what is happening. Arrow has even lost the ability to mourn the dead in her frenzy to harm the men on the hill as much as possible.*



*Arrow has become so hurt that the only outlet for her feelings is rage. Using that anger and hatred to mask her grief hurts less than truly processing her emotions about all the terrible things that have happened since the beginning of the siege.*



*Arrow seems disgusted with the fat man, seeing him as a weak liability who is unable to fight or protect himself in this crisis. The Sarajevans at the funeral are symbolically forced into graves, showing how all the civilians of Sarajevo are just walking dead in the eyes of the men on the hill. Though both the fat man and Arrow refuse to hide in graves during the mortar attack, Arrow sees herself as a hero who is choosing her own destiny and the fat man as a laughable remnant of a time when luxuries like eating were allowed.*



Arrow snaps out of her thoughts, unsure why she is thinking about this funeral. She shakes it off, focusing on her mission to protect **the cellist**. She looks up at the window where she thinks the sniper was, then looks at her own hiding spot and the decoy window she set up. Suddenly, her body goes cold and Arrow realizes the sniper must be watching her. She has no idea where the sniper is, and no way to do anything about it. She hopes the sniper thinks she is just another Sarajevan who likes the cellist, then worries that looking up at the windows has tipped the sniper off to her plan. She walks away, trying her best to look nonchalant.

Arrow goes to get her rifle, then camps out in her chosen apartment. She didn't report to Nermin last night, and she worries about what Nermin will do if she doesn't kill the sniper today. Shortly before 4 o'clock, Arrow turns her attention to the sniper's window. She is confident that she can kill the sniper easily today. **The cellist** goes into the street, sits, and begins to play. After five minutes of music, the sniper still has not moved. Arrow still doesn't understand why the sniper isn't shooting, but she feels too far in to change her plan now.

A movement in the decoy apartment distracts Arrow, but she shakes it off and refocuses on the sniper window. Then she suddenly realizes that the gun in the decoy window is not the rifle that she set up. She slams herself to the ground before the sniper sends a bullet into her window. She lays there, waiting to hear the second shot that will kill **the cellist**, but the music continues uninterrupted. The cellist plays until he is finished with the **Adagio**, not even seeming to notice that a gun went off a few feet above him. The cellist packs up and goes inside his apartment building, as Arrow stays still – hoping to convince the sniper that she is dead.

That night, Arrow goes to report to Nermin. He suspects that the sniper was waiting to see if he had really killed Arrow before shooting **the cellist**. Arrow is not so sure, but she stays silent as Nermin explains that they will post a soldier in Arrow's hiding spot in case the sniper goes to check for Arrow's body. Nermin then tells Arrow that his promise to let Arrow remain a free agent may become more difficult to keep.

Arrow knows that the Sarajevo militia is struggling between a faction that wants to save the city at all costs and a faction that wants to stay civilized in their fight. The wildcard in all this is the criminals, who were invaluable when the war first started because they had fighting experience. Now the criminals are uncontrollable, trying to make a profit off the war and refusing to give up the power the army initially gave them.

*Arrow feels that thinking about the funeral compromised her ability to focus solely on the mission at hand. Her emotional memory causes her to make the mistake of giving away her decoy apartment. Arrow still sees emotion as a weakness that a weapon like herself cannot afford.*



*Arrow again forgets that her mission is simply to protect the cellist, not to actively kill the enemy sniper. Nermin wants her to do what is best for the cellist, while Arrow's hatred for the men on the hill tells her that she must seek violence against her enemies. The sniper is still not a threat however, and Arrow is not yet comfortable enough to shoot a man she feels is innocent.*



*The sniper preys on Arrow's weaknesses, using her overconfidence in anticipating the sniper's next move against her. Thinking like a weapon has convinced Arrow that the men on the hill care only for violence. Yet the sniper seems unwilling to hurt the cellist while the cellist is playing such beautiful music. The cellist pays no attention to the shot that could have ended his life, prioritizing the music above everything.*



*Arrow's status as an unofficial member of the army is in jeopardy, as she may soon become an official part of the army with no hope for retaining her moral code.*



*For Galloway, saving Sarajevo means more than killing all the enemies or protecting the buildings. Through Arrow, Galloway suggests that some in the Sarajevo Defense Corps have forgotten their true goal – restoring Sarajevo to peace – and have been consumed by the desire to “win” the war by any means necessary.*



Arrow wants Sarajevo to remain worth saving, and she wants to help the defenders remember what is worth fighting for, but she sees that Nermin is in a difficult position keeping her away from the traditional army forces. Nermin dismisses her, telling her to worry about nothing but her mission with **the cellist**.

The next morning, Arrow stays hidden in her apartment near **the cellist** so she will not ruin the illusion that she is dead. She hopes that the sniper will not expect her to return to a place where she was found and shot at. Her one change is that she has switched windows, finding a better spot in the master bedroom where the windowsill is cracked enough for her rifle to fit through. Now she won't have to cut a hole in the plastic and reveal her position.

The day passes slowly, and Arrow thinks about all the men on the hill she isn't killing because she is protecting **the cellist**. She wonders if the men on the hill hate her, or simply hate anything that is different from them. She wishes they could all return to a Sarajevo where no one was hated or thought inferior for their ethnicity. She only excuses her own hatred because she thinks she hates the men on the hill for their actions—but more and more she realizes that she hates all the men on the hill as a group.

At four o'clock, **the cellist** comes out and the sniper shows himself immediately in a window across the street. Arrow puts the sniper in her sights, then waits when she sees that the sniper doesn't even have a finger on his trigger. Arrow wonders if the sniper is listening to the music for some odd reason. Arrow listens to the music as well, promising herself that she will shoot if the sniper moves at all. Yet the sniper stays motionless, listening to the cellist's sad piece with his eyes closed. Arrow knows the sniper has probably killed before, and therefore deserves to die, but she can't bring herself to shoot while the sniper is not threatening the cellist.

