



# The Bastard of Istanbul

By Elif Shafak

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**The Bastard of Istanbul** By Elif Shafak

A “vivid and entertaining” (*Chicago Tribune*) tale about the tangled history of two families, from the author of *The Forty Rules of Love* and *The Architect’s Apprentice*

**"Zesty, imaginative . . . a Turkish version of Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*."**  
**--USA Today**

As an Armenian American living in San Francisco, Armanoush feels like part of her identity is missing and that she must make a journey back to the past, to Turkey, in order to start living her life. Asya is a nineteen-year-old woman living in an extended all-female household in Istanbul who loves Jonny Cash and the French existentialists. *The Bastard of Istanbul* tells the story of their two families--and a secret connection linking them to a violent event in the history of their homeland. Filled with humor and understanding, this exuberant, dramatic novel is about memory and forgetting, about the need to examine the past and the desire to erase it, and about Turkey itself.

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## **The Bastard of Istanbul** By Elif Shafak Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In her second novel written in English (*The Saint of Incipient Insanities* was the first), Turkish novelist Shafak tackles Turkish national identity and the Armenian "question" in her signature style. In a novel that overflows with a kitchen sink's worth of zany characters, women are front and center: Asya Kazanci, an angst-ridden 19-year-old Istanbulite is the bastard of the title; her beautiful, rebellious mother, Zeliha (who intended to have an abortion), has raised Asya among three generations of complicated and colorful female relations (including religious clairvoyant Auntie Banu and bar-brawl widow, Auntie Cevriye). The Kazanci men either die young or take a permanent hike like Mustafa, Zeliha's beloved brother who immigrated to America years ago. Mustafa's Armenian-American stepdaughter, Armanoush, who grew up on her family's stories of the 1915 genocide, shows up in Istanbul looking for her roots and for vindication from her new Turkish family. The Kazanci women lament Armanoush's family's suffering, but have no sense of Turkish responsibility for it; Asya's boho cohorts insist there was no genocide at all. As the debate escalates, Mustafa arrives in Istanbul, and a long-hidden secret connecting the histories of the two families is revealed. Shafak was charged with "public denigration of Turkishness" when the novel was published in Turkey earlier this year (the charges were later dropped). She incorporates a political taboo into an entertaining and insightful ensemble novel, one that posits the universality of family, culture and coincidence. (Jan. 22)

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From [Booklist](#)

**\*Starred Review\*** The new Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk has faced charges for making anti-Turkish remarks regarding the long denied mass killings of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Acclaimed Turkish writer Shafak has also been hauled into court for "insulting Turkishness." The case was dropped, and her bold and penetrating tale of the tragic repercussions of the Armenian genocide will live on. In her second novel in English following *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* (2004), Shafak tells a many-faceted, mischievously witty, and daringly dramatic story that is at once a study in compassion, a shrewd novel of ideas, a love song to Istanbul, and a sensuous and whirling satire. The novel's ruling force is gorgeous Zeliha, the unapologetically sexy proprietor of an Istanbul tattoo parlor. An unwed mother at 19, she has raised her daughter, Asya (now 19 herself and obsessed with Johnny Cash), in a chaotic, food-centric household that includes her mother, grandmother, and three sisters: Banu, the pious clairvoyant; Cevriye, the high-strung history teacher; and Feride, the neurotic. The sisters haven't seen their Americanized brother, Mustafa, for almost 20 years, and are stunned when his 19-year-old stepdaughter, Armanoush, whose mother is from Kentucky and whose father is Armenian, arrives in Istanbul to search for her Armenian roots. As Asya and Armanoush forge a tentative friendship unaware of all that they actually share, others panic over the looming revelation of shocking secrets. Shafak weaves an intricate and vibrant saga of repression and freedom, cultural clashes and convergences, pragmatism and mysticism, and crimes and retribution, subtly revealing just how inextricably entwined we all are, whatever our heritage or beliefs. *Donna Seaman*

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Review

"Laural Merlington has the skills to bring this complex, intriguing story to life." ---AudioFile

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From reader reviews:

**Maxine Lucas:**

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**Rhonda Robitaille:**

Information is provisions for folks to get better life, information these days can get by anyone from everywhere. The information can be a knowledge or any news even a problem. What people must be consider any time those information which is within the former life are challenging to be find than now's taking seriously which one works to believe or which one typically the resource are convinced. If you find the unstable resource then you have it as your main information you will have huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen inside you if you take The Bastard of Istanbul as the daily resource information.

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**Heather Garcia:**

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