



Masters of Sex: The Life and Times of William Masters and Virginia Johnson, the Couple Who Taught America How to Love

By Thomas Maier

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Now a New Showtime Original Series

Showtime's dramatic series "Masters of Sex," starring Michael Sheen and Lizzy Caplan, is based on this real-life story of sex researchers William Masters and Virginia Johnson. Before "Sex and the City" and Viagra™, America relied on Masters and Johnson to teach us everything we needed to know about what goes on in the bedroom. Convincing hundreds of men and women to shed their clothes and copulate, the pair were the nation's top experts on love and intimacy. Highlighting interviews with the notoriously private Masters and the ambitious Johnson, critically acclaimed biographer Thomas Maier shows how this unusual team changed the way we all thought about, talked about, and engaged in sex while they simultaneously tried to make sense of their own relationship. Entertaining, revealing, and beautifully told, "Masters of Sex" sheds light on the eternal mysteries of desire, intimacy, and the American psyche.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review He was an ob-gyn on staff at the medical school at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Emotionally chilly and egotistical, Masters was interested in researching human sexuality. Johnson was a divorced mother of two, looking for a job and a way to earn a degree. She accepted a job offer as research assistant—and sex with Masters as a condition of employment, ostensibly in the name of science. Working together in the 1950s and 1960s, they built on the earlier work of Alfred Kinsey and changed the way Americans looked at sex. Maier goes beyond the image and contributions of this world-famous couple to reveal a driven and calculating man who divorced his faithful wife after 29 years and married Johnson to prevent her from marrying a wealthy benefactor of their clinic. Johnson, though granted equal credit for their work, never got over feelings of inadequacy. She subverted her personality and desires only to have Masters divorce her after 21 years to marry an old sweetheart from his youth. Maier recounts the boldness of their experiments and treatments, controversies surrounding their use of surrogates and study of prostitutes, and their eventual decline as the sexual revolution they sparked raced ahead of them. Based on interviews, Masters' unpublished memoir, and clinic documents, Maier's book offers a wonderfully written and totally absorbing look at an amazing couple. --Vanessa Bush

Review

A Chicago Tribune Favorite Nonfiction Book of 2009

"Told with patience and care . . . Maier writes well, and with humor." --New York Times

"Award-winning biographer Maier . . . delivers the first in-depth look at a complex couple who helped revolutionize the study of human sexual response. Academics and amateur sexperts alike will rejoice."

--Library Journal

"A wonderfully written and totally absorbing look at an amazing couple." --Booklist

"Masters of Sex is a terrific book about the unlikely couple who touched off the sexual revolution. More than a biography, this is an intimate history of sex in the twentieth century."

--Debby Applegate, winner of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in Biography.

"A well-written and insightful account of Masters and Johnson, who, in a clinical sense, probably knew more about sex and marital love than any other couple in America."

--Gay Talese, author

About the Author

Thomas Maier is the author of the critically acclaimed "Dr. Spock: An American Life," which was a "New York Times" Notable Book of the Year; "The Kennedys: America's Emerald Kings," which was adapted into a Warner Home Video documentary; and "Newhouse," which won the Frank Luther Mott Award for Best Media Book. An award-winning investigative journalist at "Newsday," he lives with his wife and three sons in Long Island, New York.

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