As **the cellist's** piece ends, the sniper smiles and opens his eyes. Arrow shoots, hitting the sniper directly between the eyes. The sniper falls and Arrow watches the cellist pack up his instrument. She desperately wants the cellist to turn toward her, acknowledge her in any way. But the cellist simply disappears into his building without glancing up at all.

*Arrow is still half a civilian, allowing her the freedom to consider whether the military is actually doing the right thing. This mission with the cellist reminds Arrow that Sarajevo is more than the military efforts.*



*Arrow's metaphorical death calls back to her use of a nickname to separate her pre-war and post-war identities. Now that the old Arrow is dead, Arrow can go even farther in her mission to kill the sniper without being encumbered by her old moral doubts.*



*Rather than focusing on the good she is doing for the morale of the city by allowing the cellist to play safely, Arrow would prefer to act out her hatred of the enemy through active violence. She still blames her hatred on the men on the hill, not seeing that it is her choice to react with hatred and that the act of hating other people is damaging to herself.*



*Arrow has forgotten that the men on the hill are also human, so she considers them incapable of appreciating civilized or beautiful things. As she herself listens to the music, she considers what marks someone as "deserving to die." By Arrow's own metric, she also deserves to die because she has killed many people. While before Arrow saw her violence as righteous because it was in reaction to the violence of the men on the hill, this mission with the cellist reminds her that all violence is fundamentally against the values of civilization.*



*Arrow chooses to perpetuate violence even though the sniper was not going to shoot. She hopes that the cellist will approve of her actions, but the cellist's refusal to look up shows that Galloway sees art as completely separate from the horrible acts of war. As the cellist represents the importance of art and culture, Arrow is now positioned in opposition to the true civilization of the city.*



## TWO: KENAN (PART 3)

The men on the hill have tried to bomb the brewery many times, but so far the basement of the building has protected the springs well enough that it is still a good source of water. A hundred of people are in line when Kenan arrives, and he is happy that it isn't more crowded. A system of tubes and hoses brings the water up from the brewery's basement so that about twenty people can get water at a time outside the brewery building.

A man near the front of the water line has a medium dog with him. The man fills up a thermos for the dog before he starts to fill up his water containers. The dog drinks as if he will never see water again, which Kenan realizes could be true. The man finishes filling his containers, fills the dog's thermos again, then loads his water containers onto a dolly. Kenan thinks that a dolly is an unnecessary risk when the wheels get so tangled in the debris of the street, but he envies how much water the man can transport.

People chat in the water line, taking advantage of a rare opportunity to be around other people. Trucks roll up, presumably transporting water to the troops on the front lines, and the traffic noises allow Kenan to pretend it is a normal day if he closes his eyes. Then it is his turn to get water. Kenan fills his containers, trying not to waste any water as he switches out his different bottles, even though the water spills out endlessly because there are no valves on the hoses.

As Kenan fills his water containers, the whistling of shells comes far too close. Kenan thinks of a time as a schoolboy when he knew he was going to get punched and he thinks now that he is going to die. The shell hits and knocks Kenan off his feet. All sound disappears from the world and Kenan is paralyzed. He watches other people running around, then finds he can stand. Kenan walks to where the shells hit, about thirty feet away from where Kenan was standing.

Kenan sees a woman holding her leg where her foot has been blown off. Two men rush to help the woman while other people gather the wounded and help them into cars to go to the hospital. Kenan watches all the people, thankful his family is nowhere near this scene. Kenan turns to find the man who had the dog, as the man clutches the dog's leash and desperately calls the dog's name. Kenan tries to convince the man to get medical attention for a gash on his leg, but the man runs off to find his dog.

*The civilians of Sarajevo have put together a system for getting as much water as fast as possible, but their temporary riggings show how tenuous basic survival is in the city. One attack from the men on the hill could render the brewery useless and add even more difficulty to getting the fundamental elements of life in Sarajevo.*



*Kenan, like Dragan, looks at a dog and sees the similarities between humans and animals. Like the dog at the brewery, Kenan does not know what might happen that would keep him from getting water again. The man's ability to get a large quantity of water affords him the luxury of keeping a dog, when others can only worry about the survival of their human loved ones.*



*The brewery is one of the few places where people still feel comfortable enough to engage in casual interaction. Kenan, starved for this kind of normalcy tries to indulge in pretending that life is once again easy. But the pressures of survival bring him back to carefully watching each drop of water. The endless rush of water out of the hoses is a reminder that this lifestyle is unsustainable for both the civilians and the city itself.*



*The conditions of the siege have raised every action to life and death stakes. While Kenan compares the foreboding sound of mortars falling to watching a punch come toward him, the consequences are far different. Kenan tries to keep the mindset of civilian concerns, but the circumstances of the siege make that impossible.*



*The man with the dog prioritizes his dog above his physical health, as Galloway points out that relationships are what become truly important to people in times of crisis. The horror of the war reminds Kenan of his own family, and he he desperately wants to keep them safe.*



Snipers fire at the ambulances that come to try and help the wounded at the brewery. The shelling continues and the crowds at the brewery all rush around trying to help the wounded, recover the bodies of the dead, and get themselves to safety. Kenan simply watches, finding that he can neither run to selfishly save himself or to altruistically help others in this crisis.

