

When Lisa Taddeo who is the author of this book decided to write about *Three Women* over a decade ago, she didn't think she was going to write about female desire. Instead, she initially wanted to write about men's desire. She was captivated by the force and violence of men's sexual desire, and how they would risk families, jobs, and reputations for an opportunity to have that.

Taddeo found out after interviewing men for a while that, in most situations; their overpowering feelings would reduce immediately after they have an orgasm with the person they long for. Meanwhile, the stories of the women she spoke to started at that point. The hopes, needs, and obsessions of these women had the tendency to happen quietly over the course of several years and these feelings of the women seem deeper, darker and far more complicated than the men she interviewed.

Hence, Taddeo selected three of the women from those she interviewed and she followed their lives for a period of eight years. Also, in order to understand them better, she had to move to the towns where two of the women lived in. Their stories, recreated from interviews, diaries, and legal documents, don't just have important truths about female desire, however, they also illustrate how that desire is thwarted, disregarded and misinterpreted by the outside world.

Maggie was dragged into an inappropriate relationship with her high school teacher after been cast out by her family and friends.

It is very normal for teens to feel alone and misinterpreted. However, for some teens; it is worse than the others. For some, like Maggie; the person that offers to help them out of their sadness only drags them deeper into the abyss.

Maggie Wilken was raised in Fargo, a conservative small town in North Dakota by her loving parents. Her dad was a big man and he gave the best hugs in the world; Maggie's mum was quiet and caring. Maggie's troubles started when she had her first sex. She slept with a 31-year-old army buddy of her brother-in-law called Mateo; she'd met him while visiting her

sister's family in Hawaii. Maggie was just sixteen then. Her Catholic family didn't take it lightly with her when they got to know. They made her undergo pregnancy test and they even took her to a psychiatrist, who prescribed to Maggie different types of drugs.

However, the worst was still to come. A friend of Maggie told their classmates what had happened in school. The rumors started to spread, and she started getting insults. People called Maggie several names such as "whore," and her friends started avoiding her. She felt dirty and lonely.

Just one person still appeared to care about Maggie and this person was her favorite teacher, Mr. Knodel. Aaron. Knodel was a handsome and popular young English teacher. He was married and he had two kids with his wife, he also had an honest passion for his job. He would stay after class just to talk with Maggie regularly, and she trusted him. Maggie told Mr. Knodel in a letter about what had happened in Hawaii and the insults she had gotten from it. Mr. Knodel comforted her and he told her that she had done nothing wrong.

After their talk, Knodel followed up by sending text messages to Maggie, and Maggie felt that there was finally a person who understood and cared for her. She was thrilled by the increasingly affectionate attention she got from Knodel. However, as Mr. Knodel kept texting Maggie even during winter break, Maggie knew that their relationship was starting to cross normal teacher-student boundaries.

Maggie was devastated after the sudden end of her secret relationship with Mr. Knodel.

At first, the text messages that Mr. Knodel sent to Maggie during winter break were innocent, he was just asking her how she was doing. However, sooner enough the messages got more personal; he asked her if she was dating anyone or if she had kissed anyone on New Year's Eve. Soon, there were about 30 texts a day and most times it was often late at night. Maggie wasn't sure where all this was heading to, however; she couldn't help but feel thrilled that a handsome older man was taking so much interest in her.

During the New Year when school resumed, Maggie and Mr. Knodel began to see each other secretly either in the classroom or in her car. They spoke about their feelings for each other and Mr. Knodel told Maggie that he was beginning to fall in love with her.

A month after, Mr. Knodel's wife traveled out of town and he invited Maggie over to watch a movie at his house. Halfway through the movie, he asked Maggie to kiss him. Then he leads her into his guest bedroom and he performed oral sex on her and he told her that he didn't want to do anything more with her before she turned eighteen.

Over the next few months, their relationship grew more intense. They would speak on the phone for hours, send each other poems and love notes, and they would meet secretly in classrooms to make out. At a point, Maggie gave Mr. Knodel a book called Twilight which is her favorite book, and he filled it with notes relating their relationship to that of Edward and Bella, the star-crossed vampire-human lovers in the book. He said their love was just as deep and dark.

Regardless of their intimacy, Mr. Knodel still sets firm rules for Maggie, the most significant being that she should never text or call him first. However, on his birthday, Maggie decided to make an exemption and she texted Mr. Knodel how thrilled she was to give him his present. Immediately after that text, he called her.

He said his wife saw her text because he was in the shower when she texted. Just like that, his relationship with Maggie ended.

After the call, Maggie vomited. She stopped eating and she stayed in bed for days. During that same week, there was a great flood in Fargo, similar to what happened in the Bible. According to Maggie, the natural disaster was a sign of her heartbreak.

Because their relationship was a secret, Maggie couldn't even talk to any of her friends about it. And again, she found herself completely lonely.

Maggie attempted to make Mr. Knodel responsible for his crime, only for her to experience more loss in her life.

