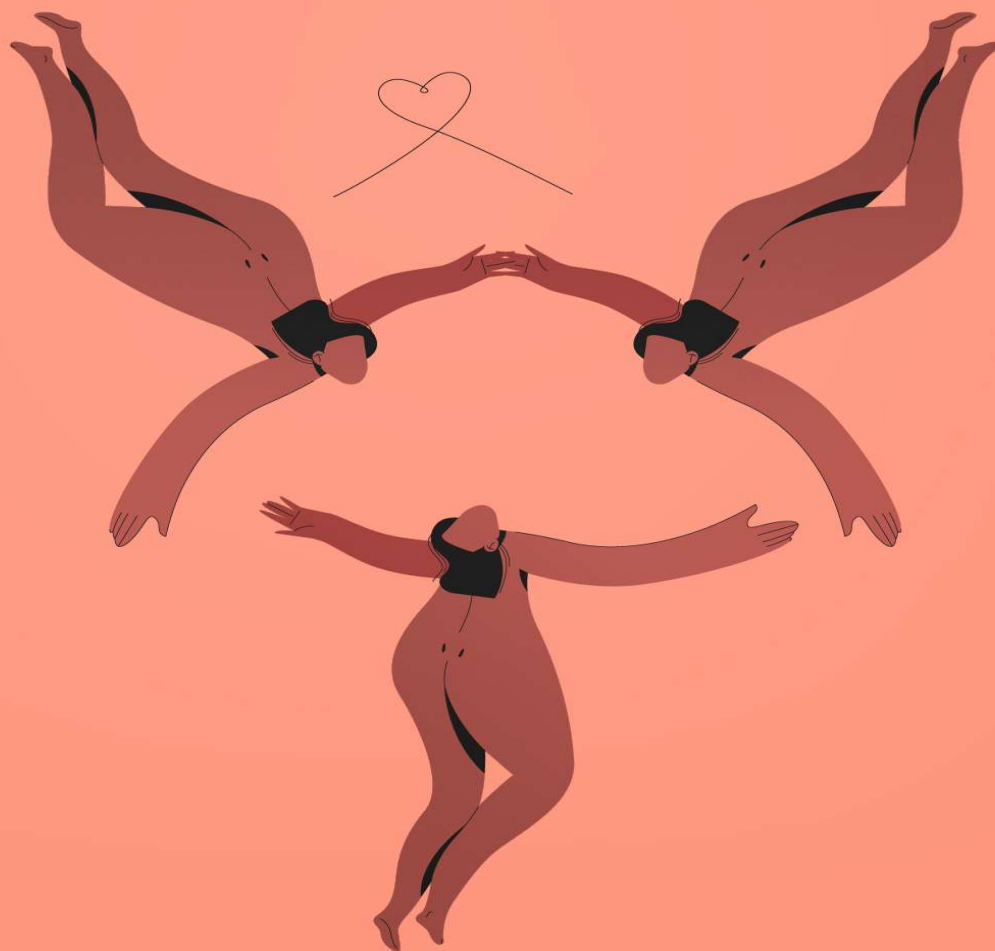


SUMMARY

BY ALYSSA BURNETTE

THREE WOMEN

By Lisa Taddeo



Three Women by Lisa Taddeo

Written by Alyssa Burnette

An honest portrayal of female sexual desire in
America.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
The Misrepresentation of Female Desire	6
Maggie's Story	9
Lina's Story.....	11
Sloane's Story	13
Final Summary	14



**DO YOU WANT THIS BOOK
AS AN 20-MINUTE AUDIOBOOK?**



**Get the key insights of non-fiction books
in minutes instead of hours. Listen to
our free audiobooks while you workout
or on your commute to work.**



**DOWNLOAD
OUR FREE APP**



Introduction

Everyone has a chapter they don't read out loud. Everyone has secret parts of their lives they don't want anyone else to know about. And often, those secret chapters involve our sexual experiences. Maggie, Lina, and Sloane are no different. Over the course of this summary, you'll meet three everyday American women. They could be your daughter, your sister, your niece. They could be anybody. Their stories are simultaneously unique and universal because their stories represent the things that happen to so many women in America. Over the course of this summary, you'll get to know Maggie, Lina, and Sloane, and the sexual experiences that had a profound impact on their lives.



