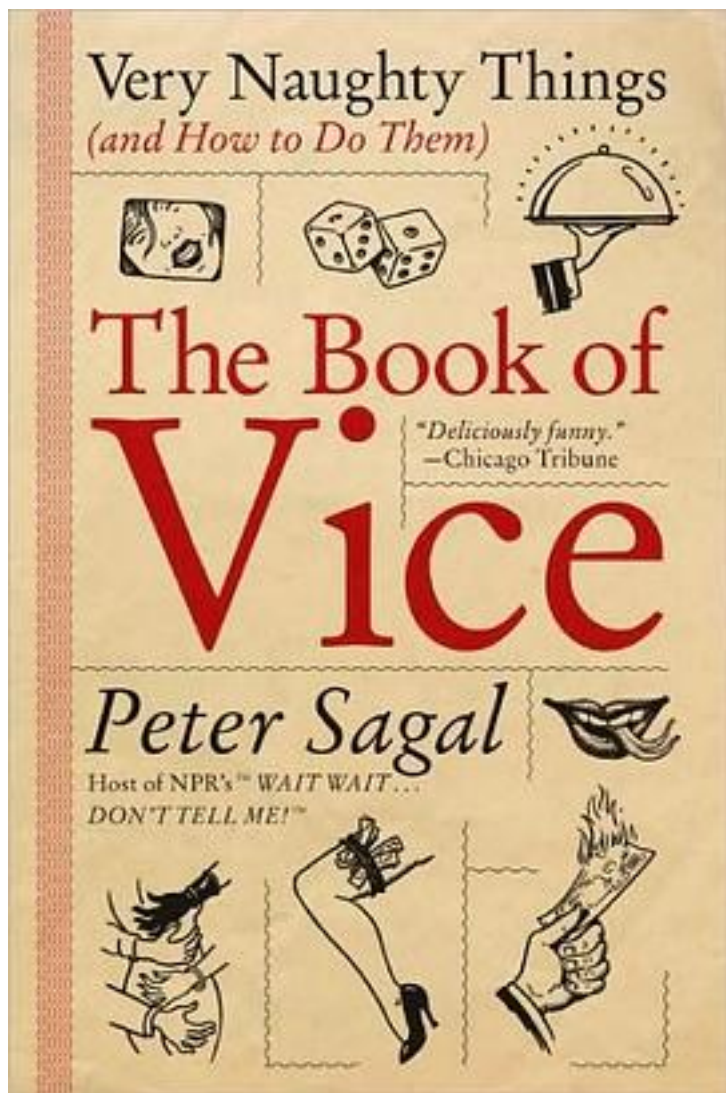


The Book of Vice



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NPR host Sagal (Wait, Wait... Don't Tell Me) offers a hilarious, harmlessly prurient look at the banality of regular people's strange and wicked pleasures. In the wake of the late-1990s obsession with other people's fun, notes Sagal, the hoi polloi have pursued their own indulgences, such as sex joints, swinging couples' clubs, gambling and pornography. He describes the three necessary elements of vice that distinguish it from sin and give it that irresistible frisson: social disapprobation, actual pleasure and shame. A buttoned-up journalist and family man, Sagal visits the respective dens of inequity, interviewing the principals in the name of research while preserving his academic irony, e.g., during the shooting of a hardcore porn sequence for Spice TV, he remarks of the actors: I began to appreciate how very well Evan and Kelly did their work. Indeed, the dedicated hedonists, such as the regular joe habitués of San Francisco's Power Exchange or the normal-seeming couples who frequent the Swinger's Shack, face the same problems of meeting supplies, logistics, expense versus income, and time management as does any warehouse foreman. Sagal is a terrific, lively writer, and while some of his segments are repetitive and stretched, he is admirable in humanizing the

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