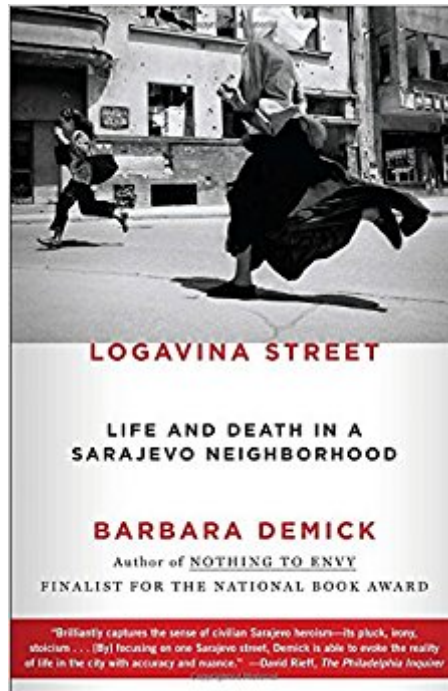




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# Logavina Street: Life And Death In A Sarajevo Neighborhood



## Synopsis

Logavina Street was a microcosm of Sarajevo, a six-block-long history lesson. For four centuries, it existed as a quiet residential area in a charming city long known for its ethnic and religious tolerance. On this street of 240 families, Muslims and Christians, Serbs and Croats lived easily together, unified by their common identity as Sarajevans. Then the war tore it all apart. As she did in her groundbreaking work about North Korea, *Nothing to Envy*, award-winning journalist Barbara Demick tells the story of the Bosnian War and the brutal and devastating three-and-a-half-year siege of Sarajevo through the lives of ordinary citizens, who struggle with hunger, poverty, sniper fire, and shellings. Logavina Street paints this misunderstood war and its effects in vivid strokes—at once epic and intimate—revealing the heroism, sorrow, resilience, and uncommon faith of its people. With a new Introduction, final chapter, and Epilogue by the author

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Brilliantly captures the sense of civilian Sarajevo heroism—its pluck, irony, stoicism . . . [By] focusing on one Sarajevo street, Demick is able to evoke the reality of life in the city with accuracy and nuance.”—David Rieff, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

“[A] beautifully rendered portrait of Sarajevo.”—Mark Danner, *The New York Review of Books*

“Barbara Demick shapes the history of one city street into a small masterpiece.”—Jim Dwyer, columnist, *The New York Times*

“If you can read only one book about Bosnia, this should be the one.”—Mary McGrory,

syndicated columnist, The Washington Post – “Take a walk on Logavina Street – you’ll learn a lot about the heroism and courage of the human race.” – Georgie Anne Geyer, columnist and author, Universal Press Syndicate

Barbara Demick is the Beijing bureau chief of the Los Angeles Times. Her book *Nothing to Envy* was a finalist for both the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award. Her reporting on North Korea won the Overseas Press Club’s award for human rights reporting as well as awards from the Asia Society and the American Academy of Diplomacy. Her coverage of Sarajevo for The Philadelphia Inquirer won the George Polk Award and the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in international reporting.

I’m very pleased that Barbara Demick’s “Logavina Street” got a second life after her brilliant (and brilliantly received) book on North Korea, *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*. That book has been a justifiably big smash. Publisher Spiegel & Grau (a Random House imprint) was smart to go back and re-release her 1996 Sarajevo work given Demick’s new, higher profile. By all means, fans of Demick’s writing should get their hands on this new paperback edition. Her original narrative ends in mid-1995. The new paperback features a new chapter, ‘Return to Logavina Street,’ which has a 2011 coda to the story. That chapter, plus a new epilogue, bring a new perspective to her work. I especially liked this passage from the ‘Return’ chapter (about her June 2011 visit): “Since the 90s I have been back to Sarajevo twice, once in 2007 and more recently in 2011. Each time, I was struck by how much it looked and felt the same. Now that I’m living in Asia, I’m accustomed to dynamic cities constantly reinventing themselves. When I leave Beijing for a holiday, I come back to find the building next door demolished and new skyscraper rising in my backyard. Not Sarajevo. The city is timeless, almost immutable. Along the stone alleys of the Bascarsija, the jewellers are tapping away behind shopfronts with the same names: Kasumagic, Cengic. Even the music is the same 1980s technopop. So little has changed on Logavina Street that I can almost navigate my way with my eyes closed.” Like in ‘*Nothing to Envy*,’ Demick’s winning technique is to crystallize the story from the large and complex down to the personal. In the North Korea book, we saw that country and its truths through the eyes of six defectors. Here, we see the Sarajevo siege through the eyes of the residents of one famous street. It’s a work that – despite the passage of 17 years – has relevance today with the recent capture and ongoing trials of Radovan Karadzic’ and Ratko Mladic’. Moreover, even today, Demick portrays a ‘peace’ that is shaky at best. She notes that “[e]vents that might lead to another war are easy to imagine: if Republika Srpska tries to secede from Bosnia...” She quotes

