

Title: *Three Women* by Lisa Taddeo

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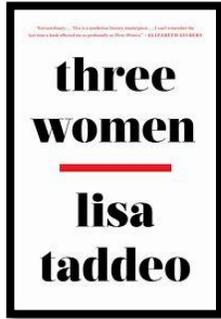
Why this Book?

Lisa Taddeo's debut novel *Three Women* was the result of 8 years of immersive journalism. It reads like fiction and has generated a lot of buzz and rave reviews. Lisa Taddeo chose to write the personal stories of three American women Lina, Maggie and Sloane because they were very open and patient in sharing the details of their life choices, desires and intimate stories. The writing is richly detailed, engaging and stunningly candid. Too candid, some might opine? Taddeo is non-judgmental about the women's life choices and private lives. Their stories and some of their choices and even underlying life-experiences hold up a mirror to other women. They raise questions we rarely discuss or perhaps even contemplate, even in a culture as open as ours. What do women *really* want? The stories also meaningfully connect with the #MeToo era reporting. This book is a good starter for private contemplation or book club discussions!

About the Author

Lisa Taddeo is the author of *Three Women* (2019). She has contributed to *New York magazine*, *Esquire*, *Elle*, *Glamour*, and many other publications. Her nonfiction has been included in the *Best American Sports Writing* and *Best American Political Writing* anthologies, and her short stories have won two Pushcart Prizes. She lives with her husband and daughter in New England.

About the Book



A riveting true story about the sex lives of three real American women, based on nearly a decade of reporting.

In suburban Indiana we meet Lina, a homemaker and mother of two whose marriage, after a decade, has lost its passion. Starved for affection, Lina battles daily panic attacks and, after reconnecting with an old flame through social media, embarks on an affair that quickly becomes all-consuming.

In North Dakota we meet Maggie, a seventeen-year-old high school student who allegedly has a clandestine physical relationship with her handsome, married English teacher; the ensuing criminal trial will turn their quiet community upside down.

Finally, in an exclusive enclave of the Northeast, we meet Sloane—a gorgeous, successful, and refined restaurant owner—who is happily married to a man who likes to watch her have sex with other men and women.

Based on years of immersive reporting and told with astonishing frankness and immediacy, *Three Women* is both a feat of journalism and a triumph of storytelling, brimming with nuance and empathy. (Excerpted from the publisher)

Author Interview: Lisa Taddeo is interviewed about *Three Women* by Katie Couric.

[Watch interview \(6:53\)](#)

Book Reviews

“Extraordinary...This is a nonfiction literary masterpiece...I can’t remember the last time a book affected me as profoundly as *Three Women*” – Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love*

“Taddeo is stellar at embodying the women, taking on the voice of each in turn. It produces a feeling that the reader is sitting down over coffee to listen to the deeply personal and frequently painful stories of Maggie, Lina, and Sloane...With the disparate threads of these stories, Taddeo weaves complex connections between her subjects’ desire.” – Bryn Greenwood, *Washington Post*

“What makes their stories revolutionary is the exquisite candor with which Taddeo gives them voice...Taddeo narrates with a magically light touch, inhabiting each so fully we feel as if we’re living alongside them. The book is sexually explicit... but it never feels gratuitous or clinical. Its prose is gorgeous, nearly lyrical as it describes the longings and frustrations that propel these ordinary women.” – *NPR*

“Taddeo takes readers inside the lives of three women whose lives were profoundly influenced by choices they made regarding sexuality. Written in beautiful prose, Taddeo’s take makes the nonfiction stories come alive in a collection you won’t be able to put down.” – *Newsweek*

“Taddeo spent a decade immersed in the sex lives of three ordinary American woman... The result is the most in-depth look at the female sex drive and all its accompanying social, emotional, reproductive, and anthropological implications that’s been published in decades. But it’s also fully immersive.” – *New York Magazine*

“In her ambitious, if flawed, debut, journalist Taddeo reports on the risks women take to fulfill their sexual desires... Taddeo’s immersive narrative is intense, but more voyeuristic than thoughtful.” – *Publishers Weekly*

Get the Book

Download *Three Women* in your preferred format:

eBook

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Discussion Questions

For discussion tips & tech support: [How to Start Your Own Online Book Club](#)

1. Why do you think we have such a difficult—or uncomfortable—time talking about women’s desire and women’s bodies, even in today’s otherwise open cultural discussions?
2. In the prologue, the author writes, "One inheritance of living under the male gaze for centuries is that heterosexual women often look at other women the way a man would" (page 2). Discuss this statement. In your experience, have you found this to be true or false? Assuming you believe this statement to be true or at least partially

true, how does the notion of the inherited male gaze affect Lina, Sloane, and Maggie's desire and the actions they take to seize their desire?

3. One thing that Lina, Sloane, and Maggie have in common is the way they modify their behavior to fit the needs and desires of the partners they desire. How did it make you feel that these women had to change parts of themselves to try to gain love and acceptance from the ones they are with or the ones they desire? What does this say about power in relationships and the dynamics between men and women that we inherit and invent for ourselves? Have you ever experienced this in a relationship?
4. While Lina and Sloane are adults when they realize and act on their desires, Maggie is a high school student involved in an alleged relationship with a married teacher. Did you view Maggie's story differently from those of her counterparts? What struck you most about her experience?
5. Maggie's experiences not only upend her own life but also that of her entire community. Were you surprised by the outcome of the trial and the varying ways in which Maggie and her teacher each have to deal with the fallout from it? How did you feel about how strongly the community supported Maggie's teacher?
6. At one point in her narrative, Lina explains that she fears being alone more than she fears death, which seems to inform a lot of her decisions. Do you agree with her? Why do you think that loneliness and not experiencing love frighten us so much?
7. Something that seems to follow Sloane are the expectations that others put upon her when it comes to her job, life partner, appearance, status, and so on, which create a line she has to straddle. How does accommodating other people interfere with Sloane's own needs and desires? Is there an overlap between her accommodation and her desires?
8. In your opinion, what shapes our views of sex and relationships most? Is it environment, past experience, the media, our families, our friends, or something else? How does each of the three women's lives influence her mind-set? How have experiences from your past informed your adult life?

(Discussion Questions issued by the publisher)

Read-alikes

- [Ask Again, Yes](#) by Mary Beth Keane
- [Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion](#) by Jia Tolentino
- [Know My Name: A Memoir](#) by Chanel Miller
- [Untrue](#) by Wednesday Martin