

December 2024

From the Librarian

Kia ora koutou,

The final newsletter for the year. It has been lovely meeting you all over the past few months.

The library will be re-opening on the 7th of January- with the usual hours.

Wishing you all a very relaxing and joyous holiday season.

- Holly Fletcher



Book Review

Elif Shafak

There are Rivers in the Sky

Elif Shafak is a Turkish British Novelist, essayist, public speaker, political Scientist and activist. Her novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* was shortlisted in 2019 for the Booker Prize.

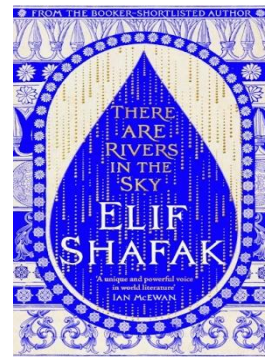
Shafak's most recent book, *There are Rivers in the Sky*, is a tale about

water and the ways in which this connects us to our human history and the natural world. The novel is intricately narrated from multiple perspectives, spanning both time and place.

One of the central characters is Arthur Smyth King of Slums- born on the banks of the Thames in mid-19th century London. Growing up in extreme poverty, Arthur possesses an extraordinary ability to recall everything he has ever witnessed- right down to the details of his own birth. His intelligence leads him on an unexpected journey, one that defies the limitations imposed by his social class.

Another key figure is Narin, a nine-year-old Yazidi girl who embarks on a journey to Lalish with her grandmother, a renowned healer and water diviner. Through her grandmother's stories, filled with deep significance and teachings, Narin learns about her people, who have historically been marginalized. As they make their way through war-torn Iraq, the narrative gently weaves together the connections between all these characters.

The third main perspective is Zaleekhah Clarke, a hydrologist who has recently moved into a houseboat on the Thames after leaving her husband. She is fascinated by the notion that water can hold memory. She is struggling with her mental health. As the story unfolds we learn more about the tragic death of her parents during her childhood and her complex relationship with water.



Shafak's talent for vivid yet balanced descriptions is intoxicating. The depictions of London during the mid-1800's are full of humanity, capturing the visceral essence of the Thames with its various smells and atrocities. These descriptions linger in the reader's mind, so much so that you can almost feel yourself breathing the same air as the characters.

