

ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK 2012



*the
Cellist
of
Sarajevo*
by *Steven Galloway*

READER'S GUIDE

IMAGINE IF EVERYONE READ THE SAME BOOK AT THE SAME TIME

WHAT NEW THINGS WOULD WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT WITH ONE ANOTHER?

Celebrating its fifth year, One Maryland One Book is Maryland's only statewide community reading program. It is designed to bring together diverse people in communities across the state through a shared experience: the reading and thoughtful discussion of the same book. Each year, the book selection process is guided by a common theme, which this year is "courage and unity in times of war." The Maryland Center for the Book at the Maryland Humanities Council partners with public libraries, high schools, colleges and universities, museums, bookstores, correctional facilities and other organizations to bring book-centered discussions and other related programs to communities across Maryland.

The Maryland Humanities Council has at the core of its mission the deep commitment to providing Marylanders with an opportunity to gather and discuss issues important to their lives and communities, believing that a great work of literature provides an excellent springboard to do so. One Maryland One Book is not just about reading or literature. It is also about bringing people together for meaningful dialogue.

The book selected for 2012 is *The Cellist of Sarajevo* by Steven Galloway.

GET THE BOOK

Pick up a copy of *The Cellist of Sarajevo* at your local public library or bookstore and start up a conversation with your family, friends, coworkers, or even the person sitting next to you as you ride the bus or train. This is your chance to take a moment to have a great conversation with an old friend or to make a new one.

JOIN IN

We invite you to join Honorary Chairperson, Maryland's First Lady Katie O'Malley, and thousands of other Marylanders at one of the many book discussions and related programs happening around the state in September and October.

If you're out and about, you might find copies of *The Cellist of Sarajevo* in unexpected places. Our Wandering Books can be found in public spaces such as parks, buses, malls, county fairs and doctor's offices. If you find a copy, it's yours for a short time. Register the book online so we can see how far it travels (instructions are included with the book), read it, review it, and release it for someone else to enjoy.

To find One Maryland One Book programs in your area, go to www.onemarylandonebook.org and click on the Calendar.

For all the latest information, "Like" or follow us:



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Look for Steven Galloway at the Baltimore Book Festival on Sunday, September 30 and other venues around the state during the first week of October.



Check out author Steven Galloway as he talks about *The Cellist of Sarajevo*.

**LETTER FROM HONORARY CHAIRPERSON
MARYLAND'S FIRST LADY KATIE O'MALLEY**



Thank you for joining me and the Maryland Humanities Council for the fifth anniversary of One Maryland One Book, our state's community reading project. Since its inception in 2008, nearly 23,000 people have attended over 700 programs and many more have read the annually-selected books. This year, you will be one of thousands who make time to take part in this shared experience.

As Maryland celebrates historical milestones, including the bicentennial of the War of 1812 and the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, we can reflect on our history by discussing a contemporary war. The selection of Steven Galloway's *The Cellist of Sarajevo* offers a personal glimpse, though fictionalized, into the horrors, struggles, and resiliency caused by violence and inhumanity. Haunting and serious, this wonderful work of literature offers hope—hope for each of us as individuals and hope for the choices we make and how they can uplift rather than destroy.

A program of the Maryland Humanities Council's Maryland Center for the Book, One Maryland One Book is made possible through the generosity of our sponsors and community partners, many of which have supported the program since its launch. We greatly thank them for their support. We encourage you to pick up a copy of *The Cellist of Sarajevo* and join the conversation. Find out how to get involved at www.onemarylandonebook.org.

