



Girl Walks Out of a Bar: A Memoir

Lisa F. Smith

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Lisa Smith was a bright young lawyer at a prestigious law firm in NYC when alcoholism and drug addiction took over her life. What was once a way she escaped her insecurity and negativity as a teenager became a means of coping with the anxiety and stress of an impossible workload.

Girl Walks Out of a Bar explores Smith's formative years, her decade of alcohol and drug abuse, divorce, and her road to recovery. In this darkly comic and wrenchingly honest story, Smith describes how her circumstances conspire with her predisposition to depression and self-medication in an environment ripe for addiction to flourish. When her close-knit group of high-achieving friends celebrate the end of their grueling workdays with alcohol-fueled nights at the city's clubs and summer weekends partying at the beach the feel-good times can spiral wildly out of control.

Girl Walks Out of a Bar is a candid portrait of alcoholism through the lens of gritty New York realism. Beneath the façade of success lies the reality of addiction.

Girl Walks Out of a Bar: A Memoir Details

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Author : Lisa F. Smith

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From Reader Review Girl Walks Out of a Bar: A Memoir for online ebook

Billy says

Very entertaining! I was very entertained of a very common tale of drunkenness. She certainly lived it & fortunately came out the other side!

Jenni says

I absolutely loved Girl Walks Out of a Bar! From the first sentence of the book, I couldn't put down Lisa Smith's compelling and incredibly honest memoir, giving a "behind the scenes" view into addiction in high-pressure corporate law. She keeps nothing from the reader, taking you with her on the roller coaster of highs and lows on her journey from addiction into recovery. You'll be rooting for her all the way!

Jillian says

Just couldn't quite finish it. I kept trying with this book, picking it up again and again, but nothing about it could hold my attention. After reading my fair share of drug and alcohol abuse related memoirs, I found absolutely nothing special, memorable, or intriguing here. I give it two stars because there wasn't anything particularly terrible about the writing or the purpose, nothing offensive or obnoxious, only that nothing kept me interested. I couldn't connect with the author. I'm not sure how this topic could become dull but that was my experience. Dull review reflecting a dull reading experience.

Alex findingmontauk1 says

I'd give this one a 3.5 out of 5. I enjoyed the story and really getting into the mind of an alcoholic and substance abuser. It was shocking to realize how so many things we do in life are JUST on that edge of pushing into the land of addiction. And that line is different for everyone I think. I connected with the protagonist in more ways than I would like to admit to be honest. So I applaud the book for helping me to hold a mirror up to myself and see some things that may sometimes be going on. I would read more from this author!

Carrie Young says

Long drawn out story of a privileged woman with supportive family and friends, a high paying job and the ability to seemingly come out on top, despite dealing with alcoholism and drug addiction.

Karyl says

One of my favorite shows on television is "Intervention." I do love watching these types of shows because unlike some folks, I don't use them to feel better about my own life, but because I truly love to see it when someone is able to turn his life around and be the best person he can be. I am always so thrilled when at the end of an episode, it shows that the person has been sober for the last 6 months, and I especially love the follow-ups during the show itself that feature recovering addicts years later and how healthy they look and how good they feel.

So this book was really right up my alley. My heart broke when I read how Smith had this voice in her head telling her that she was an imposter, useless, not good enough, never going to make it, when her entire life was full of amazing achievements. It was no wonder that she turned to alcohol to quiet those demons, and then to cocaine to counteract the effects of the alcohol. And it shows that this can happen to anyone -- it doesn't have to result from childhood abuse or a traumatic event, though of course addiction is much more likely in those cases. Smith has a wonderful, supportive family and an excellent career; it was the voiceover in her head, the monster that is depression, that convinced her that she was nothing and would always be nothing.

Memoirs can be hard to rate, but I feel like this was better than most. I really enjoyed the way in which Smith organized her book. Starting from her entrance into rehab and then going back in time and catching back up to her recovery made a lot of sense and allowed the reader to join her on her journey. I admit I am surprised and extremely impressed that Smith was able to find sobriety without having to go to an extended in-patient rehab, that the stint in Gracie Square was enough to yank her onto the sober path and encourage her to stay there.

I'm always so amazed by the strength of recovering addicts, and I wish Smith all the very best, that she remains healthy and sober so she can continue to defeat the demons in her head.

J.L. Sutton says

Lisa K. Smith's *Girl Walks Out of a Bar* is an engaging memoir about addiction spiraling out of control as well as taking charge of that addiction. Stories from functional alcoholics, who seemingly invent a life around their addiction which has nothing to do with the life everyone else sees them leading, fascinate me. They reveal ways we all construct identity and how we present ourselves and see the world. For addicts, seeking help challenges their identity. What does it take for someone to face their addictions head on? While I wasn't sure (of all the experiences presented) what it finally took for Smith to seek recovery, her account is believable and compelling. 3.5 Stars.

Marie says

The main thing I came away with having read this book is amazement at how much abuse a body can withstand. Reading this book was like rubbernecking at a horrible auto accident. Unfortunately the recovery description, coming very late in the book was glossed over and seemed rushed. However, it is amazing that she was able to quit without relapsing, given the level of her addiction.

Anne says

Could not put it down!

