

Honey Brown Eyes  
by  
Stefanie Zadravec

Winner of the 2009 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding New Play

3 page excerpt

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## CHARACTERS

**Alma**- 30s. Female. Brown hair, brown eyes, thin. (Bosnian-Muslim)

**Dragan** - 20s. A soldier with the White Eagle paramilitary. (Bosnian-Serb)

**Zlata** - 12 years old. Alma's daughter. Looks like Alma, brown hair, brown eyes.

**Denis** - Late 20s. Alma's brother. Tall, sensitive. (Bosnian-Muslim)

**Jovanka** - 60s+. Petite, tough, resilient, unsentimental. (Bosnian-Serb)

**Branko/Milenko** - 30s. Serb paramilitary soldier/ local mafia. Physically large and/or menacing in some way.

**Time:** June 1992.

**Place:** Bosnia.

Act One - a Kitchen in an apartment in Visegrad, Bosnia.

Act two - Kitchens in Sarajevo and Visegrad.

The play takes place in one day and night

**Playwright's note:** Each Silence should be observed and held a few seconds longer than is comfortable. The silences should feel empty. Explore standing on stage and having no idea what to say or do next. A silence is longer than a beat or a pause.

Also, the play should be performed without excess emotion. Characters should only cry where specifically noted in the script. Emotion gets buried beneath hunger and day-to-day survival. Explore the numbing effect war has, and how a favorite song or a fresh orange feels almost *technicolor* in comparison to the dreary reality of survival.

**A note on sound:** Television sounds (laughter, dialogue, applause) should play lightly beneath the scene whenever the television is on. When **SOUND: Laugh track** is written in the script, this indicates a separate sound cue that serves as punctuation to the action or silence on stage.

## SCENE ONE: DAY

June 1992. Visegrad. (VEE shih grad)

MUSIC: 80s Serbian punk music.

SOUND: Commotion from the street and hallway. Doors being kicked in. Shouting.

LIGHTS up on a small, bare kitchen. The door has been kicked in.

On a table sits a small, battery-operated television, which plays a re-run of an American sitcom. We hear its laugh track and light chatter throughout the scene.

DRAGAN (20s) a paramilitary soldier wearing military pants and boots and a rock t-shirt from the album Dum-Dum by Ekaterina Velika. He carries a rifle and has a handgun tucked in his belt, and looks slightly out of place.

ALMA, a woman in her 30s, holds a dzezva, a Turkish coffee pot with a long handle, which she was just about to pour.

ALMA and DRAGAN stare at each other, frozen. Neither dares to move.

A *long* Silence.

SOUND: Laugh track.

Silence.

ALMA

Coffee?

DRAGAN

What?

ALMA

Coffee. Would you like some?

Silence.

ALMA

I just made it.

So? DRAGAN

It's fresh. ALMA

Silence.

SOUND: Laugh track.

I'll pour it out then. ALMA

ALMA slowly turns to pour it out.

Leave it. DRAGAN

ALMA places the pot on the table and steps back. They stare at each other.

I just made it. ALMA

You said that already. (beat) I need a cup. DRAGAN

SOUND: Laugh track

ALMA carefully places a cup on the table. DRAGAN pours himself coffee. He opens the sugar bowl and turns it upside down. It's empty.

There's no more. Sugar. ALMA

I see that. DRAGAN

I used the last of it. ALMA

Uh-huh. DRAGAN  
(blowing on his coffee)

The last of it. ALMA

You said. DRAGAN

ALMA  
Yesterday the bread.

DRAGAN  
Uh-huh, who else is here?

ALMA  
Nothing.

DRAGAN  
What?

ALMA  
No. No one.

DRAGAN sips the coffee and burns his  
tongue.

DRAGAN  
What the fuck are you trying to do-

DRAGAN	ALMA
It's scalding	I said I just made
fucking hot. God.	it- Sorry. I'm
Fuck. God.	sorry. I'm sorry.

Silence.

SOUND: Laugh track.

ALMA  
I'm sorry.

DRAGAN  
(tossing coffee towards Alma)  
Burned my fucking tongue.

ALMA  
Sorry.

DRAGAN  
Fuck!

ALMA  
I don't have any bread-

DRAGAN  
What?

ALMA  
*Bread.* If you burn your tongue, you can eat a piece of bread-

DRAGAN  
I didn't burn my tongue.