GET THE FREE AUDIOBOOK IN OUR APP: [QUICKREAD.COM/APP](https://www.quickread.com/app)

The Misrepresentation of Female Desire

There is a popular meme that features a male cartoon character saying, “Women are so complex and unknowable. It’s impossible to know what women want.” A female cartoon character standing in the frame with him replies, “Actually, it’s really simple. All we want is--” At this point, the male character cuts her off-- seemingly without having heard her at all-- and continues, “It’s so impossible to know.” Although this meme might give us a chuckle in the moment, the sad reality is that it’s an accurate representation of how many women are treated. Because the truth is that what women want isn’t complicated, it’s just very misunderstood.

This is largely because of a societal double standard that punishes and stereotypes women for qualities that society praises in men. For example, anyone who believes in gender equality would agree that women have the right to wear what they want. But if you’re a woman, you probably know that short dresses will get you called “slutty” or prompt men to say you are “asking for it.” Both of these statements are viciously sexist and completely untrue! But that doesn’t stop people from weaponizing their opinions to keep women from wearing or doing what they want. For example, if you’re a woman, then your own experience has probably taught you that women fear sexual assault on a daily basis. We avoid walking home alone at night. We look over our shoulders constantly. We watch our drinks like hawks and jump through innumerable social hoops to avoid accepting drinks from strangers. We give out fake phone numbers when we’re cornered by creepy men, motivated by the sheer terror of being stalked and murdered. We give our mothers and friends our locations before we go out on a date with a stranger. Why? So they can call the police if our date turns out to be a rapist or a serial killer. These are just a few of the fears, stereotypes, and struggles that women face on a daily basis! And this is in the “modern” world where women have allegedly achieved all the rights they needed to attain equality.

But sexism is never so apparent as when women speak out about their experiences with sexual assault. And although there are countless cases of women who have spoken out only to be ignored and disbelieved, one

especially horrific case is that of Chanel Miller. Many people remember Chanel Miller as the girl who bravely took her rapist to court and wrote a memoir about her experience. But Chanel's memoir was not a story of justice or satisfaction; rather, it chronicled the re-victimization she experienced at the hands of the media and the criminal justice system. One of the most painful aspects of Chanel's story was the moment she learned-- via social media-- that she had been found unconscious behind a dumpster, with her bra torn off and her dress hiked up above her waist. She read that although the police thought she had been penetrated by a foreign object, that object turned out to be the penis of a freshman at Stanford University. His name was Brock Turner.

She read that, according to Brock Turner, she had enjoyed being raped. That she was both unconscious and that she had given consent; Turner switched his version of the facts multiple times throughout the story, offering the lie that would seem most plausible or the one most likely to get him off the hook. Even worse was that the author of the article seemed to agree with him! They suggested-- without knowing the facts-- that perhaps Chanel had wanted it to happen or that she was asking for it by virtue of what she was wearing or how much she drank. To add insult to injury, the end of the article noted the fact that Brock Turner was a swimmer who had been aggressively recruited for a prominent scholarship at Stanford. He had a promising future as an Olympic hopeful, they added, and included the times for his swim meets at the bottom of the article.

Chanel got the article's message loud and clear: sure, it seemed to say-- sure, Brock Turner raped someone and left her behind a dumpster, unconscious and curled up in the fetal position. But oh well, he's really good at swimming, so he gets a pass, right? She must have wanted it anyway. And to make matters worse, the article's readers seemed inclined to agree. Many of the comments questioned why Chanel had attended the party in her first place, asked what she was wearing or how much she drank. Others remarked that it was such a shame that Turner had been arrested. Many of his friends and family spoke out in his defense, claiming that this arrest was "unfortunate" and that it was going to have an unduly negative impact on Turner's future.

Still others commented in Turner's defense, serving as character witnesses and arguing that either he couldn't have done this or that if he had, he should be let off with a warning. There was no mention of the unnecessarily negative impact it would have on Chanel's future.

Chanel's story illustrates the tragedy that many victims of sexual assault experience when they attempt to speak up. When a woman says, "I was raped," people rush to blame the victim, to accuse her of lying, or to ask sexist, unhelpful questions. So, the truth is that female desire-- and the female experience-- isn't quite as mysterious as many people make it out to be. Rather, women are ensnared by the complex web of societal expectations that make it almost impossible for them to speak candidly about their experiences. So, when women are assaulted, they often hold those feelings of pain, shame, and anger inside. And when women experience passionate love or sexual desire, they often keep quiet about those feelings too because admitting you like sex gets you labeled "a slut." So, over time, when those feelings are held deep within your heart, it's understandable that female feelings can grow intense and deeply personal. It's understandable that it might be difficult to share your experience with others or to even be honest with yourself. That's what happens when society shames women for all forms of sexual experience, both positive and negative.