Michelle says

Well-written memoir of a successful, driven attorney's descent into substance abuse. For audiobooks I prefer memoirs, and I seem to gravitate toward celebrity, addiction, or messed up family situations (polygamy, living in the wild, etc.) Evidently I like to hear about lives very far afield from mine. The thing that really struck me with this one is something that is quite obvious. Being an addict is incredibly boring. I cannot imagine that endless obsession, the constant planning and plotting. It is a full-time job and I'm shocked she could have an actual job for so long. It's kind of ironic that the term "partying" is used when it's the very opposite of a party. It all seems like a huge hassle (filed under: duh), which should dispel any old fashioned thoughts that addiction is a choice. I cannot think of anything less appealing than drinking red wine in the morning. So gross. Anyway, fascinating how she managed a high profile job as well as her addiction and did not "lose it all." I'm impressed by the way she approached her recovery. It's interesting, though, because in addiction memoirs about people from decent-to-good childhoods the writers all seemed to be early "experimenters." Maybe that's another "duh" but when they're getting drunk at 12 and trying cocaine at 14 and their parents are generally attentive and around, it's like "how did they not notice?" Overall, a very fast read (listen) and one of the better ones in the genre.

Peter Monn says

I've read tons of recovery memoirs and I have to say it wasn't my favorite. That being said, the story was well written and compelling and my best friend loved it but I just didn't connect with the writer. Check out my full review on my booktube channel <http://youtube.com/peterlikesbooks>

Philip Mann says

Reading this book, looking over the author's shoulder as she sinks into a serious drinking problem, you want to tap her on the shoulder and ask, "Why are you doing this, why?" At one point she admits to drinking two bottles of wine a day, by a random count. Plus cocaine. And she still manages to hold down a job as a high-flying lawyer. Yet every activity in her life, from a trip to the grocery store, to how to cover up her breath in an elevator, all of it revolves around drinking.

And one morning, in a glimpse of self-awareness, she understands how dangerous her life has become, and checks herself into a rehab center. From there she never looks back. I dreaded turning each page, wondering when she would take just one sip, then a glass, and then wind up emptying a bottle.

The book goes reads smoothly, in a frightening way. We watch her, from her late teens, slide into a life where drinking accompanies almost every event, and soon is her life. And then she climbs back up, one step at a time. I found myself dreading each new page, waiting for her to stumble. Her ultimate triumph is a testament to a person of enormous willpower.

Girl Walks Out Of A Bar is an autobiography, but could just as easily be called inspirational. A great book.

Andrea Conley says

Eye opening first hand account of the horrors of addiction. You never know the types of battles that others are fighting...

Theresa Alan says

When I finished this book (as an ebook), I was shocked by how many I-was-an-addict-who-got-sober stories that were recommended to me ("If you liked this book, here are fifty more similar books . . .") I like these stories of successful people who lost everything and then claw their way back up to success. In Lisa Smith's story, she almost lost everything but caught herself before that happened, which is amazing considering that she says she didn't go a day without drinking for ten years. The drinking eventually morphed into barely making it to eleven a.m. to an early lunch where she could order drinks, to starting to drink in the mornings and using coke to keep her going. How she kept her high-powered job while doing this and how she didn't land in the hospital until the day she checked herself into detox is also stunning.

My favorite of this genre of nonfiction will always be Augusten Burroughs' *Dry* because I laughed out loud and cried my guts out all through that one. I didn't laugh or cry once during *A Girl Walks into A Bar*, but there are words of wisdom on living life sober. This book also didn't have the harrowing aspects of a book like *The Night of the Gun* by David Carr because she wasn't wandering into crack dens in the middle of the night. Instead, as a New Yorker, she just had boxes of wine delivered and would call her coke dealer as if she were ordering a pizza.

This is a decently written book for the genre, but it doesn't break new ground or have any new insights.

For more of my reviews, please visit: <http://theresaalan.net/blog/>

Mike Keren says

Full disclosure: I learned of this book because it was the winner of the pitch Week Competition at When Words Count Writer's Retreat, a contest which I currently have a book competing in. I anxiously awaited its release and began trading it as soon as I finished the book I had open when it was released.

This is an excellent book. Few writers have been able to capture the experience of addiction as eloquently and as vividly as Smith has done in these pages. Augusten Burroughs in *Dry* is the only other one I have read. As a psychologist by profession, I have had many clients throughout my long career who have had substance abuse and other addiction issues. I'm not an "addiction specialist" but since much of my career has been in correctional settings I have dealt with addiction's sequelae on an almost daily basis. Like Burroughs, Davis' account really highlights the phenomenology of craving, needing, and withdrawing. Writing, perhaps gives her the distance to describe and recount it in a way that the consulting couch doesn't always permit. Whatever the secret, "Girl Walks Out of a Bar" has definitely added to my understanding of addictions.

On a personal reader basis, the book is well written. While many of the reviews have touched upon her use of humor, it is not the element that stood out for me. Her honesty is brutal and unflinching. Her willingness to describe the state of her apartment at the height of her addiction, right down to the stench of cigarettes, booze and perspiration; her admissions regarding her reluctance to commit to sobriety and her painful process of acknowledgement of how hard a sober life will be for her; and her willingness to portray her friends as three dimensional characters who both don't understand her addiction and try to help make for a gut punching read.

The the book was over i found myself wanting more. She leaves the writer when her sobriety is still relatively new and fresh. I wanted her to take her honesty and show me the pain of working her "steps", repairing and/or letting go relationships, and how now, years later, the struggle manifests itself. Perhaps she will write a sequel.

Smiths a voice for the alcoholic we don't often think about, the one who remains hidden because she still functioned. Her biographical statement speaks to her work getting the message out there, and the World will be a better, safer and more productive place because of her work. I recommend this book to anyone trying to figure out addiction -whether for themselves or a loved one. I recommend it to fellow therapists who are seeking to comprehend the phenomenology of an addicts experience. i recommend it to substance abuse counselors and other healthcare professionals who need a reminder of the way their behavior can impact a patient's experience and their future. I recommend this book to HR professionals and counselors who face these situations daily. Finally, I recommend it to anyone who enjoys a good, honest memoir. Good reading!