Sincerely,

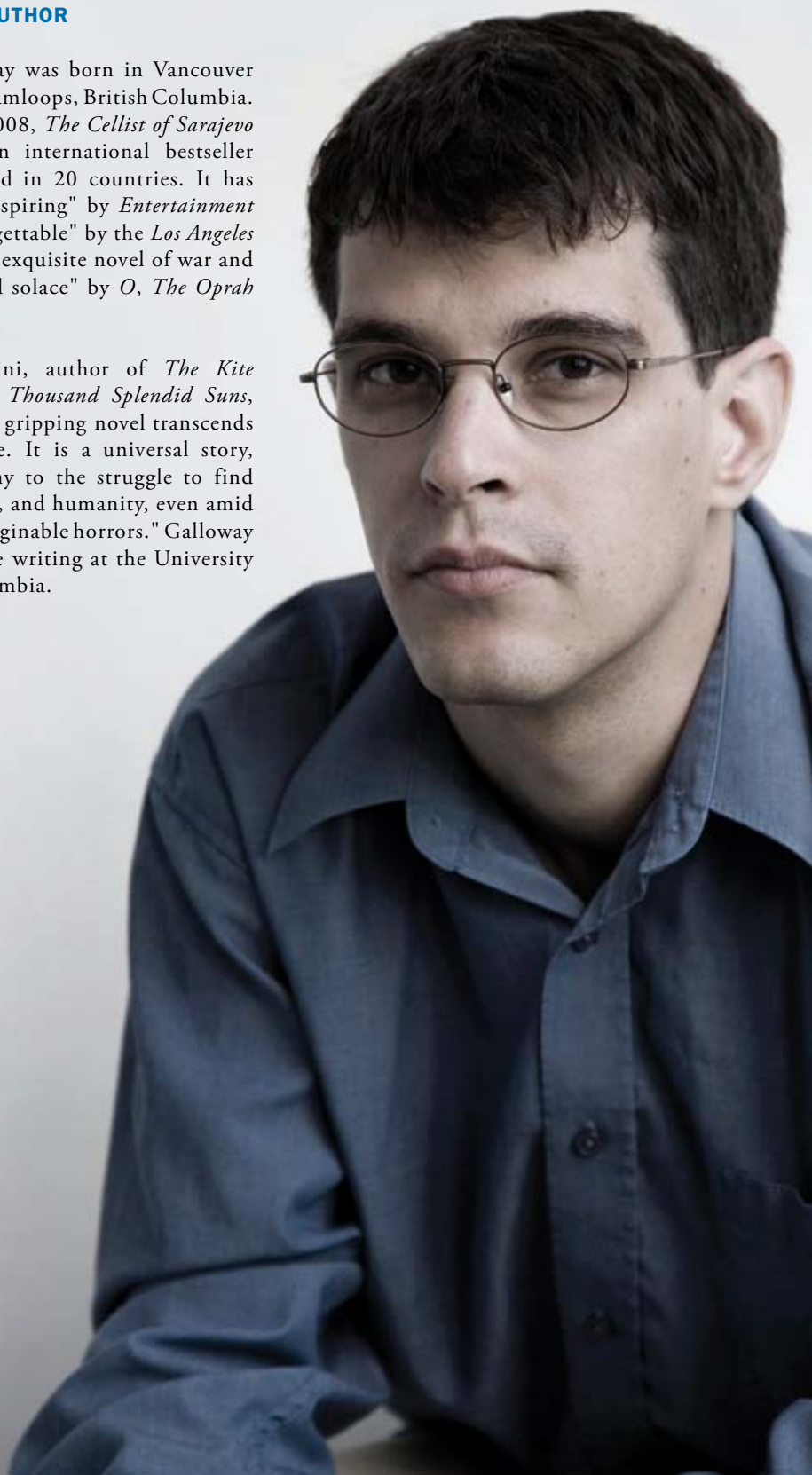
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie O'Malley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie O'Malley
First Lady of Maryland

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steven Galloway was born in Vancouver and raised in Kamloops, British Columbia. Published in 2008, *The Cellist of Sarajevo* has become an international bestseller with rights sold in 20 countries. It has been called "inspiring" by *Entertainment Weekly*, "unforgettable" by the *Los Angeles Times*, and "an exquisite novel of war and loss, music and solace" by *O, The Oprah Magazine*.