Water from the brewery washes the blood off the street. Kenan walks back to his water containers, then is consumed by a desire to stop the water from spilling uselessly onto the ground. He tries to block one hose but soon gives up. Kenan thinks that the water washes away all the atrocities of the men on the hill, making it easier for them to kill again and again because they never see the full consequences of their actions.

Kenan finishes filling up Mrs. Ristovski's bottles as the last of the wounded are taken away. He slowly and deliberately picks up all his containers, then begins to walk home. He wonders which bridge will be safest after all the shelling. He eventually decides on the Cumurija Bridge, willing to risk walking over the steel frame to get to the relative safety of home. He starts walking again, realizing that he must look ridiculous as he waddles through the rubble with his heavy load of water. He hopes the snipers are not more likely to shoot at people who look funny.

Kenan makes it to the cover of the buildings on the street below the brewery. He is disgusted with his cowardly thoughts and actions after the shelling when people like Ismet are on the front lines. Kenan thinks he should go back and help the old man find his dog, but all he wants now is to get home and crawl into bed. Kenan keeps walking toward home, trying to keep his mind blank as he passes places in the city where he used to enjoy himself with his family on the weekend.

Kenan arrives at Cumurija bridge and sees another man crossing from the other direction. Kenan waits for this other man to come across, wishing that Mrs. Ristovski's bottles had handles so that he could carry all the water at once. As it is now, Kenan will have to make two trips so that he can keep his hands free to help clamber over the steel of the bombed bridge. Kenan hides Mrs. Ristovski's bottles so no one else will take them, then heads out onto the bridge as the other man passes by and hurries away.

*Kenan considers the "heroics" of other people during this time of crisis. Galloway uses Kenan's stunned inaction to show the response of many ordinary people during such horrible times. Unaccustomed to violence and in shock at the degree of pain around him, Kenan can only watch and bear witness.*



*Kenan does what he can to stop the endless flow of water, but he is unable to accomplish much as one small person. Similarly, Galloway points out that no one person can stop the cycle of violence trapping the besieged city. Kenan feels like giving up, seeing no end to the flow of blood that the men on the hill cause in Sarajevo.*



*In the chaos of the mortar attack, Kenan finds comfort in focusing on the one beneficial thing he can do for his family. Even though he has just witnessed horrible atrocities, his family still needs water and Kenan still needs to get home. The world does not stop in the face of violence, demoralizing Kenan even more about his long journey home.*



*Kenan considers himself a coward because he has been unable to act like a traditional hero who saves others. He does not see the small heroism in his dedicated journey to get water for his family at great personal risk to himself.*



*Kenan resents Mrs. Ristovski, regretting his promise to help her before he knew how much trouble the war would bring. In the pressure of war conditions, things that would otherwise be small annoyances – such as Mrs. Ristovski's difficult bottles – become huge sources of stress for Kenan.*



On the bridge, Kenan carefully balances his heavy bottles hanging from a rope that he has draped around his shoulders. He moves slowly so the bottles do not swing so much that Kenan falls. Another shell falls in the distance and Kenan stumbles. His knee hits the bridge hard and Kenan is filled with rage. He runs across the bridge recklessly and collapses on the other side. Kenan is desperately tired, wishing that he didn't have to carry water through this horrible world, especially not for a neighbor who hates everyone. Kenan thinks that Mrs. Ristovski should get her own water, picks up his own containers, and starts toward home.

*Right now, Kenan considers any action that does not directly help his family to be unnecessary. Instead of seeing the good that he is doing for another person, Kenan wishes that he could care only about himself and his family. Pushed to his limit by the recent mortar attack, Kenan cannot find the energy to help others. This, rather than his shock during the attack itself, is a true display of cowardice and a moral failure.*



### THREE: DRAGAN

A small group of people gather around Emina, trying to see how badly injured her arm is. Someone hands Dragan Emina's blue coat as they tie a tourniquet below her shoulder. Emina continues to bleed as more gunfire erupts in the enemy controlled neighborhood Grbavica. Dragan kneels beside Emina, noting that she doesn't seem to be in much pain. Emina comments that she had wanted to see **the cellist** play on his last day. A car approaches and the crowd flags it down so it can take Emina to the hospital.

*Galloway highlights how common it is for civilians to be injured while simply living their daily lives. When Emina is shot, the community of people on the street does come together to help her, showing small acts of heroism. Meanwhile, even when her life is threatened, Emina cares more about missing the cellist than her safety, showing the importance of art in times of struggle.*



Two men load Emina into the car. Dragan wishes he could go with her, but knows that it is not his place. A man who saw the incident assures Dragan that Emina's wound is as non-threatening as a gunshot wound can be. The car pulls away and Dragan sits behind the boxcar. He finds the bottle of pills that Emina had been delivering in Emina's coat, then throws the coat on the ground. It has bloodstains now and no one will want it.

*Dragan, far from trying to avoid other people, now cares deeply about a woman he once considered a passing acquaintance. Talking with Emina helps re-awaken his desire to connect with others, which he then carries forward by keeping the bottle of pills that still needs to be delivered.*



Dragan looks at the body still on the street, again wondering if it is better to be killed or wounded. He decides that what makes the difference is whether he wants to stay in the world he lives in and whether life is worth the fear of death. Surprisingly, Dragan finds that he thinks life is still worth it.

*For Dragan the question of being killed or wounded is not an idle concern. Death, or injury that would vastly reduce his quality of life, are constant concerns for Dragan, even though he never wanted to be a part of this war.*



A month ago, Dragan had been forcibly conscripted by an army gang, even though his job at the bakery renders him exempt from the draft. He spends three days digging ditches with no idea how close he is to enemy fire, and with no food. In that pit, Dragan had decided he would rather die than live like this. His boss at the bakery had eventually found Dragan and gotten him released back to the bakery, but by then Dragan had already given up on his life in the city. Now, after seeing Emina, Dragan realizes that the city still holds opportunity for connection.

