



Turning Idolater

Edward C. Patterson

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Philip Flaxen, who strips past his jockstrap on the Internet for manluv.org, acquires a rare gift - a book that transforms his life. With it, he sparks with a famous author, whittles away at a new craft, swims with an odd circle of new acquaintances and is swept up in mayhem. Philip leaves the world of the Porn Nazi and enters the realm of crisp possibilities - great expectations and dark secrets that unravel over deep waters. Follow this whodunit as Philip Flaxen turns idolater and never looks back - a tale of Internet strippers, back street murders, Provincetown glitz, New York City nightlife and a love story for the ages. If you liked "No Irish Need Apply" and loved "Bobby's Trace," you will absolutely adore "Turning Idolater." Life is filled with serendipity, pleasurable and bracing, but on the fringes and in the heart, life can be a very bloody business.

Turning Idolater Details

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From Reader Review Turning Idolater for online ebook

Sharon says

I was initially uncertain what to make of Turning Idolater. I'm a great admirer of Edward C. Patterson's work, but I just could not imagine how a book about a gay man who strips on the Internet, whilst obsessing over the language of Moby Dick, could somehow intertwine with information about the rare book trade and a murder mystery.

Yet, in the end, that story turned out to be absolutely brilliant.

As always, Patterson's prose is gorgeous; the descriptions of whales, gulls, a cat and a dog in Provincetown are particular standouts in that regard.

His protagonist, Philip, is a sympathetic fellow -- not without his flaws, certainly, which make him human instead of a cardboard caricature. There's more to Philip than meets the eye, which we learn as the tale progresses.

Highly recommended for those who enjoy a good literary novel.

Elaine says

THIS IS THE FIRST BOOK I READ BY THIS AUTHOR, BUT A VERY GOOD READ. AN INTERESTING CAST OF CHARACTERS: THOMAS, PHILLIP, SPRAKIE, AND FLO. A STORY SURROUNDED BY THE WORDS FROM THE GREAT BOOK MOBY DICK. A GREAT MYSTERY, AN AMAZING BOOK. A MUST READ.

Antonella says

3.5

This is a good, compelling book, although the style wasn't exactly my cup of tea. See review by Kassa. The editing mistakes almost drove me crazy, and please notice that English is not my mother tongue, so there are probably more, not to mention the mistakes in German. That's the reason for not rounding the rating up.

And I should reread "Moby Dick".

Fitri Febriana says

I'm very like it

Todd Fonseca says

Emotionally distraught after finding male pornography in her son's room, Philip Flaxen's mother shares her discovery with her husband. Ashamed and disgusted with this revelation, Philip's father disowns his son, kicks him out of his only home, and warns him to never return. Philip turns to his only friend, Robert Sprague - "Sprakie" - who takes him into his apartment. Sprakie introduces him to the seedy world of adult internet sites where Philip can get work by "baring it all" in order to stay off the streets.

Online, Philip encounters a "customer" different from his normal patrons - this client is well educated, articulate, and thoughtful. Intrigued, Philip breaks all the rules to meet this man face to face in hopes of kindling a romance. As it turns out, Philip's admirer is an extremely successful though considerable older author. A May-December romance ensues yet both men struggle with their very different backgrounds and social strata. Each consider whether they should turn idolater or leave love behind. Meanwhile, a series of cold blooded murders involving Philip's acquaintances occur and neither Philip nor his lover realize that their choice for love is also a life or death decision.

In "Turning Idolater", Edward C Patterson has create a novel best described as contemporary literary fiction. Inspired and anchored by Melville's "Moby Dick", Patterson explores the social mores impacting two men drawn to one another yet kept from complete commitment due to the fabric of their very different backgrounds and colliding realities.

Through Patterson's lyrical prose and keen understanding of the human condition, he creates characters so real I felt as if I was reading a memoir. Frequent reference to literary classics and intricate and loving descriptions of priceless book restoration invite the reader into a contemporary equivalent of a Jane Austen novel. Fans of Patterson's work will certainly enjoy Turning Idolater.

