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Addictarium: A Drug Abuse & Recovery Memoir



Synopsis

When photography student, wild child, and self-anointed "creative, nomadic Spirit," Danielle Martino finds herself curled in a ball on the cold tile floors of her filthy rank bathroom in the tiny studio she rents with her fiancé and partner-in-crime, she knows it's time to quit abusing heroin. Severely impaired from shooting "bad dope," and already partially blind from the infection that the poisoned bag has caused, she is forced to hitch a greyhound bus to New York City, and to abandon her care-free, American-bohemian, drug infested life-style. Upon her arrival to Manhattan, she is immediately admitted to Bellevue Hospital, while withdrawing from heroin, and the severely draining reality of coming off of drugs. Several weeks of eye-surgeries later, she is forced to deal with the fact that part of her eyesight is never coming back. It is then that she is placed in New York City's notorious therapeutic community, Safe Haven Village--the quintessential rehab for felons, addicts, homeless patrons, and the mentally ill. Fast-forward to a year later, and we witness Danielle's reckless plight into the phase 2 commitment of the program, dubbed The "Re-Entry Unit," or "The Village," as Danielle likes to call it, because "it is a freak-show by every definition of the word." In re-entry, Danielle comes to find out the first year of treatment, titled "The Boot Camp Phase" has nothing on re-entry's bizarre "palace of panic!" She is recklessly plucked and thrown into the Queens, New York program, where she impulsively--and, desperately--commits to only graduating and leaving the program, after she finishes school, and seeks employment. The community is there to help addicts put the finishing touches on their "new, sober lives," or so they say...With a facility that closer resembles a homeless shelter or mental ward, this is one girl's journey towards a healthy recovery, despite all circumstances against her, interlaced with tales of the corruption ignored in New York City government-operated-and-funded drug recovery system(s), and the wounded, vacant, nomadic broken souls, who are dumped in these places, and often forgotten about. This bold and candid story highlights in the starkest of lights, why it is so difficult for addicts to gain the recovery they seek, when they do finally decide to "put the drug down." Especially for Danielle, as weaved throughout this tale we witness the complicated and confusing relationships formed between addicts, through desperation, loneliness, and misunderstanding. From the beginning drama ensues, when her closest confidante and companion, Karen Frodge, is pimped out and eventually back on the needle. Another pair of comrades seduce Danielle into a dysfunctional sexual, triangular relationship, where all three are set to lose, while she finds herself jamming 7 hits of acid down her throat, stabbing herself in the leg while doped up and panic-stricken, and chronically relying on other substances to mask her addiction to heroin. We watch Danielle go from suicide worship, "neurotica," and masochistic-and-habitual self destruction, to finally--at last, a legit

fight for recovery, in this "house of broken souls." Danielle who was also dumped and discarded of by her fianc  of six years, on the day of her third eye surgery--to continue his own reckless lifestyle of sex, drugs and partying--ends up in the seat of counselor; Angel Rodriguez. Enter more chaos. Angel is a Latin, Brooklyn-bred counselor, 20 years her senior, and immediately, Danielle is attracted to him. But when he ends up her very own counselor, it becomes obsession for the pair, and in a place filled with corrupt staff members, and deranged and disturbed residents, he is everything Martino believes she needs during her year in Safe Haven's phase 2 building.

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Customer Reviews

I had a hard time reading this book. It is a difficult story that is being told. Even with the author stating it is fiction based upon experience, it is still a painful story. The main character is Danielle. She has been in rehab for a year and is now in the part acclimating her return to society. The book opens with Danielle continuing drug use and getting involved in all sorts of situations. There is a counselor there who she has a crush on. She gets assigned to this counselor and finds that they love each other. I have to say that I found Angel, the counselor, to be a manipulative person. At no

point did I feel he loved Danielle. I think he was excited by her and her exploits. I feel he emotionally abused her. Toward the end of the book he tells her something that totally made me question how many times he did this. How many girls did he use? It made me sad for Danielle. There are other characters in the book and the author writes them well. The author did an amazing job with showing the life of a drug addict. I have read other books where I was told it and the book is always better when we are shown. She delves into addiction and you witness the many faces of it. I think toward the end when we witness Danielle finally looking inside herself, the author is at her best. I wanted to cheer! I thought it was the most honest, from the heart, part of the book. Now for the warnings. There is drug and alcohol abuse, which I shouldn't need to point out. There is sexual activity and for those who have rape as a trigger, there is an explicit rape scene. I wish I had been ready for that. There is adult language. Danielle self harms, (the author portrays that very well). The book has some editing issues and would benefit from an editor.

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