The author wanted to shed new light on the female experience with love and sex by getting to know three ordinary women very well. She wanted to listen to their stories, to understand their feelings, and to represent their experiences in a way that would give other women the freedom to tell their own stories. So, when you listen to Maggie, Lina, and Sloane's stories, try to leave your preconceived, gender-biased notions at the door. Don't listen to the cultural message that women are unknowable and impossible. Instead, just listen to the women as they tell you what they really felt.



GET THE FREE AUDIOBOOK IN OUR APP: [QUICKREAD.COM/APP](https://www.quickread.com/app)

Maggie's Story

When you were a teenager, did you ever have feelings for someone that you shouldn't have? Did you ever have a crush on the bad boy at school or on an older authority figure? If you did, you're not alone; teenagers are extremely vulnerable and impressionable. At that time in your life, you're young, immature, and prone to feeling lonely or misunderstood. Sadly, those feelings often create the perfect storm, leading vulnerable kids into relationships with people who will take advantage of them. And Maggie was no different. When Maggie was 16, she had sex for the first time. This is a fairly normal experience for a lot of 16-year-olds, but Maggie's experience was different because she had sex with a 31-year-old man, an army friend of her brother-in-law's. And although Maggie felt flattered by his attention, the sad reality is that she was victimized by a grown man who preyed upon a teenage girl.

In an ideal scenario, someone should have helped Maggie realize that, even if she consented to sex with this man, she was still a child and therefore not an equal participant. Someone should have helped her understand that exploring her sexuality was natural, but that she needed to run from grown men who were trying to take advantage of her. In an ideal scenario, Maggie should have received support from her family and counseling from a sympathetic mental health professional. But unfortunately, Maggie received none of those things. Instead, her family took the news very badly. They shamed Maggie and called her a slut. They took her to a religious therapist who prescribed drugs to "fix what was wrong with her." And Maggie's friends at her Catholic high school responded the same way. At a time when she should have received understanding and support, Maggie felt humiliated and alone.

So, when Maggie's English teacher Mr. Knodel offered her a shoulder to cry on, she was grateful for his help. He developed a relationship with her, often staying after class to talk to her, and Maggie felt like he really listened. She was vulnerable and alone and afraid, so she trusted him. She opened up to him about her abuse in a deeply personal letter and his kindness was the first

comfort she had received. And when his attention got a little more intimate, and the two began exchanging text messages, she was flattered. Maggie never had sexual intercourse with Mr. Knodel; their only sexual encounter involved him performing oral sex on Maggie through her underwear in his guest bedroom one evening. But their relationship intensified as days turned into weeks and weeks turned into months. Maggie fell completely in love with him.

Their illicit relationship came crashing down when Maggie broke one of the cardinal rules Mr. Knodel had set for her: she texted him first. Because Mr. Knodel was married with two kids, he felt that it was vital to keep their relationship a secret from his family. (Not to mention the fact that he knew he was taking advantage of an underaged student!) But when Maggie texted him first, Mr. Knodel's wife found out, and he quickly ended his relationship with Maggie. Maggie was so devastated that she was physically ill when she heard the news. Afterwards, she stopped eating for days. There was no one she could tell and no one she could go to for support. She felt as though her life was ruined... once again.



GET THE FREE AUDIOBOOK IN OUR APP: [QUICKREAD.COM/APP](https://www.quickread.com/app)

Lina's Story

Sadly, Lina's story is somewhat similar to Maggie's. Although Lina wasn't raped by her teacher, she was sexually assaulted as a teenager and she also felt unable to come forward about her experience. When she was fifteen, Lina developed an intense crush on a boy named Aidan. As luck would have it, Aidan liked Lina back and their first kiss was the most magical experience of her life. The two began dating and Lina felt that she had never been so happy. But then Aidan started to act differently towards her. Lina wasn't sure why, but she was worried. So, when an older boy invited her to a party, Lina accepted his invitation. She was hoping that Aidan might feel jealous if he saw her receiving attention from other guys and that his jealousy would inspire him to try and win her back. Unfortunately, her plan backfired horribly.