Terra Noah says

3.5 stars

I read this for the M/M Romance Goodreads group's 2012 Book Bingo. Oh what can I say...I literally had to drag myself through most of this book.

Okay, first, it's a literary book, which means fancy prose. It's beautiful, but soooo slow. And I mean serious pacing issues. The blurb doesn't indicate this writing style and neither does the topic (an online stripper).

Second, the descriptions were way, waaay too long at points. It really slowed down the reading and I think it could have gone without a lot of it. Especially at the beginning of part two, where it goes pages and pages [spoiler]in the point of view of a seagull, then a whale, then a cat, and finally a dog before we get to the humans[/spoiler]. Wow, I didn't see the purpose of it and found myself skimming through most of it. A content editor would have quickly yanked that out. There are actually quite a few places in this book where I would have stopped reading, because the pace just died, if I hadn't been forced to continue for the book bingo.

Third, I'm giving this story 3.5 stars despite the above faults. The main reason is that it was a beautiful story between Philip and his love interest - and by beautiful, I mean epic. I may have had to drag myself through the first 70%, but the last 30% I read with frevor, being moved by the emotions and curious about the [spoiler]killings[/spoiler]. The characters were deep, the plot was nicely woven, and I think this story will

stay with me forever. I'm glad I dragged myself past the first 70%. With proper content editing, this would be a solid 5 star book for me.

John Morand says

An intelligent read.

Reading this story it showed me Melville like I never read it as required reading in High School. If only the teacher hadn't ignored speaking of Ishmael 's love with Queequeg. It's an old fashioned murder mystery with well placed references to Money Duck. It's not an erotic tale, has some romance, and a little humor.

Lady*M says

Turning Idolater is a mystery, love story, homage to Herman Melville and a lot more. It's beautifully written and put together, with compelling characters (I dare you to not like Sparkie) and almost hypnotic insight into their lives. Both red herrings and clues were sprinkled masterfully through the novel - a true joy for this mystery fan. It will not be for everyone, but I laughed, I cried and, yup, loved it. If not for editing errors and some unnecessary drama near the end, this would have been a five-star read. But, it's very close - 4.75.

Highly, highly recommended.

Jenna Scribbles says

This was a great mystery, gay romance (not erotica), thriller. I couldn't put it down. I loved the characters created by Mr. Patterson. I even cared for the icky bad guys. :-)

Edward Patterson has a great knack of portraying emotion in the scene and characters. As a writer I feel I've been taught a lesson by reading this book. I found myself rereading passages in order to grasp his technique.

Wonderful.

Kathleen says

1.5 stars. The basic plot outline of this book had a lot of potential - internet strippers are being killed by an unknown person, falling in love with a client, may/december romance and all that jazz. Unfortunately, for me, all that potential got lost under a purple haze of florid prose. I understand what the author was trying to do with the tie-ins to Moby Dick but the round and round writing and all the odd turns of phrase often ripped me out of the story rather than drawing me into it. I did not like this style of writing but I know there are those out there that would. So - if you are one who would - I recommend this book because the plot is solid. However, if you are one who does not, steer clear.

Debby says

Wow

This was not what I was expecting. The characters come alive the plot intense and intriguing. I was hooked from the first chapter until the last. Look forward to reading more from this author.

Linda ~ chock full of hoot, just a little bit of nanny ~ says

2.5 stars. There's a great story here, a Cinderella/Pretty Woman mash up set in contemporary NYC. However, the writing style was just not to my taste. I understand the writer's intent, I do, and I admire him for sticking to his guns. Unfortunately, I'm just not that into Melville. If I wanted to read endless purple prose, complicated similes and people talking like they're in a 19th-century Romantic adventure, I'd read a book from the time period. The constant allusions to the sea, the endless quotes from Moby Dick and the very posh dialogue kept pulling me out of the story. I skimmed through the last half of the book to get to the actual plot and enjoyed that part of it well enough, and I even pegged the wrong guy as the perp for awhile.

