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BIOGRAPHY

Playing With Fire: Confessions of a Sex Therapist
Martin Blinder
Trafford Publishing
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Four Stars (out of Five)

Playing With Fire is an informal comedic look at the very serious condition of sex addiction definitely too explicit for the youngsters. This chronicle of successive passions owes a debt to the venerable Penthouse letters—those pornographic kiss-n-tells which start off stating that their authors always thought the editors concocted such reports of outrageous good fortune until the most amazing thing actually happened to them. From the moment Peter X is caught *in extremis* with a medical school cadaver it's clear that virtually any brand of kink is fair game for this sullied character. After that disaster the protagonist redirects his studies and becomes certified in the only subject he can think about.

Peter gains prowess from the methodical private tutoring of a sexology teacher and soon accepts that certain relationships are about nothing weightier than hooking up. He inherits a girlfriend from a married client but marvels at the superficiality of the arrangement: "I knew nothing of Melissa's daily routine let alone her inner self. Fine with me. I had what I wanted." The man simply lacks the will to deny assistance to frustrated women no matter the setting. He's a hardwired hedonist who violates the doctor—patient ethic even in a convent where his controlling Id makes him think "…habit and all this nun was a fox."

Dr. X addresses the penetrating questions scientists shrink away from such as "which gay women might have sex with a man and under what circumstances?" As a busy therapist Peter finds it rewarding to get to the bottom of matters. He lives one lurid scenario after another so the reader doesn't have to. Who thinks fractional fatherhood sounds pleasant? Does anyone really crave work as a toe-jam janitor? Didn't think so.

In order to stay employed Dr. Peter X maintains a low public profile. Under that pseudonym he's the next thing to a phantom. Dr. Martin Blinder is a forensic psychiatrist on the faculty at UC San Francisco. He's appeared on *Oprah Sally* and other first-name shows and also provided expert commentary to news organizations. He's best known for supplying instrumental defense testimony in the murder trial of San Francisco Supervisor Dan White who served a

reduced prison sentence after the acknowledged shootings of Mayor George Moscone and fellow Supervisor Harvey Milk. Blinder's assessment was later mis-summarized and referred to as the "Twinkie Defense."

Playing With Fire is racy thicker with historical reference than one might expect and raised from the level of the basic premise by funny expressions. Go ahead and laugh if alone become a little disgusted if judgmental people are lurking nearby consider adding a new adventure to the playbook if you have a game collaborator or just feel superior to the poor souls who are servants to animalistic impulses. The best way to keep this book from the impressionable is to stow it between a mattress and box spring. Nobody would ever look there.