*Dragan would rather die than live as part of the military effort. He values his life as a civilian, something that seemed impossible in the current conditions of Sarajevo. However, Dragan now realizes that he can control his mindset, no matter what is happening in the city around him. Taking inspiration from Emina's optimism, Dragan hopes to remain a civilized member of society even while it is not functioning correctly.*



Dragan wishes that he had rushed into the street to help Emina, but he is also comfortable with his cowardice. He was not built for war and he does not want to be built for war. Dragan thinks about abandoning his trip to the bakery, going home, and trying to do something nice for his brother-in-law. He imagines himself going to the tunnel under the airport and escaping Sarajevo for good. He walks through the trip that would take him to Italy to reunite with his wife and son. It would be wonderful to live with them in a safe city with no one hating them and no one to hate.

A shell falling interrupts Dragan's thoughts of escape. He listens to the shells and gunfire, wondering if the men on the hill also want this violence to be over. Dragan has never understood why the men on the hill saw people like him as a threat and he doesn't see what killing the Sarajevans will accomplish. Dragan realizes that he doesn't truly want to live in Italy. He wants to be free to live in the Sarajevo of his birth and he must stay here now to keep the hope of returning to that Sarajevo alive.

### THREE: ARROW

In Nermin's office, Arrow waits alone. Nermin finally comes in and Arrow announces that "he's dead." Nermin isn't sure whether Arrow is talking about **the cellist** or the sniper. Arrow flatly clarifies that it is the sniper, trying not to let herself feel any emotion at all. Nermin notices Arrow's discomfort and Arrow explains that she shot the sniper while the sniper was listening to the cellist's music. Nermin nods, then tells Arrow it is time for her to disappear before the Sarajevo militia forces her to break her oath not to kill innocent people.

Arrow is confused, unsure if it is even possible to disappear in a city surrounded by the men on the hill. Nermin continues, explaining that the men on the hill are not the only ones who are destroying Sarajevo. People within the defense are also creating a Sarajevo that condones evil rather than opposing it. Nermin is going to be relieved of his command soon, because he hasn't wanted to join the militia's corrupt deals. Nermin apologizes for turning Arrow into a soldier against her father's wishes. Arrow tells Nermin she forgives him and leaves Nermin's office.

*Dragan finds comfort in the fact that he is not a hero, preferring to live in a world in which heroism is not necessary because civilized life is functioning in Sarajevo. Dragan dreams of living again in a place where civilization is possible, though he seems unsure whether that will ever happen in Sarajevo again. The small things he can do to improve his life here during the siege feel too unimportant.*



*Dragan feels that he must be loyal to his city, in a way that the men on the hill have not been. In order to live in Sarajevo again, Dragan decides to withstand the long, suffering days of the siege. Staying there through the trouble is how Dragan shows his heroism, even if he never makes grand gestures or helps others.*



*For Arrow, disconnected from human society, it doesn't seem to matter whether the cellist or the sniper died. Galloway points out that the damage of violence and hatred is the same on both sides – whether the dead man is a soldier whom Arrow thought deserved to die or the cellist that Arrow was supposed to protect. Nermin sees that Arrow is close to crossing a moral line and he hopes that she can stay a civilian throughout this conflict.*



*Galloway emphasizes that defending Sarajevo means opposing hatred, not simply fighting against the men on the hill. The defense, in order to truly save Sarajevo, must resist falling into the hatred that started this conflict. Nermin defends this principle at immense cost to himself, showing how a person can be a hero without action on the battlefield.*



Arrow walks into the street, wondering if she is still one of the good people because she kills the men on the hill out of hatred. She worries about Nermin, knowing that he will have few options and little safety if he is relieved of his command. When Arrow has walked three blocks, she hears shelling. Other people in the street rush to get to cellars and basements, but Arrow does not hurry. She no longer hides in the basement during shelling, preferring to stay in her bed rather than letting the men on the hill force her into hiding.

A boy runs frantically past Arrow and Arrow recognizes him as an assistant in Nermin's building. Arrow realizes that this boy is afraid of more than just the shelling, and she stops and turns back toward Nermin's office. She runs back just in time to see Nermin's building explode. Arrow falls to her stomach, watching through the scope of her rifle as the fire brigade appears and tames the blaze of the building. They put out the fire and find no survivors. The firemen chatter about how lucky it was that this shell fell after hours, but Arrow knows that this explosion came from inside. Arrow lingers by the building for hours, hoping that Nermin escaped somehow. When two soldiers carry a body out of the building, Arrow goes home.

The shelling continues all night. Arrow listens to it from her bed, wondering if tonight's damage will even be noticeable in the rubble already covering the city. She thinks she should be more upset about Nermin's death, but she feels little about anything. She shivers in the cold, hungry after another night of eating rice. She could trade the cigarettes the army gives her for more food, but she can't be bothered.

Arrow realizes that her stash of cigarettes could be enough to buy her a pass through the tunnel, but she doesn't really want to leave Sarajevo or the girl she used to be when this city lived in peace. Furthermore, Arrow realizes that she still wants to protect **the cellist**. She falls asleep.

Arrow is woken by the sound of soldier boots outside her door. She gets out of bed quietly and puts a revolver in her coat pocket. Arrow opens her door to find three men carrying guns, one of them in army fatigues. The men ask if she is Arrow, while Arrow contemplates whether to shoot them or not. The men order Arrow to come with them. Arrow refuses, but the men shift their hands to their guns. Arrow can see that they are afraid of her and is momentarily pleased. But then she realizes she does not want anyone to fear her and goes with the soldiers, who explain that they are taking her to Colonel Karaman.