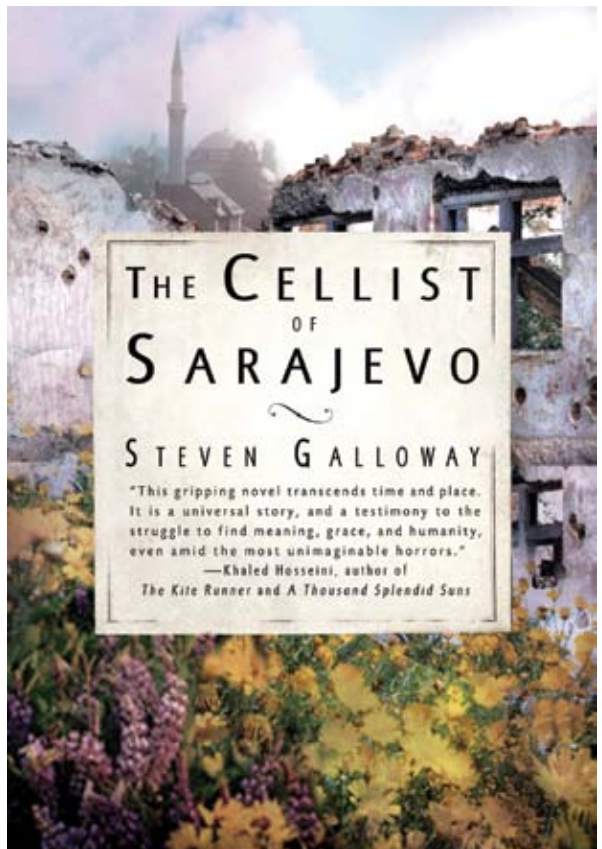
Khaled Hosseini, author of *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, has said, "This gripping novel transcends time and place. It is a universal story, and a testimony to the struggle to find meaning, grace, and humanity, even amid the most unimaginable horrors." Galloway teaches creative writing at the University of British Columbia.



ABOUT THE BOOK

In a city under siege, four people whose lives have been upended are ultimately reminded of what it is to be human. From his window, a musician sees 22 of his friends and neighbors killed by a mortar attack. In an act of defiance, the man picks up his cello and decides to play at the site of the attack for 22 days in their memory. Elsewhere, a young man leaves home to collect drinking water for his family and in the face of danger must weigh the value of generosity against selfish survivalism. A third man, older, sets off in search of bread and distraction and instead runs into a long-ago friend who reminds him of the city he thought he had lost, and the man he once was. As both men are drawn into the orbit of cello music, a fourth character—a young woman, a sniper—holds the fate of the cellist in her hands. While she protects him with her life, her own army prepares to challenge the kind of person she has become.

A novel of great intensity and power, *The Cellist of Sarajevo* brilliantly explores how war can change one's definition of humanity, how music affects our emotional endurance, and how a romance with the rituals of daily life can itself be a form of resistance.



ABOUT THE SIEGE OF SARAJEVO

The Siege of Sarajevo began twenty years ago, in April 1992, and lasted until February 1996—the longest siege of any capital city in the history of modern warfare. Sarajevo, now capital of the independent nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been a cultural, religious, and commercial hub of the Balkans since the 15th Century. The siege was part of the Yugoslav Wars—a series of complex ethnic conflicts fought between 1991 and 1995 following the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The siege broke out when the European Community (now the European Union or EU) recognized Bosnia's independence. An estimated 18,000 Serb rebels, led by Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, began bombarding Sarajevo with sniper shots and shellfire from the hills surrounding the city. Their goal was to create a new Serbian state, Republika Srpska.

Prior to the conflict, the city was a cosmopolitan center of 525,980 inhabitants that was approximately 50% Muslim, 30% Serb, 10% Yugoslav, 7% Croat and 3.5% Jewish. According to a report for the United Nations Commission of Experts, nearly 10,000 persons were killed or went missing during the siege, including over 1,500 children. An additional 56,000 persons were wounded, including nearly 15,000 children. An average of 329 shell impacts hit the city each day, causing extensive damage to both civilian and cultural property; the Council of Europe's Committee on Culture and Education concluded that most of the buildings in the city had been damaged to a greater or lesser degree. UNICEF reported that of the estimated 65,000 to 80,000 children in the city, at least 40% had been directly shot at by snipers; 51% had seen someone killed; 39% had seen one or more family members killed; 19% had witnessed a massacre; 48% had their home occupied by someone else; 73% had their home attacked or shelled; and 89% had lived in underground shelters.

The area has since stabilized, but the effects of the siege will no doubt be felt for generations.

