

Reading Comprehension | The Cellist of Sarajevo

Read the following text about *the cellist of Sarajevo* and do the comprehension question

During the terrible civil war in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, Sarajevo was besieged and the population was continually under attack. There were many civilian victims. To make matters worse, people had to live without water, electricity or food. Few shops were open.



On May 27, 1992, a bakery opened in the afternoon and many people queued to buy bread. Unfortunately, a mortar shell exploded near the shop and twenty-two people were killed while waiting for their turn to buy fresh bread.

Vedran Smailovic lived near the shop. When he heard the news, he was so sad that he decided to do something about it. He was a musician and he didn't find a better answer to this tragedy than playing his cello, most notably performing Albinoni's Adagio in G Minor, one of the saddest pieces of music. For twenty-two days, he put on his concert clothes, took his plastic chair to the ruined square of the downtown Sarajevo marketplace, and started playing music at exactly four o'clock in the afternoon. He was often under the threat of snipers and shells, but fortunately, he was never hurt. His bravery inspired musical numbers and a novel. For example, in his honor, composer David Wilde wrote a piece for solo cello, *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, which was recorded by Yo Yo Ma. Canadian author Elizabeth Wellburn also worked with Smailovic to create the children's book *Echoes from the Square* (1998). Another Canadian author, Steven Galloway, based a character on Smailovic in his bestselling 2008 novel, *The Cellist of Sarajevo*.

Vedran Smailovic escaped the city in late 1993 and has since been involved in numerous music projects as a performer, composer, and conductor. He now lives in

Comprehension:

1. Vedran Smailovic was hurt during the mortar shell near the bakery shop.
A. TRUE B. FALSE
2. He used to play his cello alone in the middle of the ruins of the marketplace.
A. TRUE B. FALSE
3. Vedran Smailovic still lives in Sarajevo.
A. TRUE B. FALSE