

***Flirtin' with the Monster* Table of Contents**  
With Essay Summaries

**Introduction ~ Ellen Hopkins**

*Crank* and *Glass* author Ellen Hopkins introduces the anthology by explaining why she wrote the books, a fictionalized version of her daughter's meth addiction, and how writing them changed (and continues to change) her life.

**Part I**

**Role Models ~ Niki Burnham**

Author Niki Burnham takes on the censorship of *Crank*, *Glass*, and similar books, arguing that there is value in reading about characters with flaws and controversial problems. In order to be believable, a book must have conflict, and conflict is usually caused by people acting less than ideally. But more importantly, books such as *Crank* and *Glass* are valuable because they give their readers a safe way to explore problems such as drug addiction, allowing them mentally and emotionally to experience dangerous things they may be curious about without actually risking their own lives or health.

**More Than Just a Broken Line ~ Susan Hart Lindquist\***

Novelist and poet Susan Hart Lindquist explores why *Crank* and *Glass* are so powerful. The books are bestsellers despite being long, written in verse, and free of happy endings. Lindquist argues that much of the popularity of these books can be attributed to their lyrical writing, verses full of allusions, assonance, rhyme, and figurative language. Hopkins' careful choices about story, form, and point of view, Lindquist says, are what give these works the honest and compelling voice that hooks readers and makes them want to read more.

**Love Is an Addiction ~ Megan Kelley Hall\*\*\***

Author Megan Kelley Hall explores the similarities between being in love and being on drugs, and why the two are so closely connected for Kristina in *Crank* and *Glass*. Hall looks at addiction as a metaphor for love in everything from Shakespeare to popular songs, and at the science that seems to support the connection.

**Why Kristina Can't Just Quit ~ Mary Bryan**

Mary Bryan, the director of a substance abuse treatment center (in Kristina's home state of Nevada), gives a scientific perspective on the nature of addiction. She describes the stages and the typical physical and emotional progression of addiction, using Kristina as an example, while acknowledging that there are different types of addiction and that it is different for each person. She also assures that there is hope for every addict (even one as far gone as Kristina), and explains how treatment for addiction works.

### **A View From the Bench ~ Judge John Tatro**

Criminal court judge John Tatro draws on his experience trying meth addicts to explain the devastating effect that methamphetamine has on not just the addict but also on the family and the community. He describes how Hopkins' books helped him understand the personal and emotional side of addiction and changed the way he does his job.

### **Letting a Loved One Go ~ Gail Giles\*\***

Author Gail Giles looks at the attempts Kristina's family makes to help Kristina by pushing her away, liking the decision to amputation. Sometimes, Giles argues, cutting off the addict not only saves the family but also saves the loved one, because it can force him or her to finally make the decision to try to recover.

### **The Secret's Out ~ Terri Clark**

Librarian and author Terri Clark explores the destructive power of secrets, what kind of secrets people keep, and the reasons that they keep them. If Kristina had just told her secrets to a parent or someone else who could have helped her, Clark asks, could she have saved herself from addiction? Clark also discusses the way Hopkins' books have encouraged other teenagers to share their own secrets with Hopkins, and often get help.

### **The Importance of Being Between ~ Micol Ostow\*\***

Author Micol Ostow uses Kristina's invention of a second personality, "Bree," to encourage readers to accept their whole selves rather than repressing certain parts. She explains the Freudian concepts of the id, ego, and super-ego, and suggests that Kristina's creation of Bree was her way of dealing with her id—and that if Kristina had been able to at any point successfully accept those desires and integrate them into herself, she might not have ended up destroying her life.

### **Reality-Based Memoir vs. Non-Fiction ~ Cinda Williams Chima**

Author Cinda Williams Chima discusses the nature and purpose of memoir and the controversy surrounding fictionalized memoirs. What is a memoir? How true does it need to be? What is "truth," and is it the same thing as fact? Chima argues that memoirs are best when they are partly fictionalized because it makes for better storytelling and a more effective (and "real") book, using *Crank* and *Glass* as an example.

## **Part II**

### **Letting Go ~ John Hopkins ("Scott")\*\*\***

John Hopkins, the real-life inspiration for the character of Kristina's stepfather Scott, tells his side of the story—how he became aware of his stepdaughter's addiction, and the heartache she put her family through as it escalated. He explains what he and his wife had to do in order to

save their family, particularly their grandson, and how they have been able to move on without bitterness but not unscathed.

**Best Friend, Stolen ~ Kelly Foutz (“Jake”)\*\***

Kelly Foutz, the inspiration for Kristina’s brother Jake, is Kristina’s younger sister. She was the family member who was most involved in “Kristina’s” actual drug use, and her poignant recollections show not only new insight into Kristina’s story, but her own struggle to keep her sister and best friend from being stolen from her by the monster of addiction.

**Kristina Speaks Up ~ “Kristina”\*\*\***

The real Kristina gives her side of the story in this wistful, poignant essay. She describes how her desire to be accepted led her to use drugs, even though she initially hated them and did them in order to fit in, and how even when she wanted to do the right thing she experienced a complete lack of control because of her addiction. She expresses her hope that her story will prevent others from going down the same road.

**Choices ~ Orion Hopkins (“Hunter”)\*\***

Eleven-year-old Orion Hopkins, “Kristina’s” son and the inspiration for Hunter (the baby Kristina gives birth to at the end of *Crank*), gets the last word in the anthology, demonstrating addiction’s long reach. Although Orion does not have many memories of Kristina, his life is clearly shaped by the problems Kristina’s addiction caused him and his family. But he feels lucky that he now has a good life and explains how Kristina’s problems have inspired him never to do drugs himself.

While you don’t need to have read *Crank* and *Glass* to appreciate most of the essays in this volume, pairing the essays with the text they cover will enrich their meaning.

\* You only need to read an excerpt of *Crank* to understand or use this essay.

\*\* You only need to have read *Crank* to understand or use this essay.

\*\*\* You may need to have read both *Crank* and *Glass* to understand or use this essay.