
Swimming in Addiction

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The characters and events in this book are based on actual events and all names used in this

book are used to maintain privacy.

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Recovery

It was five o'clock in the morning and important to be on the first bus headed Swimming in Addiction towards the housing project. The travel would take me to the office where most of my days were spent as an office assistant. The bus made the usual stops from one block to another picking up riders from every corner. However, work was not the plan for the day. The mission for today was to steal money from the office safe and to leave my note of confession.

They say that confession is good for the soul, but my soul was not my concern at the moment, my concern was focused on how not to get caught. For months I had stolen small amounts of

money from the safe that held rent money received from tenants. It was twenty dollars here and fifty dollars there, but somehow the money was always replaced by the same hand that stole it. The money had to be right for the next deposit to the bank.

My office manager trusted me with the safe combination; it was simple to take advantage of that. Not above the actions of any other thief, it Swimming in Addiction was too easy to steal from those who had less than I had. After all, the people who lived here were low income, welfare recipients. If they didn't care that they were poor, why should I? What they had or didn't have was of no concern of mine, at least not at this time. My concern was to get what I needed. There was no way to deny my drug addiction. One thing for sure that a drug addict needed was money to buy more drugs. It didn't Swimming in Addiction make any difference where or how it was gotten or from whom. There was no room for mistakes; this mission had to be timed just right.

The bus on this route would stop at the office every two hours. As the bus continued on its way it was the same old scenery that was now blurred in unfamiliar shapes. The rush in my steps when the mission began did not Swimming in Addiction allow me to care about my looks. There was little doubt my appearance was more than a "hot mess". My hair was pulled back in disarray. My face had no makeup to hide behind. With any luck, no one else would notice the smell of someone who had not bathed in days. After all, most of the last forty-eight hours had been spent with a crack pipe in my mouth; hygiene was the least of my concerns.

My unease now was not about my looks, but to get into that safe and get the money before anyone arrived to start their day. Little thought was given to how much money would be taken. Whatever it was, it needed to be enough to make it worth my while. Swimming in Addiction Besides, the last part of my plan was to confess to my crime and Swimming in Addiction there was a good chance that my crime would send me to jail.

My heart began to pound as if it had no mercy for me as the bus pulled into the office driveway. Beads of sweat rolled down the sides of my face. My hands were gripped tight around the metal bar of the seat in front of me. My mind was not sure what to do next; breathe or hold my breath. Fear began to creep into my wild and racing thoughts. At the last minute an unexpected thought battled its way into my consciousness, "You do not have to do this Casey; do not get off the bus." It would have been simple to stay on the bus and return home. However, my body craved the high of crack more than the need to stop my crime. It was easier to allow this unexplainable urge to lead me.

It's hard to explain this internal urge through which a crack addict goes. Without Swimming in Addiction a doubt; this urge requires few words to describe it to a fellow crack addict. It's what drives us to continue to abuse our bodies the way we do. Even as we take the first hit for the night, we know in our minds that we should not do this. The money spent should have been used to pay bills, put gas Swimming in Addiction in the car, buy food or pay the rent. But it is the immense euphoria of the first hit that fuels Swimming in Addiction us to use more and do things that we would not normally do.

If my heart pounded any harder, the other passengers would hear it. As the bus door swung

open my feet hit the pavement. It felt as if time began to move in slow motion. It took forever to get to the main entrance Swimming in Addiction of the office. As my feet stepped into the hallway my adrenaline kicked into high gear. Time began to move faster. Once the safe was in my view my fingers went into position to tumble the numbers for the right combination.

It seemed that hurry had gotten the best of me because as well as my fingers knew the combination, the safe door did not open. A voice began to direct me inside of my head. "Okay Casey, you've opened the safe hundreds of times, slow down, and remember to turn the dial one number at a time." "Twelve to the left..., thirty to the right..., twenty-four to the left." At last the door opened.

My hands reached for the tray that contained the money. "How much, how Swimming in Addiction much would be enough? Twenty, forty, sixty, eighty, one hundred...that should be more than enough." Satisfied with the amount, the money found its way into my pocket. As my body prepared to go into escape mode, my brain had another plan, "Get fifty more Swimming in Addiction dollars". As the extra money slid into my pocket my eyes glanced over at the Swimming in Addiction clock on the wall. Ten more minutes before the bus returned. With the money in my pocket, the safe door closed, there was one thing left to do.

It was now time to write my confession of thievery to my supervisor. There was no time for hesitation as the pen met paper.

"Melanie,

This letter is to let you know that I have taken money from the safe. This is not the first time. You will find one hundred and fifty dollars missing from the cash drawer. My drug addiction has gotten the best of me and I am ashamed of where it has led me. Perhaps you will find it in your heart to forgive me one day. Please have personnel take money out of my next paycheck to replace the money I have stolen. It would be understandable if the main office contacts the police."