Maggie became very nervous and depressed after her relationship with Mr. Knodel ended. After she graduated from high school, she tried to go to college but she ended up dropping out. Afterward, she went back again and she dropped out again. When she turned twenty, she finally had the courage to tell some of her girlfriends about her relationship with Mr. Knodel. She felt validated by their sympathetic reactions but she was also worried. One of the girls told Maggie that Mr. Knodel was possibly doing the same thing he did to Maggie to other girls.

Something happened that added insult to injury: Aaron Knodel won the North Dakota's "Teacher of the Year" award.

When she found out about the award, Maggie decided to sue Mr. Knodel for statutory rape. However, she had to first tell her parents about what had happened. When they got to know about what happened; they were upset, however they supported her decision to take legal action.

Something terrible occurred: Maggie's father committed suicide. He had always been an alcoholic, maintained by his daily routine. However, his workplace was shut down and he hadn't been able to find another job. This affected him and his drinking became worse. For a while, he attempted to stop and it looked like he was doing better. However, during one cold winter morning, Maggie woke up only to find police in her kitchen. She knew instantly that her father had committed suicide.

In court as well, things went bad for Maggie. Knodel's lawyer argued that Maggie is a crazy girl from a broken home and only trying to ruin an honest man's family. Since Knodel made Maggie delete all their texts; she only had a record of their calls and the notes he made in her Twilight book as evidence. Of course, Knodel claimed that he only called her because he was only trying to help a troubled student and those notes weren't his. Meanwhile, Maggie's court-appointed lawyers told her that she wasn't likable enough, and too annoyed on the stand.

In the end, Aaron Knodel was found not guilty by the jury.

Presently, six years later, Maggie works at the same restaurant she worked at after she dropped out of college. Maggie's mother found documents in Knodel's teacher file that she believes could be used as a new piece of evidence; however, Maggie didn't care again. In high school,

she believed Knodel was the only person who understood her. Now, because of him, she feels no one would ever understand her again.

After having a car accident, Sloane decided to be perfect in every way and she developed an eating disorder.

Sloane Ford was born wealthy parents in Pound Ridge, New York. Her parents were kind, however, they were also distant. When Sloane was in her fourth grade, her mother assumed she was looking a little fat. Hence, she took her to a doctor, who prescribed her diet pills. Sloane began taking these pills in secret before lunch at school.

When Sloane was a teenager, her mother agreed that she was pretty. Sloane worked very hard so she could be seen as fun and cool. Then she became one of the famous girls in her school and she was hanging out at senior parties always enjoying the attention she got from the boys at the party.

One night while Sloane was drinking at her house with her friend; the two of them decided to take her brother's car out so they could get more cigarettes. They were drunk and reckless; they wound up driving off the road, doing a full flip into a ditch. The police that was at the scene said it's a miracle that none of them died. As a matter of fact, they walked away without any scratch or injury.

The reaction from Sloane's family members cut her as deeply as the injury would have. They seemed more worried about her brother's car than her health or well-being. No one asked her how she was doing or if she was okay.

Sloane decided after the car accident that life was too valuable for her to be less than perfect at everything. She wanted to be the best and skinniest girl she could be. At first, she tried eating a small quantity of food, however, after having a big Thanksgiving meal with her family, she felt that being anorexic wasn't just enough. Hence, she started vomiting any time she felt that she'd eaten too much. She became skinnier by the day, soon her grades were affected and she had to drop out of field hockey. Her family pretended not to see what was happening to her.

In short note, Sloane's obsession with being the perfect woman involved every part of her life. She learned how to be the perfect lover to both men and women in a college in New York. At all times, she wore the correct outfit and she knew precisely when drinking a little too much was the right thing to do. However, food remained at the center of her life, it wasn't something to enjoy and she saw it as a thing to control which assisted her to maintain her perfect look.

When Sloane and her husband destroy a lover's marriage, she takes the entire blame for it.

Sloane's life revolved around food even when she wasn't concerned about it. When she was fifteen, she got her first job in a restaurant where she worked as a waitress. She enjoyed serving people and she also watched them enjoy the food even if she would never attempt to eat such.

While working at the fancy restaurant in New York, Sloane met her husband named Richard. He was the chef at the restaurant, he is a quiet and confident man. Sloane was both a hostess and a manager at the restaurant. After they dated for a few years, the couple decided to take a huge step of opening a restaurant together in Rhode Island, Rhode which is the place Sloane's family had a vacation home. They decided that Richard would be the chef and Sloane would be the manager. The business was successful and soon they both got married and they had two kids.

At that time, Sloane hadn't vomited for years; however, her obsession with perfection was still there. Every day she went to the gym and she was conscious of whatever she eats. Also, Sloane ensured that everything was perfect in their home too.

When Sloane did her 27th birthday, she and her husband ended up having their first threesome with Karin who is a waitress that worked at their restaurant. Afterward, Richard started inviting different people into their relationship. Mostly, he would pick out men for Sloane. He enjoyed watching her sleep with other men.

When Sloane turned forty, Richard invited his handsome co-chef named Wes into their relationship. Wes was a married man, however; Richard and Sloane thought his wife knew about it. Wes ended up to be a great third wheel in the bedroom, and for the next few months, everyone had a lot of fun.