*Arrow begins to reconsider her role in the war after finding out about Nermin's intense dedication to his principles. Arrow had thought that she was being a hero for the city by acting as a sniper, but she now wonders whether this violence is doing anything good for the city. Arrow sees herself as being just as dedicated to freedom as Nermin in her refusal to let the men on the hill dictate when she is afraid, but she doesn't understand that she is letting the men on the hill dictate her hatred.*



*It is unclear whether Nermin was part of the plan to bomb his office, or if this was done in retaliation for the advice Nermin had given against the army's current path. Either way, Nermin sacrificed himself for the ideals of a civilized Sarajevo. Rather than participate in a war that he no longer agrees with, Nermin chooses to die. He would rather live in a society that fights for the ideals of peace and tolerance than win a war based on hatred, selfishness, and force.*



*Arrow has compartmentalized herself so much that she cannot even grieve for a man who acted as a mentor and father figure. Her time as a weapon of the Sarajevo Defense Corps has hurt her deeply, so that her emotional state mirrors the rubble of the city.*



*The one thing that Arrow still cares about is the cellist, again emphasizing how important the beauty of art is to the Sarajevans suffering in the siege. To get back to happiness, Arrow must fight for the culture she once loved.*



*After months of honing her skills as a weapon, Arrow now receives the respect and awe that she thought she wanted. But instead of feeling satisfied, she is upset that people fear her. Arrow is beginning to understand that being a military hero comes with a price – human interaction. Her first response now is to shoot people, as she loses the ability to trust others.*



The men take Arrow to a small café where Colonel Edin Karaman is waiting. Colonel asks Arrow her real name, but Arrow refuses to tell him. The Colonel shrugs, telling Arrow that Nermin has been killed and she is now assigned to the colonel's unit. Arrow insists that she must keep protecting **the cellist**, but Karaman explains that there are better uses for Arrow's talents and that a man waiting outside will tell Arrow of her new orders. Arrow explains that she has always chosen her own targets. Karaman laughs, explaining that Arrow will now do whatever he tells her to in order to protect the city.

Arrow stands up to leave, wondering what her father would do. Karaman calls after her, reminding Arrow that the war has separated the city into us and them. Anyone who is not with the Sarajevo militia is against it. Arrow picks up her rifle, realizing that the choices she has made so far have given her little choice about what to do now.

### THREE: KENAN

Kenan moves quickly through the streets, reaching the other side of the main road. He sees Ismet and isn't sure how to explain what happened at the brewery. Ismet invites Kenan to come with him to the market and Kenan agrees. The market is crowded and Kenan stops at the edge so he will not bump into people with his water. Ismet goes into the market square to see if there is anything worth buying. Kenan thinks about the smugglers who bring things into the city through the tunnel, then sell them at outrageous prices.

Kenan sees the water truck from the brewery pull up to a man in a suit standing by a Mercedes. He suddenly realizes that this water is not going to troops, or to anyone who wants to help Sarajevo. He is shocked that people would stoop to buying and selling water, then angry that people are allowed to do this. Kenan wants to confront the man in the suit, but he can't put down his water or it will be stolen.

Kenan waddles over to the man in the suit with his rope of water containers still draped on his shoulders. The man in the suit laughs at Kenan struggling to carry his water, then gets into his Mercedes and drives away. Kenan watches the man go, then hears music drifting down the street. Without knowing why, Kenan follows the music. He finds a small crowd of people gathered around **a cellist** playing in the street.

*Arrow refuses to tell Colonel Karaman her real name, continuing to keep her real identity separate from the work she is doing for the army. Her services for Karaman are a duty based on her months as a weapon, though Arrow would rather follow her heart and protect the cellist.*



*Karaman chooses to see the men on the hill as the "other," rejecting any possibility of shared humanity or peaceful resolution to the war. Arrow believes that her time spent hating the men on the hill now condemns her to continue to choose sides.*



*Kenan knows that Ismet, as a soldier, has seen far worse than the shelling at the brewery, but the incident was jarring for him as a civilian. Galloway again emphasizes the way that civilians suffered during the siege, showing how food and resources became scarce as selfish people tried to make a profit off the starving, captive civilians stranded in the city.*



*Even more than food, Kenan considers water a basic need for survival. It is something that would be readily available if the city were functioning. Kenan struggles to understand how someone could be so morally bankrupt by the war that they would add a price to a fundamental part of life.*



*In the face of the selfishness and greed of the man with the Mercedes, the cellist shows how art follows a higher purpose. The cellist plays his music to help both himself and other people, while the man in the Mercedes is looking out only for himself.*



Kenan recognizes **the cellist** as a former member of the Sarajevo Symphony Orchestra, though the cellist looks much worse for the wear of the war. Though Kenan has heard that a cellist was playing to memorialize the victims of a bakery shelling, he wonders why the cellist is truly playing and what the cellist hopes to accomplish. For the moment however, the music allows Kenan to imagine a better Sarajevo. The broken buildings around Kenan repair themselves in his mind as the music continues.

With **the cellist's** music playing, Kenan can imagine himself returning home to a happy family, taking his children out to a restaurant, then walking through peaceful streets with ice cream. Kenan will ride the tram again, as he always used to, and give his oldest daughter money to go to a movie. He thinks that none of that can ever be taken away, but then the cellist stops playing and Kenan's dream is gone.

**The cellist** goes inside and a woman who had been listening turns to Kenan and explains that her daughter was one of the ones killed in the bakery shelling. Kenan wishes he could say something to comfort the woman, but he can only stand silent. When the woman turns to go, Kenan asks if her daughter liked the cello. The woman doesn't know, but Kenan responds that he thinks her daughter must have been a great lover of music. The woman leaves with a small smile.

