

# **Crank Study Guide**

**Crank by Ellen Hopkins**

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## Plot Summary

Crank by Ellen Hopkins tells the story of a teenage girl who becomes addicted to crank, a form of methamphetamine. The novel follows Kristina's downward spiral as she attempts to feed her addiction and deal with the consequences of the bad decisions that she has made. At one of her lowest points, Kristina learns that she is pregnant by a man who raped her. Although she realizes how much destruction the drugs have brought into her life, Kristina still is unable to break her addiction.

Kristina begins taking drugs during a trip to visit her birth father in Albuquerque. Kristina is already feeling misplaced in her family by her stepfather and younger brother. She is deeply disappointed when she learns that her father is not the prince that she imagined him to be. Instead, he is distant and uninterested in Kristina. It is during this time of emotional distress and upheaval that Kristina meets her first boyfriend, Adam. It is during this time that Kristina gives birth to a new personality whom she will come to call Bree. Kristina describes Bree as the essence of herself. While Kristina is a traditional good girl, Bree throws caution to the wind. Bree flirts with boys, wants to experience the wild side of life, and takes drugs.

Author Ellen Hopkins tells a powerful story about how easy it is to get addicted to drugs and how difficult it is to break away from these drugs. Hopkins shows that even the most unlikely teenagers are susceptible to drug abuse and addiction. This drug addiction can lead to decisions, such as Kristina's decision to date Brendan, which will affect the teens for the rest of their lives. Perhaps as important as the power of Hopkins' story is the way she tells it. Hopkins uses the physical form of her lyrics, as well as the words that she chooses, to help express the story she wants to tell. Stanza spacing, word spacing, word placement, and rhythm of the words all work together to help Hopkins tell her story in a very powerful and memorable way.



# Flirtin' with the Monster through At Least I Had Something

## Flirtin' with the Monster through At Least I Had Something Summary

"Flirtin' with the Monster" indicates that life after Kristina began using crack was better than her life before. But this good life didn't last long. In "Introduction" Kristina tells her audience she will tell them the whole story of the reasons why she started, and continued, doing drugs. In the section titled "Alone" Kristina indicates that at this point in her life she felt very separated from her family. Her mother seemed distant, Kristina was unable to please her stepfather, her sister had just announced she was gay, and her little brother had taken over Kristina's spot in the family as the baby. Kristina is unhappy with herself. It is because of this unhappiness that Kristina reasons that she turns into a girl whom she calls Bree.

Kristina introduces Bree in the section entitled "On Bree." Kristina believes Bree has always been with her, but that she only surfaces at Kristina's deepest points of unhappiness. In "More on Bree," Kristina contends that Bree is not an alter ego or a figment of Kristina's imagination. Bree is the person who has kept Kristina alive in the times when "good girl" Kristina would have died or been killed emotionally. Kristina writes in the section entitled "My Mom Will Tell You," that in her mother's opinion all of Kristina's troubles started when she was ordered, by a judge, to visit her father, a man she had not heard from in eight years. Looking back, Kristina realizes her mom was probably right; it probably was this visit that started her on the road to a drug addiction.

The section, "The Prince of Albuquerque," describes Kristina's search for her dad at the airport terminal. This man turns out not to look like the prince she remembered him to be. Kristina's father hums a bedtime song as Kristina introduces herself in "Mutual Assessment." Kristina realizes she and her father are strangers to one another. In "I Got in a Car with a Stranger," Kristina and her father attempt to talk to each other. Their conversation dwindles in "Small Talk Shrank to Miniscule." It is in the section, "You Call This a Castle," that Kristina bumps into a person whom she refers to as her silver knight. In the section "At Least I Had Something," Kristina writes that this boy gives her something to think about other than her father and his awful apartment.

## Flirtin' with the Monster through At Least I Had Something Analysis

In this introductory section, Hopkins sets up the background that causes Kristina to turn to drugs and as a result become addicted. Although her mother believes it is only Kristina's trip to see her father that caused Kristina's addiction, there is actually much



more to the problem. Kristina's parents are divorced. She has not seen or heard from her dad in eight years. Kristina describes her stepfather as being stern with expectations she can't achieve. Since Kristina's mother has reached middle age, she has been trying to earn fame for herself. This quest for fame, along with her new relationship with Scott, the stepfather, has left little love and attention for Kristina. Kristina's sister is gay, another circumstance that has probably taken attention away from Kristina. Jake, a younger half brother, has usurped Kristina's position in the family as the baby. For all of these reasons, Kristina feels alone and unloved. On top of all this, Kristina has realized that her father is not the man she remembered him to be.

In this section, Kristina briefly introduces Bree. Bree is the person inside Kristina who Kristina comes to prefer to herself. Kristina is careful to explain that Bree is not an imaginary friend or an alter ego. She is the person Kristina is afraid to be. But in many ways, Bree protects Kristina from the pain she feels in her loneliness and her disappointment concerning her father. As Kristina writes, it is Bree who treads the oceans "where good girls drown."