A very good story but, for me, it got lost in its execution.

Edward C. says

A BOUNTIFUL CATCH

By Irma Fritz "Author of Irretrievably Broken" (Seattle, WA)

"TURNING IDOLATER" by Edward C. Patterson is a bountiful catch. The author can turn a phrase and is ever ready to give the reader those perfect details that put one right in the scene. Take the opening, for example, where we find our protagonist, Philip Flaxen, in the tub caring for the tool of his trade, just as... "Diggers sharpen pickaxes and none but a preacher can fill the fount with consecrated drink." But Philip is not a man of the cloth nor a blue collar worker. In his trade, Philip wears no collar and more often than not, no clothes at all. Well, yes, our Philip is a gay Internet stripper. This, by itself, for the uninitiated like me to get a peek into the world of gay Internet porn, would be story enough. But if you've read any of the writer's other works you know that he can thicken a plot and cook up a stew like few others. A fishy stew it is, in the case of "TURNING IDOLATER."

As we rub-a-dub in the tub with the Flaxen One, there is our very first surprise: Philip is a reader. And what we discover in his hands, after dutifully lathering and diligently honing the tool of his trade, is not just any boy-gets-boy dime-store romance, but we watch in wonder as he dives into a whale of a story. He's reading no less than Herman Melville's masterpiece, "Moby Dick." The author soon lets us in on the fact that this is a very newly discovered pleasure for our young protagonist. The gift of this rare, first edition book has caused him to stretch his mind. Although, this is Philip's first immersion into the depth of the literary arts, he takes to it like a fish to water. But like Ishmael, he doesn't realize that there's been a sea change and that this voyage at sea he thinks he's signed up for becomes a swim for his life. Because out there at sea--now you see him, now you don't--is a giant whale that's about to pull him and Ahab down from the Pequod into the briny deep.

"TURNING IDOLATOR" is a wonderful interweaving of Melville and Patterson. And just when you think

that Patterson left Melville somewhere moored at a dry dock, he brings him right back, and pulls you along into his roiling sea of words. At times I was lost as the writer threw out a red herring here or there. And there were times when I wished for a dictionary to navigate my way through all the colorful, but to me unknown, words and names of the gay world, such as twink, hoohoo, pacific trick, or Kinzie 6. (Perhaps an idea for a new book?)

In "TURNING IDOLATOR" The writer draws his characters lovingly. Philip, on this, his most important voyage of self-realization, is filled with the energy of the very young. The author gives him an infectious lust for life and adventure as he dives into this fresh sea with the vigor of a junior sailor. You'll cringe as this innocent, unable to trust his own perceptions, blunders and blusters into this new world of seasoned old salts, trying on new words to fit his new clothes, misspeaking, misunderstanding, and at times--like a fish out of water wishing to return to the murk from which he came--spouting the phrases of his Internet porn past. Thomas is imbued with such decency and dignity; everyone should have a friend like him. And I absolutely adored Sprakie as he dances and prances, twitters and struts his abundance of queenly feathers. To watch him walk the gauntlet, a Provincetown annual gay ritual, is a joy to behold.

Reading "TURNING IDOLATOR" is listening along with Philip to... "a song he knew, the one beckoning him to coast over the waves and scoot across the pristine sea." Even as you fear that the Flaxen One is lost in the vast ocean of his own confusion ... well, if you've read "Moby Dick," you know that "The Rachel" is on her way.

Jane Harper says

If this book had been half as long, I think it would have been twice as good. The last 90% or so was excellent. Most of the rest... I'm not sure what to think. The writing was odd, and I'm not even going to attempt to give it a rating. Imagine Herman Melville writing *Great Expectations*, perhaps.

Matthew says

Well written book.

Very little sex. Nicely done romance.

Rather depressing take on Moby Dick.

A dark tale of murder.

It was a good tale, it just does not inspire me to say much.