



Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man: A Memoir

By Bill Clegg

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Bill Clegg had a thriving business as a literary agent, representing a growing list of writers. He had a supportive partner, trusting colleagues, and loving friends when he walked away from his world and embarked on a two-month crack binge. He had been released from rehab nine months earlier, and his relapse would cost him his home, his money, his career, and very nearly his life.

What is it that leads an exceptional young mind to want to disappear? Clegg makes stunningly clear the attraction of the drug that had him in its thrall, capturing in scene after scene the drama, tension, and paranoid nightmare of a secret life-and the exhilarating bliss that came again and again until it was eclipsed almost entirely by doom. PORTRAIT OF AN ADDICT AS A YOUNG MAN is an utterly compelling narrative-lyrical, irresistible, harsh, and honest-from which you simply cannot look away.

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Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man: A Memoir By Bill Clegg Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #4971699 in Books
- Published on: 2011-08-08
- Format: Bargain Price
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.25" h x .75" w x 5.50" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 256 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A rising publishing industry star trashes his life during a bender in this intense but callow confessional. Clegg, a literary agent with William Morris Endeavor, tells the story of a two-month crack binge in which he smoked away his literary agency partnership, his \$70,000 bank account, 40 pounds (he's forever cutting new holes in his belt to cinch it to his wasting frame), and his relationship with his devoted long-suffering boyfriend. There's crazed excess and tawdry sex, but also a sharply etched portrait of the addict's mindset: the veering between paranoia and a compulsive sociability with the random crackheads he picks up to party with; the shrinkage of the planning horizon to the search for the next hit; the bliss of the high (the warmest, most tender caress... then, as it recedes, the coldest hand); the bender's unstoppable acceleration until, like a cartoon character running off a cliff, it has nothing left to sustain it. The author's efforts to impart psychological depth to his addiction—he writes of wan collegiate debauches and a childhood complex about urinating—are less convincing; it's clear that the binge will end when his money runs out. Though richly rendered, Clegg's crack odyssey feels like an epic bout of self-indulgence. (*June 14*)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

In this chilling debut, Clegg has written a serious and compelling, if somewhat detached, addition to the subgenre of "addiction memoirs." Clegg's tight, elegant prose, earnest tone, and meticulous attention to detail call up a fairy tale world brutally transformed into a monstrous hell. While the *New York Times Book Review* and the *Times* considered the book tedious and clichéd, their comments appeared to be directed more toward the genre as a whole, whose repetitive descriptions of substance abuse are "amply familiar to anyone who has ever watched a single episode of *Behind the Music* on VH-1" (*Times*). Of course, reviewer David Carr has written his own tale of addiction, *The Night of the Gun* (***1/2 Nov/Dec 2008). Most critics, however, agreed with the *Globe and Mail*, which called Clegg's unflinching, intelligent, and grim account "a skillfully conjured, slow-motion train wreck from which it's impossible to look away."

From [Booklist](#)

Clegg was a partner in a thriving literary agency and was involved in a long-term, loving relationship when he succumbed to cocaine addiction. For two months, he went on a crack binge that emptied his bank account, ruined his business, destroyed his relationship, and nearly took his life. Clegg alternates between recollections of his slow and steady decline into addiction and his youthful discovery that he was gay, humiliated by his father's taunts and his mother's distance. As his addiction escalated, he frantically chased the high, endlessly starting over after binges of drinking and smoking crack, running away from every intervention effort by his family or his lover, indulging in anonymous sex with a string of fellow users. When his disheveled appearance prompts a hotel to reject his attempt to register, he realizes he has fallen into "the purgatory between citizen and nobody, between fine young man and bum" and begins a slow and painful recovery. This is a heartbreaking and completely absorbing look at the wreckage of cocaine addiction. --
Vanessa Bush

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Teresa Propst:

The book with title Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man: A Memoir has a lot of information that you can discover it. You can get a lot of profit after read this book. That book exist new understanding the information that exist in this reserve represented the condition of the world currently. That is important to yo7u to understand how the improvement of the world. This specific book will bring you inside new era of the the positive effect. You can read the e-book with your smart phone, so you can read that anywhere you want.

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Corey Mason:

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