While the subject matter of this book is engrossing, the form in which Hopkins chooses to write her novel is of equal importance. Hopkins enjoys playing with words, phrases and form in a way that makes her story leave a lasting impression. For instance, one section is titled "I Got in a Car With a Stranger." Although the reader knows this "stranger" is really Kristina's father, the use of this phrase not only foreshadows the idea that Kristina's visit to her father is ill-fated, but also gives the reader an idea how distant Kristina feels from her father at this point. One form that Hopkins uses often employs the use of a single word or words placed between the stanzas of her poetry. The words fit into the sentences of the poetry, but when read by themselves, form a sentence which summarizes the main idea of that poem. For instance, in the section "Introduction" if one reads only the single words, they make the following sentences: "I am the face in the mirror only not. I swerved recklessly picking up speed to madness."



# Dad Had to Go to Work through He Knew it, Too

## Dad Had to Go to Work through He Knew it, Too Summary

Even though it is their first chance to spend time together in nearly nine years, Kristina's dad announces he will not be home that evening in the section, "Dad Had to Go to Work." He has not even told his boss his daughter is visiting. In "He Worked in a Bowling Alley," Kristina's dad offers to take her with him to work. Kristina turns down her dad's offer in "I Opted Out." The section, "Not Quite Silent" describes the noises Kristina hears while in her dad's empty apartment. "The Screaming" that Kristina hears through the apartment walls takes her back to the time when her birth parent were still married, but would argue. Although Kristina realizes now that her mom was probably right, her dad is worthless; she has still not forgiven her mother for telling him he did not deserve Kristina and her sister. In the section, "Of Course, When I Was Little," Kristina explains that she did not understand at her young age exactly what was going on between her parents. She felt it was her mother's fault that her father went away. On the other hand, Kristina believes she could have forgiven her father any of his faults if only she still held the place in his heart that she once had.

Kristina acknowledges that she has gained some perspective on her parents' situation in, "Okay, Over the Last Few Years." This section in which Kristina describes her dad's habit of staying at home watching cable television leads into the following section "Dad Hadn't Paid His Cable Bill." Although Kristina acknowledges she should have gone to bed, she goes outside instead. Here she watches as her silver knight flirts with another girl. She takes in all their moves and expressions. In the section entitled "The Rules," Kristina admits to herself that the game seemed easy. The girl's mother calls and the silver knight is left alone in the section, "She Went Inside." In the section, "I Must Have Moaned," the white knight notices Kristina in her hiding place and starts to talk to her. He tells Kristina that although she thinks she is too good for him, she isn't. Bree takes over for Kristina in the section titled "The Wind Blew Up." Kristina is surprised at the name she has given herself in the section "Bree? Who Was She?" The knight, however, likes the name. His name is Adam, his friends call him Buddy.

The section "I Wanted to Know Him, Too," describes how Kristina, and Bree, wanted to get to know Adam better. The girlfriend discovers Kristina and Buddy talking together in "The Return of Guinivere." Kristina feels that the girl, whose name is Lince, is threatening Kristina not to invade her territory. In the section, "That'll Teach Me," Kristina goes back to her dad's apartment and tries to calm herself. Later in bed, Kristina is unable to sleep as is described in the section "Toss-and-Turn Night." "Through the Keyhole" describes how Kristina has nightmares about wildcats fighting over territory. In her dream, however, it is Kristina and not Lince who is the winning bobcat.



Kristina describes the way in which she and her father spent the next three days in the section "I Hid Out for Three Days." Kristina is surprised when her father tells her that other women do not measure up to her mom. Kristina tries to meet her dad in his own territory in "I Even Spent Time at the Bowling Alley." As she watches her dad at the bowling alley, she realizes in the section "He Hadn't Changed After All" that her dad is still involved in the drug scene. Marijuana and meth, or crank, seem to be his drugs of choice. Although her dad tells her that crank can make a person fly, Kristina realizes as she watches her dad crash that the crash is hard and perhaps not worth the flight, in the section, "You Fly Until You Crash." In the section entitled "Dad Crashed" Kristina describes her father's crash. During this empty time, she goes to the store where she runs into Buddy. In the section entitled "He Knew It, Too," Buddy asks Kristina if they can talk awhile.

## **Dad Had to Go to Work through He Knew it, Too Analysis**

In this section of the novel, Kristina realizes that her father really is the man who her mother told her that he was. He works in a bowling alley, He is paid cash without the business reporting his salary to the government so he can continue to collect disability. Although her dad says he wants more out of life than what he has now, he admits to Kristina that he still measures women against her mother, and that none can measure up. As Kristina spends time with her dad in the bowling alley, she realizes that he still loves drugs more than family. She watches as he spends all his money on crank, a form of methamphetamine. Through all of this, Kristina's pain increases as she realizes she is not daddy's little girl anymore.

Kristina's relationship with Adam grows faster than her relationship with her father. Even though Adam already has a girlfriend, Kristina is both frightened and intrigued by him. It is during one of her conversations with Buddy that Bree first makes a public appearance. As Bree takes control of her brain, Kristina hears herself saying things to Adam that she would never have had the courage to say herself.

