

# EDITORIAL

Unpopular opinion: As much as I revel in the satisfaction of throwing “OK boomer” at any senile octogenarian, I can’t help but feel hypocritical somewhat as a generation. For all the shade we have to throw at those who have come before us, “Manush ki bolbe?” hasn’t exactly disappeared from our world. The nature of it has simply changed, dare I say, evolved. Despite all of our expression and our desire to be our best selves, so much of what we do is influenced by what we see people do online. To participate on social media is to perform, and performance means appealing to an audience, audiences that each one of us have today. The fact is when we say “online”, “social media”, most of us aren’t talking about a world separate from our real lives. The Internet’s presence in how we think and what opinions we hold grows stronger every day. The nature of the Internet today is one of bubbles, groupthink, and homogenised personal information feeds. It’s up to us as digital natives to manoeuvre these worlds and set boundaries with how much we allow the Internet to influence our very beings.

– Talat Ahmed, Sub-editor, SHOUT



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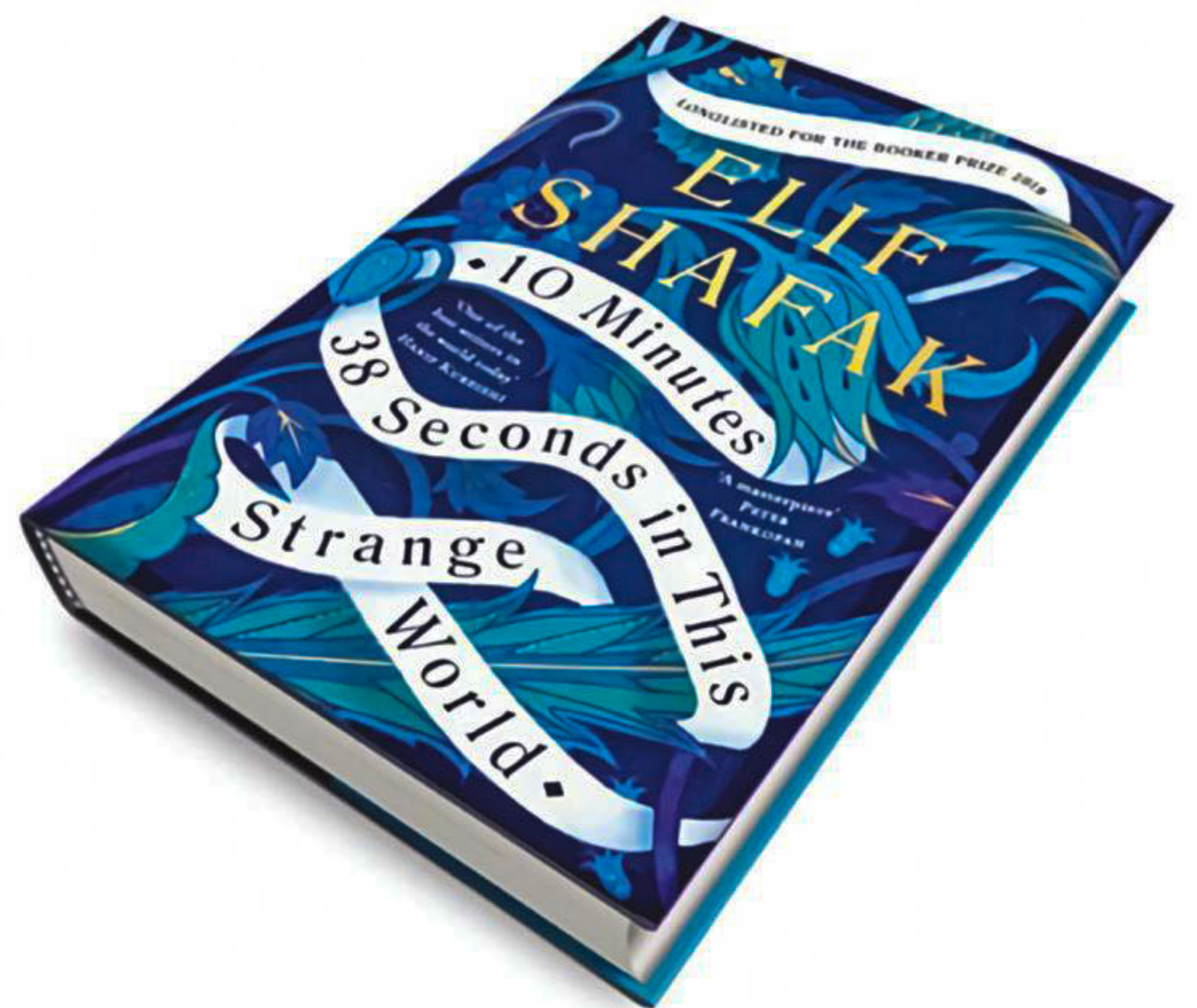


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BOOK REVIEW

# Of pre-determined endings and brilliancy



ARAF MOMEN AKA

It isn’t easy to keep one’s attention glued to the contents of an art piece once the ending is already pointed out right at the beginning. Of course, some do indeed claw their way out of the clutter of Twilight sagas and Fifty Shades of Whatever’s, and one such book is *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*.

Written by Elif Shafak, this book takes you through the journey of a dying Turkish woman’s entire life, her corpse, and all the people that were involved in the entire ordeal. Spoiler alert: You can’t spoil this book by giving spoilers because you’ll have a pretty good gist of what will happen next.

The book consists of four parts.

*The End*, where we learn of our main protagonist Tequila Leyla and her unfortunate demise in a dark alley of Istanbul. This is where the entire gut-wrenching ordeal of recollections start to uncoil.

*The Mind*, which takes you through the flashbacks of Leyla. Her innocence of childhood, ignorance of people, betrayals, the evils of conservatism, the cruel side of mankind’s countenance, etc. are portrayed in detail.

*The Body*, which takes you through the adventure of her five most trustworthy friends: Sabotage Sinan, Nostalgia Nalan, Jameelah, Zaynab122, and Hollywood Humeyra. These five souls were just as much of social misfits as Leyla was, and could see the purity of her soul through all the filth

the world threw at her body. They venture out to bring about a proper burial for Leyla, and away from the Cemetery of the Companionless.

*The Soul*, the last part of the book that details the “burial” of Tequila Leyla’s corpse and concludes the book, and thus the life and struggles of Tequila Leyla.

Of course, I could complain that this book wasn’t long enough, but that would mean having to read more of the painful experiences and heart-breaking disappointments of the protagonists etched in this book’s words.

Author Elif Shafak also maintained a very accurate adherence to the timetables of real-time occurrences with the fictional characters of hers throughout most of the second half of the twentieth century to portray the many faceless citizens of Turkey that suffered the brutality of the then government and its privileged people. Leyla and her friends showed how ordinary citizens used to look at people that didn’t fit into their cultural norms.

The book also brilliantly fuses some incidents with the characters in ways other than just making the characters read them out of the newspapers and making them comment on them. Beautiful storytelling, masterful portrayal of characters, effective elements of surprise even under the explicit impressions of what will happen next, painfully good details that prick a pin into your soul and still make you read – truly a great book and definitely a must-read.