Sources:

- Bassiouni, M. Cherif, ed. Study of the battle and siege of Sarajevo, Final report of the United Nations Commission of Experts. Bristol, UK: University of the West of England, <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/comexpert/ANX/VI-01.htm>
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- Richards, Rogers. “Remember Sarajevo.” Digital Journalist, December 2003. http://digitaljournalist.org/issue0405/remember_sarajevo.pdf
- Sarajevo Under Siege, 1992-1996. <http://www.sa92.ba/v1/index.php>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Life changed drastically for the inhabitants of Sarajevo once the siege began. How would you fare under these same conditions? What would be your greatest challenge(s)?
- 2 What effect does the constant confrontation of war and occupation have on each narrator (Arrow, Kenan, Dragan)? Do suffering, violence, and loss ever become the norm for them?
- 3 Do you think war forces everyone to compromise?
- 4 What effect does music have on Sarajevo and the lives of the characters? Do you relate in any way to the power of the cellist's performances?
- 5 In the beginning of the novel, Dragan avoids his friends and acquaintances from before the war. Kenan takes refuge in the ritual of getting water for his family. Arrow changes her name. Why?
- 6 Why do you think the author chose not to have the cellist's voice be a more integral part of the story?
- 7 Why do you think the sniper avoids taking a shot at the cellist when he has ample opportunity?
- 8 If you found yourself (or have found yourself) personally dealing with war or conflict, is there a moral line you would (or did not) cross?
- 9 Why does Dragan take such drastic measures to prevent the dead man's body from being filmed by the journalist?
- 10 Were you surprised by Arrow's final act of protest?
- 11 Are the characters in this book courageous? Why or why not?
- 12 What does this book convey about war and humanity?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We hope that your participation in One Maryland One Book inspires you to keep talking about the many thought-provoking topics examined in *The Cellist of Sarajevo*. The following list of books and movies might also be of interest. We encourage you to continue your exploration!

BOOKS

The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story by Diane Ackerman

When Germany invaded Poland, Stuka bombers devastated Warsaw—and the city's zoo along with it. With most of their animals dead, zookeepers Jan and Antonina Zabiński began smuggling Jews into empty cages. (Nonfiction)

In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez

In 1960, three beautiful sisters are found near their wrecked Jeep at the bottom of a 150-foot cliff on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. The official state newspaper reports their deaths as accidental. It does not mention that a fourth sister lives. Nor does it explain that the sisters were among the leading opponents of General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's dictatorship.

Regeneration by Pat Barker

In this first book of Barker's trilogy on World War I, decorated English officer and poet Siegfried Sassoon, who has refused to return to the fight, is pitted against noted psychologist Dr. William Rivers whose charge is to make soldiers well enough to go back to the battlefield.

House of Abraham: Lincoln & the Todds, A Family Divided by War by Stephen Berry

First Lady Mary Todd Lincoln had 13 siblings, 8 of whom sided with the Confederacy. Professor Berry offers an unusual look at a family united by blood but divided by war. (Nonfiction)



Operation Homecoming: Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Home Front, in the Words of U.S. Troops and Their Families edited by Andrew Carroll

A project of the National Endowment for the Arts, these writings represent the efforts of the soldiers and their families to record and reflect on their wartime experiences. (Nonfiction)

Hearts Grown Brutal: Sagas of Sarajevo by Roger Cohen

Cohen personalizes the Bosnian War by looking at four families and the war's effect on their lives and relationships. (Nonfiction)

Sarah's Key by Tatiana de Rosnay

Sarah, a 10-year-old girl, is taken with her parents by the French police as they go door to door arresting Jewish families in the middle of the night during the Vel' d'Hiv roundup. Desperate to protect her younger brother, Sarah locks him in a bedroom cupboard—their secret hiding place—and promises to come back for him as soon as they are released.

Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo by Zlata Filipović

Filipović's narrative is a moving account of a child's first-hand experience with war, detailing her fears as well as her determination to preserve some sense of normalcy in a world that has been turned upside down by violence. (Nonfiction)



BOOKS (cont.)

Lie in the Dark by Dan Fesperman

This book is set in the fragmented society and underworld of Sarajevo at war—the freelancing gangsters, guilty bystanders, the drop-in foreign correspondents, and the bureaucrats frightened for their jobs and very lives. It weaves through the torn cityscape, the alienation, and the terror of one man's desperate and deadly pursuit of bad people in an even worse place.