Kenan returns to the market and sees Ismet paying a huge sum for a small bag of rice. Kenan shakes his head that his friend has to pay for relief supplies that should be given for free. The sound of shelling reminds Kenan that the men on the hill continue to kill people. They make ghosts out of the living, as well, by forcing people to drown in grief. He thinks of Mrs. Ristovski, who never recovered from her pain in WWII, and decides he doesn't want to be one of these living ghosts.

Ismet comes to find Kenan but Kenan walks away before Ismet can see him. Later, Kenan will go visit Ismet and joke with him. Kenan wants to keep hope alive, so that he and Ismet can be two of the people who can rebuild Sarajevo when this is all over. For now, Kenan must return to Cumurija Bridge and reclaim Mrs. Ristovski's bottles of water.

*Kenan answers his own question about why the cellist is playing when he imagines the city coming back to health. The cellist's music may not accomplish anything tangible, but it does remind the people of Sarajevo of the good aspects of civilization. Listening to this beauty allows Kenan to regain hope that Sarajevo will recover.*



*The music reconnects Kenan to the parts of his life that make the siege worth living through. To have hope of being happy with his family once more, Kenan cannot let the dream of this future die.*



*Kenan gives this woman comfort in the wake of her daughter's death. Again, the cellist's music offers ways for the Sarajevans to heal from their wounds – even if it can't keep those wounds from happening in the first place. Filled with hope from the cellist's playing, Kenan finds the energy to connect with another person in a way that he hasn't throughout the novel.*



*With civilized life broken down in Sarajevo, the citizens either succumb to their animal nature and fight for survival at all costs, or fall into despair and become walking ghosts. Mrs. Ristovski may be alive, but the part of her that enjoys life and connects to other people is dead. Kenan, still fresh from hearing the cellist's music, remembers how much he wants to live life fully after the war.*



*To keep himself from being a walking ghost, Kenan must continue to help other people and display the values of the civilization that he cherishes. He has to go get Mrs. Ristovski's water because he doesn't want Sarajevo to turn into a place where everyone always cares about themselves.*



## THREE: ARROW (PART 2)

Colonel Karaman's soldiers take Arrow to the old Parliament Building, which has been completely gutted and bombed by the men on the hill. Its bones are still standing, and it offers a good view of all the enemy occupied territory from its upper floors. The three soldiers hand Arrow off to another soldier in the lobby, who introduces himself as Hasan. Arrow finds Hasan strangely friendly. Hasan congratulates Arrow on her skillful reputation and takes her up to the 14th floor.

The 14th floor of the Parliament Building is a mess of broken glass and debris as the wind blows freely through gaping holes in the walls. Hasan jokes about "going hunting," but Arrow doesn't respond. Hasan explains that Arrow's assignment is to shoot whomever Hasan chooses. Arrow is irritated that she has ended up in this situation with no options.

Arrow sets up her rifle in a covered position, ignoring Hasan's order to shoot from the gaping hole in the wall. Hasan pulls out binoculars and starts scoping out Grbavica. The neighborhood is a wasteland, with little that has not been shot, set on fire, or destroyed. Hasan comments that he used to live in one of the buildings on the front lines, frankly explaining that his whole family is probably dead. Arrow sadly adds that her father is dead, as well, and Hasan angrily suggests that they should make "them" pay for all these wounds.

Arrow is uncomfortable with Hasan's intense need for revenge. She turns her attention back to the streets of Grbavica, looking for anyone who might be a soldier. It is hard to tell when neither army regularly wears uniforms. Arrow has learned to identify people by the way they walk, and wonders if Hasan can do the same. Now that her rifle is dedicated to Hasan's choice, she hopes he will choose well.

Hasan nudges Arrow and points out a target. Arrow looks where he indicates, seeing only a civilian man creeping around a building. Arrow argues, pointing out a soldier who has just moved into view, but Hasan insists that Arrow shoot the civilian man. Arrow again refuses to kill an unarmed civilian. Hasan tries to convince Arrow that no one in Grbavica can be innocent and that all the people there are rabid animals who deserve to die. Arrow again argues that the other side still has some good people.

*Hasan seems cheerful and unscathed by the war, an impression that unnerves Arrow because she knows that everyone in Sarajevo has suffered. Like the parliament building, in which the lobby is intact but the upper floors are a wreck, Hasan is hiding how damaged he truly is. His compliments for Arrow's skill show that he respects Arrow's ability to murder and wound.*



*Hasan's jokes "other" the men on the hill by treating them as if they are animals to be hunted instead of human beings. Arrow again feels that all the things she has done out of hatred for the enemy are now curtailing her freedom.*



*Hasan is not as skilled a weapon as Arrow, both in terms of practical logistics and in his emotional charge against the men on the hill. Where Arrow is uncomfortable with the role hatred plays in her choices, Hasan is unabashedly motivated by hatred. He has let his grief turn into a poisonous hatred that promises to harm both the men on the hill and himself.*



*Arrow still clings to her rule not to harm "innocent" people. She believes that by only killing soldiers she can escape the guilt of being a true murderer. By deferring her choice to Hasan, who is a true member of the army, Arrow again avoids the blame for her actions.*



*In modern war, killing civilians is a far higher crime than killing military forces. Yet the lines in Sarajevo have become blurred, as "civilians" like Arrow work for the military and civilians in the street are thought to support the enemy forces. Hasan again compares the men on the hill to animals, refusing to respect their humanity. This both feeds his hatred and cheapens his own humanity.*



Hasan restates that a war can only have two sides and that Arrow must shoot. Arrow lifts her rifle and pinpoints the civilian man. She wonders if she could have done anything else these past months with the men on the hill doing so much to make her hate them. She hopes other people in Sarajevo have been able to resist that temptation, but she considers it too late for herself. But when she takes her final aim Arrow remembers **the cellist's** music in her head and knows she will not shoot.