When she accepted the invitation to the party, Lina had envisioned a little flirting and nothing more. But when she got to the party, she found out that the only guests were four other boys and herself. She had been set up. The boys quickly overpowered her, drugged her, and took turns raping her. They then spread the story around school, telling everyone that Lina was a slut who had slept with four guys at once. Tragically, Aidan believed the rumors and broke up with Lina immediately. Lina was so confused, heartbroken, and ashamed that she felt helpless to speak up. No other guy asked her out for the rest of her time in high school. Lina blamed herself for being stupid enough to go to that party, so she often felt as though she deserved to be raped and deserved to be lonely.

But when Lina met Ed in college, everything changed. Ed was kind and compassionate and he seemed to genuinely love her. At the time, Lina wasn't sure if she was in love with Ed or if she was just happy to feel wanted. She never really got a chance to figure it out because they were married in the blink of an eye. But, much to Lina's surprise, Ed wasn't very interested in sex. And, even more surprising, Lina found that sex was very important to her-- and that she was deeply dissatisfied in her marriage. Lina tried everything-- sexy lingerie, couple's therapy, attempting to discuss her feelings with Ed--

but nothing worked. He loved her, but he just wasn't interested in sex. And Lina couldn't make herself be okay with that. She was contemplating leaving Ed when she got a message on Facebook one day: Aidan from high school had looked her up! The two quickly reconnected and it wasn't long before they started sleeping together. And Lina soon found that every illicit night with Aidan was like the magic of high-school all over again.

Unfortunately, however, Aidan doesn't treat Lina with much respect. Although he swore he'd leave his wife for her, he hasn't. For years, Lina has remained a dirty secret as "the other woman." Their affair is totally on Aidan's terms. She knows it's wrong and that he doesn't respect her, but she stays because she just wants to feel loved and wanted.



GET THE FREE AUDIOBOOK IN OUR APP: [QUICKREAD.COM/APP](https://www.quickread.com/app)

Sloane's Story

Sloane's story couldn't be more different from Maggie and Lina's. Sloane was not sexually assaulted in high school and, as an adult, she had a healthy marriage with a man she loved. But Sloane's husband had a kinky sexual fantasy: he liked to watch Sloane sleep with other men. Sloane wasn't really into it herself, but she went along with it because it made her husband happy. And so he began to invite people into their bed more and more often. First, it was a waitress they worked with at the restaurant they owned and operated together. But mostly, it was men that he picked out for Sloane to sleep with. On his fortieth birthday, he went too far by inviting their co-chef, Wes, to participate in their threesomes. Sloane and her husband both knew Wes was married, but when they asked him to participate, they assumed he had talked it over with his wife.

As it turned out, he hadn't. So, when his wife found out, she confronted Sloane about it. Sloane wanted her husband to step up, to admit that he had initiated everything, but he didn't. After orchestrating this entire fantasy himself, he stood back and let Sloane take the blame for it all. He never once admitted that it was his idea or even hinted that he was involved! As far as Wes' wife knew, Sloane and Wes were having an affair. Sloane could have ratted her husband out, but she chose not to. She was afraid that knowing the whole truth would cause Wes' wife more pain. So, she chose to protect another woman and take all the blame on herself. To this day, she has never told Wes' wife the truth and her husband has never accepted responsibility.



GET THE FREE AUDIOBOOK IN OUR APP: [QUICKREAD.COM/APP](https://www.quickread.com/app)

Final Summary

Sloane, Lina, and Maggie's stories might sound complicated or incredibly unique, but in reality, they aren't. The sad truth is that most of the women you know have experienced situations very similar to these women's stories. In fact, many women have lived Sloane, Maggie, and Lina's stories in exact detail. And as you can see from Sloane, Lina, and Maggie's examples, their feelings are easily identifiable and understandable. They feel hurt, trapped, or ashamed. They want to be wanted. They want to feel loved. Every woman has felt all of these things at some point in her life. And every woman deserves the freedom to be honest about her feelings and experiences.



GET THE FREE AUDIOBOOK IN OUR APP: [QUICKREAD.COM/APP](https://www.quickread.com/app)



**DO YOU WANT THIS BOOK
AS AN 20-MINUTE AUDIOBOOK?**



**Get the key insights of non-fiction books
in minutes instead of hours. Listen to
our free audiobooks while you workout
or on your commute to work.**



**DOWNLOAD
OUR FREE APP**