The Forever War by Dexter Filkins

Through the eyes of Dexter Filkins, the prize-winning *New York Times* correspondent, we witness the rise of the Taliban in the 1990s, the aftermath of the attack on New York on September 11th, and the American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. (Nonfiction)

1861 by Adam Goodheart

The book introduces us to a heretofore little-known cast of Civil War heroes—among them an acrobatic militia colonel, an explorer's wife, an idealistic band of German immigrants, a regiment of New York City firemen, a community of Virginia slaves, and a young college professor who would one day become president. (Nonfiction)

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller

U.S. bombardier Yossarian struggles to deal with the infamous Catch-22, a hilariously sinister bureaucratic rule: a man is considered insane if he willingly continues to fly dangerous combat missions, but if he makes a formal request to be removed from duty, he is proven sane and therefore ineligible to be relieved.

My War Gone By, I Miss It So by Anthony Loyd

A former British soldier finds himself as a journalist reporting the war in Bosnia and reveals both the seduction and savagery of war. (Nonfiction)



Crossing the Miljacka River. Winter 1992-1993 photo by Christian Maréchal

The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien

In these 22 stories, the men of Alpha Company battle the enemy (or perhaps the idea of the enemy) and occasionally each other. We see their isolation and loneliness, their rage and fear. Yet they find sympathy and kindness for strangers and love for each other, because in Vietnam they are the only family they have.

The Long Road Home: A Story of War and Family by Martha Raddatz

Martha Raddatz describes the experience of hand-to-hand combat in Iraq from the soldiers' perspectives but also looks at the families of these soldiers and how they handle the stress and uncertainty of having a family member serving in a war zone. (Nonfiction)

All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque

The opening statement of this classic novel of World War I says it all: "This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all is not an adventure... It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war."

The Killer Angels by Michael Shaara

The Battle of Gettysburg is considered the turning point of the U.S. Civil War. This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel covers the three-day struggle, the thousands of soldiers who fought there, and the officers who commanded them.



Downtown Grbavica. March 1996 photo by Lt. Stacey Wyzkowski

YOUNG ADULTS

Chains (Seeds of America) by Laurie Halse Anderson

When their owner dies at the start of the Revolutionary War, slaves Isabel and her younger sister Ruth are sold to Loyalists in New York, where Isabel is offered the chance to spy for the Patriots.

Ship Breaker by John Bacigalupi

After a terrible war has ravaged the Earth, young Nailer must decide what he values most in the dog-eat-dog world that remains.

The Breadwinner by Deborah Ellis

Because the Taliban rulers of Kabul impose strict limitations on women's freedom and behavior, eleven-year-old Parvana must disguise herself as a boy in order to find a way to feed her family after her father's arrest.

Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston

The story of a Japanese American family sent to a U. S. internment camp during WWII. (Nonfiction)

Snow Falling in Spring: Coming of Age in China During the Cultural Revolution

by Moying Li

Moying Li's life is continually turned upside down during the first years of the Cultural Revolution.

Sunrise Over Fallujah by Walter Dean Myers

Birdy, a young enlistee from Harlem, tries to adjust to a soldier's life in Afghanistan during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Between Shades of Gray by Ruta Sepetys

Fifteen-year-old Lina finds solace in her art while being held prisoner in a Siberian work camp during WWII.

Chanda's Wars by Allan Stratton

In a remote village in a fictionalized Africa, Chanda risks her life to protect her family during a brutal civil war.

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

In WWII Germany, a young thief steals books and learns to read. She shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement before he is marched to Dachau.



CHILDREN

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes by Eleanor Coerr

Hospitalized with the dreaded atom bomb disease (leukemia) a child in Hiroshima races against time to fold one thousand paper cranes to verify the legend that by doing so a sick person will become healthy.

The Cello of Mr. O by Jane Cutler

When a concert cellist plays in the square for his neighbors in a war-besieged city, his priceless instrument is destroyed by a mortar shell, but he finds the courage to return the next day to play...a harmonica.

My Childhood Under Fire: A Sarajevo Diary by Nadja Halibegovich

Becoming a teenager during wartime is not easy. This autobiographical story shows 12-year-old Nadja Halibegovich's perseverance, courage, and empathy in the face of war. (Nonfiction)

The Midnight Zoo by Sonya Hartnett

When the Germans attack their Romany encampment during World War II, brothers Andrej and Tomas flee through the ravaged countryside. They discover a hidden wonder in a deserted town: a zoo filled with creatures in need of hope. Like Andrej and Tomas, the animals have stories to share and a mission to reclaim their lives.

