



My Fair Junkie: A Memoir of Getting Dirty and Staying Clean

Amy Dresner

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In the tradition of *Blackout* and *Permanent Midnight*, a darkly funny and revealing debut memoir of one woman's twenty-year battle with sex, drugs, and alcohol addiction, and what happens when she finally emerges on the other side.

Growing up in Beverly Hills, Amy Dresner had it all: a top-notch private school education, the most expensive summer camps, and even a weekly clothing allowance. But at 24, she started dabbling in meth in San Francisco and unleashed a fiendish addiction monster. Soon, if you could snort it, smoke it, or have sex with, she did.

Smart and charming, with Daddy's money to fall back on, she sort of managed to keep it all together. But on Christmas Eve 2011 all of that changed when, high on Oxycontin, she stupidly "brandished" a bread knife on her husband and was promptly arrested for "felony domestic violence with a deadly weapon."

Within months, she found herself in the psych ward--and then penniless, divorced, and looking at 240 hours of court-ordered community service. For two years, assigned to a Hollywood Boulevard "chain gang," she swept up syringes (and worse) as she bounced from rehabs to halfway houses, all while struggling with sobriety, sex addiction, and starting over in her forties.

In the tradition of *Orange Is the New Black* and Jerry Stahl's *Permanent Midnight*, Amy Dresner's *My Fair Junkie* is an insightful, darkly funny, and shamelessly honest memoir of one woman's battle with all forms of addiction, hitting rock bottom, and forging a path to a life worth living.

My Fair Junkie: A Memoir of Getting Dirty and Staying Clean Details

Date : Published September 12th 2017 by Hachette Books

ISBN : 9780316430951

Author : Amy Dresner

Format : Hardcover 256 pages

Genre : Autobiography, Memoir, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review My Fair Junkie: A Memoir of Getting Dirty and Staying Clean for online ebook

Michelle says

My Fair Junkie: A Memoir of Getting Dirty and Staying Clean is a stunning and riveting debut of addiction and recovery by author comedienne Amy Dresner. With appearances on HuffPost Live, her writing has been featured in Psychology Today, The Fix, and other notable publications. She lives in West Hollywood, CA.

The 2011, holiday celebrations should have been enjoyable and fun. For Dresner, high on OxyContin, hysterical, and fighting frantically with her husband--life as she knew it would soon be over. Dresner would face formal charges of felony domestic violence with attempted assault with a deadly weapon. In her fourth 5150 in eight years, she was committed for a 72 hour hold in a hospital mental ward. "But I can still find time to feel sorry for myself" she wrote... "and ponder, in astonishment, the wreckage I have created: a criminal trial, shattered marriage, lost friendships, no home. I have managed to burn my life to the ground." Raised in a life of wealth and privilege, her divorced father a successful writer in film production and of popular sitcoms, she had the best education and mental health care her deeply concerned parents could provide. In therapy since her teens, a London analyst (for rich Jewish New Yorkers) diagnosed her with multiple mental health disorders. Often unable to get out of bed, change her clothes, medication was only temporarily helpful. Dresner knew there was something terribly wrong with her. Eventually she would turn to Tinder to feed her need for sexual trysts with a variety of men, as her behavior involving substance and sexual addiction spiraled beyond her control.

After treatment in several rehab and halfway houses, Dresner's friend assured her that she could complete her 240 hour community service requirement working in a thrift shop as she had done. Instead, Dresner was assigned to work in the blazing sun, with a crew of non-English speaking males, sweeping streets and picking up filth and trash on/near Santa Monica or Hollywood Blvd. As she regained her sobriety and dignity, the stand-up comic inside her would realize a person didn't speed while driving simply because they weren't ticketed, she could calm a crying infant that no one else could, and the "pink cloud" of delirious happiness wasn't a realistic idea/goal after all.

**With much appreciation and thanks to Hachette Book Group via NetGalley for the direct e-copy for the purpose of review.

Erin says

this is one of the worst memoirs ive ever read. not all addicts have the privileges and advantages that amy does.. so when she constantly speaks for all of us "Addicts this, addicts that.." its very frustrating. i would not recommend this book to anyone i know, unless they want to judge an over-privileged woman who, yes is an addict, but also lives a very different life than a lot of addicts due to money.