think tank International Crisis Group's ominous conclusion: "[I]f Srpska's leaders continue driving every conflict with Sarajevo to the brink, as they have done repeatedly to date, they risk disaster. The agility of leaders and the population's patience need only fail once to ignite serious violence."

I had previously read "Nothing to Envy" which I found very engrossing and informative so I looked forward to reading another of Barbara Demicks books. Describing circumstances and events through interviews of families and individuals who have actually lived through those events, offers the reader greater insight and empathy to others, admiration for those who endured and survived, and a sense of emptiness for those who lost their lives and loved ones so randomly. For me, Barbara Demicks' books are thought provoking and not easily forgotten. This book enlightens and informs us about ordinary people and families who were just living their lives and who were caught in a rapidly changing and dangerous situation. I appreciate that the book took many years to conduct interviews and gather information. Highly recommend this book.

I read this book many years ago, and remember thinking that I could never walk by the people on my multi-ethnic, many religioned New York City street again without thinking of what the writer, Barbara Demick has revealed about the inhabitants of a few blocks on a street in Sarajevo. So many years later, I'm reminded in a re-reading of Logavina Street of the gift this writer has given us. Demick's elegant, and heart wrenching detail of lives challenged, person by person, neighbor by neighbor, each carefully drawn as vibrant souls simultaneously illuminates my own confusion about what was happening in that country. It was if they were imagined people created as a work of fiction, instead of people she could track down years later. I have often wondered what became of them, and just as I could not explain that conflict, or even how it was resolved, I am intrigued by how they have survived. Resilience has no magic alchemy. Courage emerges from the deepest place, and perhaps it is conflict that gives us hope. Demick is the kind of master journalist who can capture a truth and raise it from the ashes of that horrible conflict.

The book itself is wise and ripe with good characters that share a deep sense of pride and fear. Having been young during the conflict and witnessing my locals schools adopt Bosnian as a language, the conflict became more mysterious and it's story and history needed to be uncovered. The atrocities are horrendous and little was done to really bring it to justice. This book is a grand first hand view of life in a besieged town. Meeting the people who had nothing and surviving in the ways they did is incredibly humble to read about, but sad that more could and should've been

done. If a large scale history is what you're after, his book will offer enough to get started but focuses its energy on bringing the victims to life. I had a problem with some of the word choices that didn't distract the experience but were wrong. Notably is the usage of the term sniper. It's used liberally as if it be the best way to describe someone shooting another. It does offer a hint of intimacy, it's not always the best or proper way to describe a machine gunner shooting kids. I will be recommending this book to anyone who wants to know more about the cruelty of war and politics. And also as a way to boast the strength of a unified city.

This book chronicles the life of people on one street in Sarajevo and the impact of the Bosnian war on their lives. The people are described in their complexity and distinctiveness, without being portrayed as victims. The failure of the Clinton Administration, the EU (especially the UK and France), and the UN, to directly address the sources of the conflict (preferring their humanitarian fig leaves) is starkly set out from the street. The new edition has a postscript that brings the reader up to date with the lives of many of the people from Logavina Street. A touching read during the week when Bosnia's futbol team qualified for the World Cup.

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