My Palace of Leaves in Sarajevo by Marybeth Lorbiecki

Nadja means "hope." In 1991, 10-year-old Nadja begins writing to her cousin in Minnesota. Over the next four years her letters reveal the horrors of war while her cousin's letters give Nadja courage.

One Boy from Kosovo by Trish Marx

Twelve-year-old Edi's experiences in a Kosovo refugee camp, where he and his family escaped the ethnic cleansing against Albanians, provides an eye-opening account of ordinary people uprooted by war. (Nonfiction)

Dogtag Summer by Elizabeth Partridge

Half Vietnamese, half American, Tracy's not sure she fits in with her family in California. But when she and her best friend find a soldier's dogtag, she is jarred by memories from her life in Vietnam and the lingering anti-war sentiments that surround her today.



MOVIES

Restrepo (2010, 93 min., rated R) - Directed by Tim Hetherington and Sebastian Junger

Restrepo, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the 2010 Sundance Film Festival, is a feature-length documentary that chronicles the deployment of a platoon of U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley. The movie focuses on a remote 15-man outpost, "Restrepo," named after a platoon medic who was killed in action. It was considered one of the most dangerous postings in the US military.

The Band's Visit (2007, 87 min., rated PG-13) - Written and directed by Eran Kolirin

An Egyptian police band arrives in Israel to play at the Arab Cultural Center. Unfortunately, they take the wrong bus and arrive in a small Israeli village where they are stranded overnight. From distinctly different cultures, the band and the townspeople connect through music and become aware of the values they share.

Grbavica: the Land of My Dreams (2006, 107 min., unrated)

Written and directed by Jasmila Žbanić

A touching film about a single mother who lives with her 12-year-old daughter in the Grbavica district of Sarajevo, a neighborhood once used as an internment camp during the Yugoslav wars.

Hotel Rwanda (2004, 121 min., rated PG-13) - Directed by Terry George

This film is inspired by the true-life story of Paul Rusesabagina, manager of a five-star hotel in Rwanda, who housed and saved the lives of more than one thousand Tutsi refugees during their struggle against the Hutu militia.

In the Land of Blood and Honey (2011, 127 min., rated R)

Written and directed by Angelina Jolie

Set against the backdrop of the Bosnian War, this movie tells the story of Danijel, a Serbian army officer, and Ajia, a Bosnian held captive in the camp he oversees. They knew each other before the war and perhaps could have found love with each other. Angelina Jolie said the movie's goal is to "honor the women victims of war."

The Pianist (2002, 150 min., rated R) - Directed by Roman Polanski

This film is based on the true story of the brilliant Polish pianist, Wladyslaw Szpilman, who escapes deportation to a Nazi concentration camp and hides out in the Warsaw ghetto from 1939-1945. The memories of his music help him to survive the horrors of the war.

Savior (1998, 103 min., rated R) - Directed by Predrag Antonijevic

Former U.S. military official Joshua entered the Foreign Legion after his wife was killed in Paris by Muslim fundamentalists. Six years later, in Bosnia during 1993, Joshua and his pal Peter fight together on the Serbian side.

Playing for Time (1980, 150 min., unrated) - Directed by Daniel Mann

Winner of the Emmy for Outstanding Drama Special, this made-for-TV movie tells the story of female prisoners in a Nazi concentration camp who are spared from death in return for performing for their captors. Based on the autobiography *The Musicians of Auschwitz* by Fania Fenelon.

The Whistleblower (2010, 112 min., rated R) - Directed by Larysa Kondracki

Although fictional, this film is inspired by the actual experiences of Kathryn Bolkovac, a police officer from Lincoln, Nebraska who joined the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Bosnia in 1999. When Bolkovac uncovers a sex trafficking ring and tries to expose it, she is fired and ordered out of Bosnia.



The resources in this guide were created and compiled with the assistance of the staff of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Portions have been reprinted with permission from Penguin Group (USA).

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The Maryland Humanities Council is an educational, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our mission is to stimulate and promote informed dialogue and civic engagement on issues critical to Marylanders via the humanities. To learn more, visit www.mdhc.org.



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