Becky Sandham Mathwin says

Addiction memoirs tend to be quick reads. I read My Fair Junkie at the gym and was able to finish it in two sessions on the stair climber. Ms. Dresner's writing is sharp and she definitely has plenty of stories to tell. I

feel odd saying it was entertaining as it seems as though I'm implying that I took pleasure in hearing about her drug, alcohol and sexual addiction. However, as ghoulish and voyeuristic as it may sound it was entertaining. Addiction memoirs typically are-lots of drama.

I give Ms. Dresner credit for being so forthright about her substance abuse and mental health struggles. In addition to drug, alcohol and sexual addiction she's also been diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder (not a surprising diagnosis in terms of how she presents herself in the book). BPD is a diagnosis that carries a good amount of stigma-I appreciated the fact that she was up front about it. My biggest complaint about My Fair Junkie is Ms. Dresner's need to repeatedly bring up her physical attractiveness. I always wonder why some women tend to feel the need to do this-I'm assuming it stems from some sort of insecurity? If you look at the jacket photo you can see that she's attractive-why the need to write about it repetitively? Men don't do this but then again men aren't indoctrinated from childhood in the importance of "prettiness."

Valerity (Val) says

I thoroughly enjoyed this memoir by Amy Dresner. Even though it's about addiction and alcoholism, it's one of the funniest books I've read in a while. It's about her many trips to rehab until she finally makes it stick, told with sarcastic humor while she recounts her marital split and divorce, breakdowns and time doing community service. She runs into some real characters during her time getting and staying clean, and it's a real trip. She also worked for nearly 5 years as a stand-up comic as you will easily be able to tell from her writing style. I was given an advance copy of this book for review.

Kristin Boldon says

I really enjoyed this addiction and recovery memoir. Dresner is smart, funny, dark and resilient as heck. The non-linearity was hard to follow at times, but it has a good through line of her community service, and a strong finish.

Rowan says

Any intent is buried by ignorance and nastiness

Oof. You know how sometimes you see someone who has used up all the space in their social media profile boasting about how they're such an a**hole? This book is that, for 244 pages.

Deep contempt for people of differing lifestyles. Casual racism. Casual homophobia. Casual transphobia. Casual Islamophobia. Casual fat hatred. Casual everything that makes anyone capable of meaningful self reflection wince when we look back at how people treated each other in the 1990s.

There's a line in the book where Amy says that nobody cares why you're an a**hole, they only care that you

are one. Well, this book seems like an overlong acknowledgement that she is one, but she apparently doesn't think there's anything to be done about that fact. A pointer for you, Amy: It's not actually hard to just stop saying cruel, ignorant things about people.

Jen from Quebec :0) says

A witty, engaging memoir of addiction told (and read by) the author, a stand up comic- which makes this an unflinchingly honest, candid and FUNNY account of a terrible malady. The audible version I enjoyed is made better by Amy, the author, reading it herself- plus, if she HADN'T read it herself, all those jokes about how very deep her voice is wouldn't have hit the mark at all. --Jen from Quebec :0)

Patrick O'Neil says

I just finished reading Amy Dresner's *My Fair Junkie* and I'm truly impressed. Not only that Dresner wrote such a strong compelling memoir, but that she's actually still alive. Alcoholic, meth-head, sex addict, pill popper, suicidal, and serial rehabist—damn! Whether you're in recovery or not *My Fair Junkie* is an all encompassing equal opportunity addiction extravaganza—there's something here for everyone to identify with—a solid read for the entire family.

Samilja says

Dresner's experiences were pretty hardcore (junkie, alcoholic, sex addict), at least to this milquetoast reader, and certainly made for an interesting read. I've heard the author interviewed and in that format I found her funny, outrageous, and honest. Disappointingly, I didn't find those disarming qualities in her writing, a lack that created a tone throughout the book of self-possession, external judgment, & childish sarcasm. Perhaps that was only me, missing subtle emotional nuance within the prose but Dresner is not particularly subtle and I'm not generally a complete dunce, so I'm going with my first interpretation in terms of my rating.

Mel says

Thoroughly enjoyed how Amy doesn't take herself too seriously, either in her life or narration here. Certainly not a feel-good read, nor particularly revolutionary, but still an entertaining romp down how self-destructive one woman can become and still live another day.

