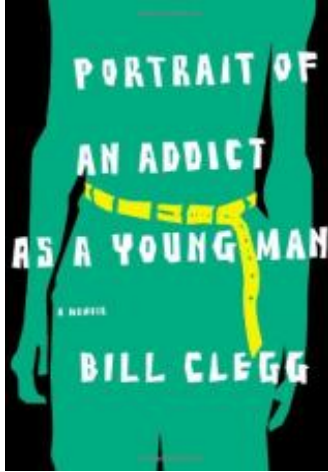


Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man

by Bill Clegg



About the Book

Bill Clegg had a thriving business as a literary agent, 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 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. He also explores the shape of addiction, how its pattern --- not its cause --- can be traced to the past.

Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man is an utterly compelling narrative --- lyrical, irresistible, harsh, honest, and beautifully written --- from which you simply cannot look away.

Discussion Guide

1. Why do you think Bill Clegg turned to drugs? Do you believe that the source of addiction is more emotional or physical?
2. Have you ever had a coworker or loved one who was an addict? What would you do if you were in the same situation as Bill Clegg's friends and family?
3. Do you think that the "Penneys" the author saw were real or hallucinations? At what point did you have a hard time deciding which they were, and why?
4. Bill Clegg was often able to find public spaces where he could take drugs --- bathrooms, dressing rooms, offices, etc.

Were you surprised by how much of his drug use was hidden in plain sight?

5. The author seemed to have a sixth sense about which other people ?liked to party.? What do you think the signs he picked up on are?

6. James Joyce wrote **The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man**. Why do you think Bill Clegg chose to call his memoir **Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man**? Do you think the two books are similar?

7. What do you think is the significance of the author?s childhood affliction? Why do you think he wrote those passages in the third person?

8. Do you think **Portrait of an Addict as a Young Man** can serve as a cautionary tale for readers? Do you think it can help people who are dealing with addiction?

Author Bio

Bill Clegg is a literary agent in New York and the author of the bestselling memoirs **PORTRAIT OF AN ADDICT AS A YOUNG MAN** and **NINETY DAYS**. The author of the novels **DID YOU EVER HAVE A FAMILY** and **THE END OF THE DAY**, he has written for the *New York Times*, *Lapham?s Quarterly*, *New York* magazine, *The Guardian* and *Harper?s Bazaar*.

Photo Credit: Van Scott-Clegg

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