Casey

Another glance at the clock told me there were four minutes left before the bus returned. With quickness, the letter found its way to Melanie's desk. There was no time to waste; the way out was within my view. Before the Swimming in Addiction door closed behind me, the need to turn around and look at my desk over-powered my need to flee.

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This job was important to me. Unfortunately, too much time was spent with my eyes on the clock as the hands danced to five o'clock. The sooner it got to five o'clock, the closer it was to

head for Swimming in Addiction home to get high. There was so much self-hatred within me. It was far greater than expected. My self-hatred began to boil over for what I had just done. But no matter how much I loathed the crack addict within me, the urge to get high was stronger than the thought to leave the money behind. It was time to turn and close the door.

A careful look outside told me no one was there to witness my escape. With subtle movements my feet hurried Swimming in Addiction my pace to the bus stop. Within the nick of time my crime had been committed. The bus had just pulled into the driveway; when it stopped a criminal climbed aboard with the evidence in her pocket; evidence that would buy more crack.

My bus trip home was as much as a blur as it was on the way to the office. But this time, there was little doubt that the police would find themselves at my front door. Would it be too much to ask for them to at least wait until the party with the pipe was complete? My stomach turned in disgust but not enough to change my mind; my addiction Swimming in Addiction ruled. My mind repeated the same message over and over again. "You're no better than Swimming in Addiction all the rest of the crack heads out there."

Once my body was in the cold blue fake leather seat, it molded into a slouch as if to go under cover from view of my companion riders. There's no one to hide from but myself. As the Swimming in Addiction bus got closer to my apartment, the more my mind asked the question, "How could this have happened to me"?

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Somehow the ride home began to feel longer than the Swimming in Addiction ride to the scene of my misdeed. The return trip view was the Swimming in Addiction same: stop signs, traffic lights, and billboards all the same. What was different was this rider. On the way to the office, this rider was just a shameful crack head. The bus returned with a shameful crack head thief.

Maybe my thievery did not compare to those who embezzled thousands of dollars. But a thief is a thief. Money from the office soda machine found its way into my pockets most afternoons. It never occurred to me that the guy who filled the machine with the sodas would notice that there was never enough money to match the sodas that had been bought.

After the first day my fingers began to steal money, it became easier to continue. It never mattered how much money was stolen. It did not matter that it was money from those who almost had none. What mattered was a way to feed my addiction. My concern to quench my appetite meant more than the needs of others. My addiction Swimming in Addiction became my ruler Swimming in Addiction of all things wrong and I was the undeniable servant of it.

There was unease in my body as it hovered on the edge of the seat. My eyes avoided contact with the other riders. Perhaps it was my guilt. Whatever it was, it felt as if my crime was confessed through the windows of my eyes. The shame that grew within me now required protection. However, there was little comfort for me on the ride home. For almost 16 years, this drug addict had become accustomed to the comfort that crack had given her. But at this moment true comfort was alien to Swimming in Addiction me. It was nowhere to be found.

Thoughts raced through in my mind. They darted from one thing to another. But my thoughts always went back to how long would it take before the police knocked at my door? Would it be possible to be too high to be embarrassed by the cold double wristed silver bracelets or the chauffeured driven limousine with the blue flashing lights?

Something needed to be done with my hands. They felt glued to the rail of the seat in front of me. Perhaps they would find relaxation if they were placed in my pockets. In one pocket was the stolen money, a simple reminder of my sin; in the other a cinnamon candy.

The candy would not find itself in my mouth right away. Instead my fingers played with it. They could feel the crinkles in the shiny red twisted cellophane paper as if my fingers were Braille readers. There was no need to remove the candy from my pocket. It was not unusual to find a cinnamon sweet in my pocket. My fingers knew every tiny detail of the crimsoned spiced candy intimately. For a moment, just one simple moment, this remnant reminder would remove me from my fear.

As a little girl the highlight of the afternoon was when my father pulled into the driveway after work. He was always greeted by the stampede of his daughters. We ran to greet him with the hopes he would have a surprise for us. Some days there were no surprises, but Daddy's arrival home was good enough. On other days, daddy would bring us hard candy packaged like Life Savers in a small wrinkled brown paper bag. The flavors were Root Beer and my preferred,

cinnamon.

My taste buds danced at the thought of the spicy tingle of hot cinnamon as it jumped for joy on my tongue. It seemed strange, maybe funny, how a small red treat could remind me of such a pleasant memory at a time like this. Even though there was a need to give myself the enjoyment of the warm sweet taste, it would not happen. I didn't deserve it. My hand was removed from my pocket... empty.

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Before The Drugs

My life as a child was not a prediction of what my life as an adult could become. Most of my life was spent in Connecticut with my two younger sisters. We felt like we were the luckiest kids in the neighborhood. Our home consisted of a complete family. I was the oldest of the three children my parents had together. As a family we had a lot of fun. As children, we knew that we were loved by both of our parents.

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