

## **The Cellist of Sarajevo** **Steven Galloway**

*The Cellist of Sarajevo* is a novel which follows the lives of three inhabitants of Sarajevo during the Siege of Sarajevo which lasted from April 1992 to February 1996. The story is set during a brief period when a cellist plays in the street in remembrance of those killed in a mortar attack on a bread queue. The novel follows the lives of Kenan, who crosses the city to find water for his family; Dragan, who has become isolated from his friends and Arrow, a counter-sniper protecting residents from snipers on the hills surrounding the city.

*The Cellist of Sarajevo* has recently featured on Richard & Judy's Book Club and was a nominee for the Galaxy British Book Awards 2009.

Please note that the questions below may act as a spoiler for the book.

1. Discuss the Trotsky quote "You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you." How true is this of the characters in this novel?
2. Can Arrow, the sniper, truly separate herself from the woman she was before the war?
3. Are Dragan's memories of Sarajevo before the war realistic or has he created an idealised version of the city?
4. Can you understand why Dragan has distanced himself from his former friends?
5. Why did the Cellist become a target for snipers? Why is it so important for Arrow to protect him?
6. Why do you think that Dragan's Holocaust survivor acquaintance committed suicide?
7. Why does the Cellist play? Is it merely as a memorial to the 22 people killed in the bread queue?
8. Why doesn't the sniper kill the Cellist after firing at Arrow?

9. Kenan believes himself to be a coward. Do you agree?

10. How do the three main characters hold on to their own humanity?

You can use HMD resources to find out more about the events in Bosnia including the siege of Sarajevo (<http://www.hmd.org.uk/genocides/bosnia/>).