Nancy says

Whoa, what an amazing journey! I've been a follower of Amy's through her writing for The Fix and other recovery publications, so I knew this would deliver. Yes that it did! This is a fasten your seatbelt kind of read! The wit, honesty, rawness, courage and resiliency she showed us in this book is bar none above anything else I've ever read in a while. Amy's takes you through her hellacious journey of finding her true

self while getting clean and sober. She battles demons - more than just alcohol and drugs, her sex addiction comes through loud and clear and she got dirty honest with her readers in this area. So much so that it helped me understand the thought process behind it and how that manifested in my disease as well. I could relate to a lot of her thoughts and rationalizations! As addicts we are always looking to fill the void! Amy's writing style and her reminiscient storytelling is one that needs to be up there with all the great memoirists (Augusten, Glennon, Caroline Knapp, Cheryl Strayed). Amy has a unique way of writing where she can convey the story to you in a raw and direct manner, but also grab you with a laugh and a chuckle! Even through the darkest of times for her, the humor is there. I think that can be hard to accomplish, especially with such a serious subject matter. You laugh and root for her the whole way through too! I read this book in about 6 days, it would have been sooner, but my job took over for a couple days! Look forward to reading her next book and highly recommend this for anyone, not just people in recovery - everyone will get something out of this pure and fresh honesty! Kudos Amy!

Michelle Monieson says

Let me start by saying this is the first book review I've ever written, AND, i rarely give books 5 stars. This book grabbed me with the first sentence and compelled me to read the book in one day, it was that FASCINATING. It was addictive (no pun intended) for 2 reasons: 1) Dresner is an amazing writer. I loved her style, her descriptive comparisons, her vocabulary - all of it! 2) Dresner is FUNNY. No wonder she did stand up comedy. The fact that she is writing about such disturbing, gritty material yet finding ways to make you laugh throughout it all...that's a talent. I learned SO much about addiction and depression, and gave me a whole new empathy for those who battle with them. I sincerely hope that Dresner continues to write. I would love to hear more about her childhood, her teen years, her various therapists, etc. I have a feeling she can make any topic fascinating and funny. This was a book I could not put down, and in fact, I think I may need to read it again.

Dramatika says

I'm in minority here, since I found this memoir ridiculous, such self pitying and seemingly endless narrative by very entitled and completely lacking self awareness woman. She never seem to take responsibility for her actions, preferring instead to whine endlessly and not every convincingly on her so hard life. She pulls a knife at her husband while under influence of whatever substance and then complains for the criminal charge! No matter what her size is (and we have endless descriptions of her slim frame and blond hair), a junkie with a knife is very scary indeed. How you are supposed to know that knife is not sharp?! She gets some community labor instead of prison time (just a month!), yet is is so so hard the whole book is based on numerous complains how hard sweeping the street is! We never find out why exactly she decided to do drugs seemingly out of random at the ripe age of 24, but are treated to the pity party of "heart wrenching" stories of how hard rehab is. How dare the doctors and everyone treat alcoholics and addicts as morally inferior! This is a disease! She complains about her mother who is still treating her as a child at 40+, exactly the time when she is supposed to take care of her aging parents, not they of her!

Oh yes, there is an issue of some mental health problems, but in such country where everyone seem to be in therapy or on prescribed antidepressant, I cannot imagined it being a problem. Where I live, one do no dare to visit any psychiatrist ever for a very real fear of possible repercussions for finding job or even just getting driving licence. Same with suicide, you must be pretty certain to do it, otherwise you get committed in the horror place that psychiatry hospital for a month at least.

Mental health issues are very real, but are never discussed seriously in this book, which is a pity, it might gain at least some insight into this mess of a wasted life.

Carol says

I ended up hate reading this at the end. There are repeated anecdotes (for real, didn't she have an editor?) a timeline that is nonlinear for reasons that aren't clear and while she does seem to grow she also seems to continiously put the blame for everything on others. she's thin, and pretty which is mentioned every other page (and then has the audacity to say that fat people never get told to eat differently. On what planet does she live?) If you really have to read a book about addiction and god knows, I've read enough, read Night of the Gun by David Carr or America Anonymous by Benoit Denizet- Lewis.

Teresa Noble says

I am pretty squeamish when it comes to needles so I had to put the book down and take a breath at certain points. Other than that, I thought it was raw and disturbing, but also funny. A great combination!
