

The New Prohibition

Sherilyn Connelly

2002

I don't drink. I'm not on the wagon, nor am I clean and sober. I've never had a drinking problem; I don't do it because I don't enjoy it. Thankfully, I figured that out very early on.

When I was twenty, my friend Vicky threw a graduation party. Mudslides were the drink du jour. Indeed, they were the drink of many a jour. Vicky's boyfriend's skill at making them was local legend, as was my girlfriend's fondness for them, earning her the nickname "Mudslide Queen." MSQ for short.

I challenged her title that night, but I didn't stop with the mudslides. I don't remember exactly what else I drank; probably beer, wine and whatever else was around. Not yet having seen *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, I was unaware of the mixing/worrying dichotomy. I suppose it can be justified as an experiment, and a successful one, because the long term results were useful.

When I was five years old, I touched the business end of the cigarette lighter in the car. To me, the little picture of the smoking cigarette looked like a trapeze with only one rope. I still didn't know what it meant, even after I burning myself. I only knew I would never touch it again. When my mom returned to the car, I must not have looked like I was in pain, and I was too embarrassed to tell her what happened. Even then, my Vulcan stoicism came in handy.

Presently, the short term results of my accidental experimental found me blacked out, surrounded by my own vomit. (Which is better than being surrounded by someone else's, I guess.) When I came to, I was vaguely aware that I was in the bathroom of the master bedroom. Whatever was left of my lucid mind piped up: *you got drunk and threw up all over vicky's parents' bathroom. congratulations! you're the worst kind of cliché. now clean it up.* Some of the puke had made it into the toilet, but a lot hadn't. I got lucky that

the floor was tile and not carpet, but it also happened to be roughly the same color as the vomit, making it difficult to tell where one ended and the other began.

I reached up, pulled off a few sheets of toilet paper and dabbed at the floor. Paydirt! Paypuke, anyway. I wiped some up and put it in the toilet. Ah, so THAT's what the floor looks like. It was like finding the elephant in the clay.

Another handful, and my brain spoke up again: *better flush that toilet. you really, really don't want it to overflow while you're down here.* So I flushed it, wiped up a few more handfuls, flushed it again, wash rinse repeat. Better to waste the water than clog up the plumbing.

I cleaned up the bathroom as well as could be expected under those circumstances, and at some point my girlfriend was able to drive me home. I only lived a few blocks away, so before long I was in bed, occasionally puking into my own toilet. Sometimes you can't ask for more than that.

The next day sucked. I spent most of it in bed, grateful that I didn't have to go to work, trying to figure out how anyone could possibly do this on a regular basis. I could hardly remember the night before, and I was miserable now. And, yet, this was a weekly or even daily routine for some people? I didn't get it. I still don't. In purely capitalist terms, the Return On Investment is all out of whack.

I never got that drunk again, and I can count the overall number of times I've been hung over on one hand. By the late nineties I'd decided not to drink at all, and now I have the convenient excuse of needing to go easy on my liver because of the hormones. Besides, someone has to be able to drive.



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 2nd Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.