# Three women by Lisa Taddeo

## Synopsis

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

Lina, a young mother in suburban Indiana whose marriage has lost its passion, reconnects with an old flame through social media and embarks on an affair that quickly becomes all-consuming. Maggie, a seventeen-year-old high school student in North Dakota, allegedly engages in a relationship with her married English teacher; the ensuing criminal trial turns their quiet community upside down. Sloane, a successful restaurant owner in an exclusive enclave of the Northeast, is happily married to a man who likes to watch her have sex with other men and women.

## Discussion questions

1. In the author’s note, Taddeo explains the mechanics of her reporting and writing process for *Three Women*. How did knowing this information affect the way you read the book?
2. 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?
3. The author spent a considerable amount of time speaking with men about desire before becoming so intrigued by the “complexity and beauty and violence” of female desire that she turned her focus exclusively to women. How would the book be different if men’s voices were included? Did you find yourself wondering what Lina or Sloane’s husbands were thinking, or what Maggie’s teacher taught?
4. 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?
5. 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?
6. 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?
7. 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?
8. In your opinion, what shapes our views of sex and relationships most? Is it environment, past experience, the media, our families 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?

 *Synopsis/Discussion questions from https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Three-Women/Lisa-Taddeo/9781451642308*