However, one day Sloane received a message from Wes's phone number. It was his wife, Jenny who texted; she didn't know anything about the affair until she saw Sloane's text messages. Sloane wanted Richard to help her in talking to Jenny and Wes as couple to couple, however, Richard thought it was best to let things lie.

A few months after, Sloane ran into Jenny at the supermarket and they decided to talk. Jenny was still very pained and she wanted to know about the whole incident. However, Sloane couldn't bring herself to tell Jenny that it was Richard's suggestion for Sloane to have sex with Wes. She didn't want Jenny to know that she only did it for her husband, because she also enjoyed it, too. She believed the full story would have caused Jenny more pain anyway.

Therefore, she took all the blame that Jenny placed at her feet, once again she made herself perfect in order to meet someone else's needs. However, deep down, Sloane wished Richard had taken some responsibility for the pain they caused Jenny and she still feels that way.

In spite of her terrible experiences with men, Lina loves nothing more than love; however, she ended up in a marriage devoid of it.

Your first kiss can either be exciting, gross or totally awkward. However, for Lina, it was the most magical thing she has ever experienced in her life and this happened when she was just fifteen. Lina had a huge crush on a handsome boy named Aidan in her class, however, she believed she wasn't pretty enough for him.

Therefore, when her friend invited her on a double-date with her boyfriend and Aidan, Lina couldn't believe it. Her fears were calmed, although, while they were all at the movies together

watching the movie Seven; she left the theater before the end of the movie because she found the movie too horrific and Aidan followed her. Aidan pulled her towards him in the lobby and he gave her the best first kiss in the world.

After that, they started seeing each other at a secret place like the river that ran through their small town in Indiana. They had a perfect high school relationship for six months. Lina started to think that nothing was as significant as being in love. However, in winter, Aidan started acting disconnected. When a friend of Lina's older sister invited her to attend a party with him, she accepted just to make Aidan jealous.

However, the party ended up being a party of three guys sitting on a couch and she found herself in a stranger's house. Shortly after her date left, one of the boys gave Lina a drink and things got fuzzy. All Lina could remember was that two of the boys slept with her and she didn't even struggle. While they were raping her, she wanted them to like her.

When the rumor started spreading that she had sex with three guys just in one night, Aidan broke up with her. For several years, no one asked Lina out again. She accepted her loneliness because a part of her believed she deserved it.

Then, after she graduated from college, Lina met Ed at a cookout. They began to date, and she became very happy because she wasn't lonely anymore. They never for once had a great sexual connection, however; Ed was kind and competent. Before she knew it, they got married. Ed worked as a mail carrier, and Lina took care of their two children. However, with time Ed's detachment became an increasing problem. At night, when he turned his back on her in bed, she imagined how she ended from Aidan's magical kisses to a husband who wouldn't even touch her.

Female desire is rich and complicated; however, mostly discounted and misinterpreted.

You may reason that the stories of Maggie, Sloane and Lina's are more dramatic than the usual experiences a woman could have. However, what these three women experience, including

their daily hopes and dreams and needs, shows us what many women go through in their lives in one way or the other.

Women experience sex, love, and romance in unique ways that share similar threads. Female desire is mostly deeper, longer-lasting and more complicated than that of men, and excellently woven through the fabric of women's lives. As a result of this, that is why Maggie wonders through all the pain if Aaron Knodel still has feelings for her. This is why Sloane allows her husband to watch her sleep with other men, and she takes all the shame as well as the blame that comes with it. Also, it is the reason Lina is keen on waiting for a man who only calls her when he's in the mood.

Women are mostly mocked for having such feelings that are deep, complicated, and sometimes difficult to name. They are ridiculed for how much they want from men and they have learned it is best not mention those feelings. Most times, what they really want from men is what they want from themselves, and the other women in their lives. They want to like themselves and they also want to feel loved and appreciated.

One of the repercussions of living under such patriarchy is that women are mostly looked at and they judge other women the way a man would do. Also, because our mothers and sisters are mostly the people we share our first and deepest connections with; it is not men but other women who make a woman feel the worst.

In the story of Maggie, it was one of her girlfriends who started the rumor about her Hawaii trip and it was her friend that called her a whore first. Sloane's life is filled with her own deep desire to be perfect, and better than other women. In the story of Lina, it's a female therapist who told her that the desire to be kissed by her husband is unnecessary.

For the women in these books, and also for a lot of women; their sexual and romantic desires control what they do, eat and think. Far from being an amusement or a distraction, desire is a driving force in our lives. If we want to do right by ourselves and by the women in our lives, it is really important to listen to what they want and need. We also have to start taking this seriously.

Three Women by Lisa Taddeo Book Review

The stories of Maggie, Lina, and Sloane tell universal truths about female desire. They illustrate how deep a female desire is, long-lasting and complicated. Also, woven deeply into the fabric of women's lives. The stories also show that the wants and needs of women are regularly mocked and ignored. However, if we want to understand what drives the women in our lives, we have to understand what they truly long for.

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