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# The Sinner, the Believer and the Confused: Elif Shafak's *Three Daughters of Eve*

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**Book Review**

## **BOOK DETAILS:**

Title: Three Daughters of Eve

Author: Elif Shafak

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Pages: 367

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ISBN: 978-0-241-28804-7

Genre: Fiction

Elif Shafak's latest novel *Three Daughters of Eve* takes her idea of a contemporary world devoid of spiritualism a step further. A world lost in religious animosity, fanaticism, intolerance towards every type of belief whether religious or popular, political bigots, crime, underworld, superlative pseudo-intellectualism, exaggerated corruption, probably has only one path to salvation— stepping out of the metaphorical closet of one's constrictive beliefs. Peri or Naaz Peri belongs to a middle class Turkish family. Always caught between the nexus of dualities such as theism-atheism, believer-non-believer, educated-uneducated, conservatism-liberalism and so on, she is always indecisive and confused about her views and beliefs. Only one man in the entire world holds the capacity to bring her face to face with her true self. Yet, it is this man who becomes the cause of her breakdown and she the cause of his ruin and disgrace. Peri, brought up in the midst of a feuding family with the father supporting liberal ideas and democracy and the mother supporting religious fanaticism and intolerant towards modern ideas and beliefs, is always on the lookout for "God". Her search for "God" continues even when she goes to England to study at Oxford. Her friendship with, the American-Iranian girl



Shirin who is a non-believer and hence considered to be the metaphorical “Sinner” and the Egyptian-American girl Mona, a staunch follower of Muslim ideology and hence the metaphorical “Believer”, rips apart because of one wrong step of hers towards the much adored and equally criticized controversial Professor Azur. More than two decades later, when she reconnects with both Shirin and Azur to apologize for her cowardly act, she is in the middle of a life-crisis, hiding in a closet of a nouveau-riche Turkish businessman’s sea-facing house. The closet has been beautifully employed as a metaphor by Shafak and Peri’s stepping out of the closet/ wardrobe is an act of daredevil. With this act she unburdens herself of the guilt she had been carrying in her heart for over twenty years. The novel has a beautiful narrative weaving across continents with its continuous shuffle from Turkey to England. The storyline is not linear rather the reader has to get accustomed to the time lapse between Turkey of 1980s and later of 2016 and England of the Twin Tower attack. The Philosophical, spiritual and theological discussions by the characters in the novel not only represent the author’s immense knowledge but also her power to imbibe them inextricably into the fabric of the storyline. Azur definitely acts as the mouthpiece of the author, thereby, highlighting the importance of acceptance of spiritualism to save the world from becoming a seething cauldron of misbeliefs. The novel is an eye-opener and a must read for both believers and non-believers of faith.