*In direct opposition to Hasan's statement about two sides in war, Galloway's novel explicitly examines the ambiguity of war. Arrow's growing discomfort with her hatred shows that there are ways to react to violence other than with hatred, even if Arrow cannot think of them. In the midst of her moral struggle, the cellist's music helps her choose the right path. Again, Galloway positions art, culture and civilization against any acts of war.*



Arrow gets up and picks up her gun. Hasan warns her that leaving now will make her a defector, but Arrow decides to take that risk. Hasan does not follow her as Arrow makes her way down the fourteen flights of stairs. Outside the Parliament Building, Arrow sneaks past the guards onto the streets and runs away.

*Arrow finally takes responsibility for her own actions. She chooses to be a defector, like Nermin, and accepts the danger that might bring, rather than continuing to be a part of violence that she no longer condones.*



### THREE: DRAGAN (PART 2)

On the other side of the intersection, Dragan can see a man setting up a camera. The man is too clean and neat to be a Sarajevan, so he must be a foreign journalist. As the journalist sets up his equipment, another man decides to brave the intersection. He makes it across safely and Dragan thinks the journalist looks disappointed that he didn't get to film it.

*The journalist seems to be taking advantage of Sarajevo's plight to get a dramatic story. Dragan sees other people using Sarajevo to project the image they want, instead of painting a nuanced portrait of what Sarajevo is and was.*



Another dog comes up behind the journalist and also seems to be on a mission. Dragan briefly wonders if the dog will try to eat the corpse of the hatless man, but the dog stays focused. As the dog passes, Dragan wants to help the poor animal. But the dog seems to want nothing to do with humans. Dragan realizes he has been like that dog these past months, trying not to get too involved with his surroundings.

*The dog has given up on human civilization completely, keeping to itself instead of either harming others by eating the corpse or trusting others in order to help it. Dragan, similarly, neither assisted nor took advantage of anyone. The fact that he is not harming anyone is not enough – Dragan must reengage with his fellow citizens.*



The journalist sets up a few more cables for his camera and Dragan knows he will be filming soon. Dragan does not want the body of the hatless man to be on camera. Though Dragan agrees that the world should see what is happening in Sarajevo, he doesn't want his city to be seen as a place where bodies are allowed to lie in the streets. He doesn't want the hatless man to be stripped of his humanity and held up as a curiosity for foreign audiences.

*While Dragan recognizes that Sarajevo is in trouble and that the media can help them gain foreign aid, he also does not want the world to see a Sarajevo in which the rules of civilization have completely broken down. The Sarajevans are still people, not an exhibit or an example for the world of the horrors of war.*



Dragan thinks about Emina and the cellist. Just as **the cellist** plays because it is the only thing he can do to keep the city from getting worse, Dragan sees what he can do to help Sarajevo return to being a place where bodies do not line the streets. Dragan knows the sniper is still targeting this intersection, but he thinks he can go out into the street and pull the hatless man out of the camera's view in less than a minute.

Dragan walks into the street. Time slows in his head as he makes his way to the body of the hatless man. Dragan finally reaches the body and grabs the man's hands. Dragan is surprised that being this close to the dead body doesn't bother him. A sniper bullet hits the dead body, but Dragan simply starts to drag the body away. He is past fear, knowing that the sniper will fire again but simply accepting this fact without emotion.

Dragan makes it back to the safety behind the boxcars. He checks his body, seeing that he has not been injured. He looks up to see that the journalist is staring at him but the camera is not rolling. Dragan is glad that the body will never be on film now. Shells begin to fall from the hills and defending gunfire answers. Dragan waits for everything to go quiet, wondering when this war will end and if people will forget everything that happened once it is over.

Once the firing stops, Dragan stands and picks up Emina's coat and the dead man's hat. He thinks about what will happen when the Sarajevans become content with living with dead bodies in the street. That is the moment that the men on the hill will truly win. Dragan covers the dead body with Emina's coat and puts the man's hat back on his head.

## FOUR: KENAN

Four days after his momentous trip for water, Kenan again wakes early and plans another trip to the brewery. Today is the last day **the cellist** will be playing and Kenan looks forward to listening again. He worries about the coming winter when firewood will also be a precious resource like water is now. He shaves again by candlelight and looks forward to the day when electricity will not be a rare luxury.

*Every small action can help Sarajevo regain and maintain its spirit during peacetime. Galloway praises Dragan and the cellist for doing what they can where they can, even if their small moments of heroism do not seem to have an overall effect on the war.*



*Dragan does what he must, finally taking action to make Sarajevo become the city he wants to live in. His fear had previously paralyzed him so much that he chose not to do anything. Now, even though his life is in danger, Dragan has a cause that feels is worth the risk.*



*Though Dragan did not want the journalist to film a corpse, thereby disrespecting the man who died and the city of Sarajevo, Dragan is not opposed to media presence in the city in general. He wants the world to know what is happening, if only so that the war will not be forgotten. In the same way, it is important to Galloway that Sarajevo is immortalized in this novel. He wants his vision of the Bosnian conflict to help educate others against falling into that hatred again.*



*Dragan hopes to avoid falling in to apathy once more. He must be actively working to help Sarajevo become the place he remembers and the city he wants to live in. By offering respect to the dead body, Dragan follow's Emina's spirit and honors her.*



*As this book is set in the first year of the siege, Galloway hints at the troubles to come. The situation for civilians will get worse before it gets better, just as Kenan fears. But acts of defiance, such as the cellist's music, help Kenan keep hope alive through his worry.*



As Kenan leaves the bathroom, the electricity comes on. Kenan happily checks his closet where a car battery is saving up this power so that Kenan's family can listen to the radio later. Amila gets up from bed, also celebrating the electricity. She teases Kenan that he should pick up the ingredients for a cake while he's out and Kenan suggests they get brandy as well. The couple embraces for a long moment as Amila tells Kenan to be careful.

*Kenan chooses to be resourceful in providing for his family and ensure that there will still be some pleasures in their life. Joking with his wife is another sign that Kenan is refusing to be a "ghost" who is so embittered by suffering that he doesn't enjoy anything in life.*



Kenan kisses his wife goodbye and goes out to the hallway. Again, Kenan does not want to go outside, and does not want to struggle through the streets risking his life for water. But he will go, because this is how he earns the right to help Sarajevo repair itself when the war is over and help his family survive until then. He looks forward to hearing **the cellist** play again as a reminder of that coming future. Kenan goes to Mrs. Ristovski's door and knocks, waiting for her to give him her cumbersome bottles to fill at the brewery.

*Kenan's trips to get water are not momentous in the traditional heroic sense. Yet his dedication to his family makes this somewhat mundane task extraordinary. By enduring this time of trial, Kenan looks forward to bringing civilization back to Sarajevo after the war. Until then, he does things like listen to the cellist and help his neighbor so that civilized actions will not disappear from Sarajevo altogether.*



## FOUR: DRAGAN

Dragan questions whether the real Sarajevo is the happy, peaceful city of his memories or the violent, conflict and hate-filled place of his present. He's been waiting at this intersection for two hours now, refusing to decide to go into the street. Dragan wants to believe that Sarajevo will eventually return to the beautiful society that Dragan wishes for. But to do that, Dragan knows he must continue to work to reinstate civilization.

*After all of Dragan's questions about which Sarajevo is "real," Galloway suggests that the real Sarajevo does not matter as much as the Sarajevans' vision for their city does. As long as Dragan is working toward a vision of a peaceful Sarajevo, that city has a chance of becoming real.*



The journalist has packed up, trying to find a more exciting intersection to film. Dragan decides that he is going to cross now, no matter who may or may not be watching him. He steps into the street, imagining the sniper aiming at him. His feet refuse to run, so Dragan walks calmly across the intersection, as if he were just going for a stroll. He has never been so afraid, but he realizes that he wants to walk to prove that his city is not a place where he will run like a frightened animal.

*Dragan starts to act as though the city were normal, even though it is risky and he is afraid. Galloway portrays this action as quietly heroic, again taking one small step towards a Sarajevo in which walking down the street is once again a completely unremarkable act.*



Dragan waits for a sniper bullet to hit him, but he is not shot. He reaches the other side of the road, accepting that it is impossible to know when one will die. He walks, feeling like any other old man walking down the street, at first toward the bakery. Then Dragan remembers Emina's pills in his pocket and decides he will deliver the medicine before going to get his bread. Then, Dragan will go to watch the cellist so he can tell Emina what it was like. As Dragan walks, he passes an elderly man and cheerfully wishes him, "good afternoon."

*By delivering the medicine and saying hello to a fellow Sarajevan, Dragan brings to life the ideals of the civilized Sarajevo where he wants to live. Galloway again asserts that it is not necessary to perform grand acts of bravery to improve the world. Dragan's actions will not end the war, but they will keep the war from extinguishing all hope in the city.*



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## FOUR: ARROW

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Arrow wakes up in her apartment to the sound of soldiers in the hall, ten days after she walked away from Hasan. She has been hiding in various places around the city, and is somewhat surprised to be found the first day she returns to her home. Arrow doesn't pick up her gun, having already decided to let Karaman's men find her now that she has finished protecting **the cellist**.

The last day **the cellist** played, there was a good-sized crowd in the street. Arrow began to cry as the cellist played, everyone stuck motionless as they listened to the **Adagio's** sorrowful melody. Arrow realizes that this whole war could have been stopped if no one had ever been filled with hate. The cellist finished playing, with tears on his face, then walked over to the pile of flowers and added his bow to the pile. The cellist returned to his apartment and the crowd gradually dispersed.

In her apartment, Arrow wonders what her life would have been if the war never happened. There seem to be an endless number of possibilities, all of which lead to her being happy. But now, Arrow's only options are to kill or be caught as the hate continues to grow inside her. Thinking of that, Arrow had added her rifle to the cellist's pile of flowers that last day, leaving her gun next to the cellist's bow. Arrow knows that the soldiers will burst through her door in a few seconds to kill her. She quietly whispers, "My name is Alisa."

*Arrow finally gives up her life as a weapon, refusing to use her gun even in self-defense. Her last mission was protecting the cellist – an endeavor in which she added to the spirit of tolerance, peace, and art in the city, rather than adding more violence.*



*With the cellist's last performance, Arrow reconnects with the emotions she has been denying since she cut off her own humanity in order to become a weapon. Galloway displays the cellist's music as an antidote to hate, able to help Arrow recover from her time spent in damaging hatred.*



*Poisoned by hate, Arrow sees that she cannot continue to live in a world where she would always be an instrument of violence. To honor her human soul, Arrow reclaims her identity from before the war as she gives herself up. Arrow, like Nermin before her, sacrifices herself to avoid perpetuating a cycle of hatred. She decides that the cellist's music is more important than her life of murder and chooses to die after protecting the cellist rather than to live in hate.*





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