In this section also, the writer begins to insert some concrete poetry in with her other lyrics. A concrete poem is one in which the poet forms his words to create the physical image of what he is writing about. For instance, in the section "I Even Spent Time at the Bowling Alley" the words are arranged so that they form the image of the arrows often seen painted on the floors of bowling lanes.

Notice also that in this section Hopkins continues to play with words. For instance, she names Kristina's white knight Adam. It is ironic that Adam is the man in the Christian Bible who originally caused the fall of man from God's grace. This may foreshadow the idea that it will be this Adam who will cause the fall of Kristina from her "good girl" status. In the section "I Must Have Moaned" Kristina indicates that Buddy seems like a Jack-in-the-box waiting for the "pay-off crank." Although it is understood the word "crank" is used in this sense as a verb, it is an interesting use of the word in this phrase

because it causes the phrase to have a double meaning. It can also indicate a satisfying dose of drugs, specifically the one which is the namesake of this book.





# His Mom Was at Work through I Thought I Knew the Way Home

## His Mom Was at Work through I Thought I Knew the Way Home Summary

In the section "His Mom Was at Work," Kristina and Adam go to his apartment to talk. It is here that Kristina smokes a cigarette for the first time. Kristina feels her life change in the section, "He Wanted to Kiss Me." In the section, "First Kiss," Kristina writes that Adam's kiss was wonderful, and its tenderness unexpected. Kristina details a week's worth of activities with Adam in "The Week Flew By." In, "Somehow the Place Looked Different," Kristina goes to the bowling alley with Buddy. Kristina explains the emotions that had made her susceptible to pressure as she accepts Buddy's offer to give her drugs in the section "You Have to Remember." Marijuana makes Kristina too low. She admits that she wants to use crank.

The section, "We Met at the Bowling Alley," details Kristina's first experiment with crank. In the section, "Just Before the Drop," Kristina describes her anticipation before her first use of crank as being like the first time one rides a roller coaster. She describes the physical feelings of using crank in "No Time Like That First Time." Because she realizes she can't act as the drugs are enticing her to, Kristina just sits in the section "But That's Not Exactly Cool." In, "If a Little's Good," Kristina does another line of crank. She and Adam get physical. In "Although Maybe" and "Because It Wasn't That" Kristina ponders the meaning of the phrase, "all the way." She also contends that with Adam it wasn't like the dictionary definition of sex. Kristina hears her dad's voice outside the door in the section "I Didn't Want to Stop Either." When her father calls her Kristina, Adam asks who Kristina is.

Kristina laughs in the section "For Some Crazy Reason." The noise of her laugh alerts her dad, and Lince, to their hiding place in the section "Not Until the Door Opened." Lince believes Adam when Adam tells her that he and Kristina weren't doing anything. Lince asks for a line of crank. In the section, "Like an Idiot," Kristina writes that she realizes how strange it is for her to be doing drugs with her father, boyfriend and his other girlfriend. In the section, "Dad Said," Kristina's dad and Buddy begin talking about sleeping with her dad's boss. Lince jumps in with a comment and Kristina decides to leave. She hopes Buddy will follow, but he does not. In the section, "I Was Pissed," Kristina recounts leaving the bowling alley. Soon after she leaves, she is scared. In the section, "I Thought I Knew the Way Home," Kristina is lost. As she tries to get her bearings, she is surrounded by three guys in Raiders jackets.



## His Mom Was at Work through I Thought I Knew the Way Home Analysis

It is in this section of the novel that Kristina becomes completely hooked on Adam. He surprises her by not being the egotistical male that she expected. At the end of their first week together, Adam convinces Kristina to do drugs with him. Kristina indicates she did not need much convincing after the emotional roller coaster of the past several days. Kristina realizes things are strange when her father, boyfriend, and boyfriend's other girlfriend are doing drugs and talking about sex together. Kristina leaves the room hoping Buddy will follow her. He does not follow her and so she leaves the bowling alley and attempts to walk home alone.

Hopkins continues to play with words and form in her poetry in an effort to accent the meaning of her story. For instance, in the section "He Wanted to Kiss Me," the last stanza of the poem has only one word per line. This division causes the reader to slow down his reading process and gives emphasis to each individual word. The final word, "forever," is even separated from the rest of the poem by a blank line. This blank line allows the word "forever" to stand out both on the page and in the reader's mind. This form gives the reader a clearer idea of how life changing this moment was for Kristina.

Also, notice in the section "Choices, Choices," there is another sentence hidden in the single words in this poem. These words form the sentence, "Choices make Kristina crazy Bree laughs." This sentence highlights one of the major differences between Kristina and Bree. Bree does not take the choices she makes seriously. Kristina, on the other hand, is not able to easily make choices. It is easier for the less decisive Kristina to allow Bree to take charge than to fight to be herself.

Finally, notice the play on words in the section, "Just Before the Drop." In this poem the author uses the term "crank" to describe the noise made by the roller coaster car as it reaches the top of the drop. Ironically, crank is also the term used for the drug that Kristina is about to try. Other onomatopoeia, words that imitate the sounds they describe, can be found in the section, "Not Quite Silent" where Kristina describes the noises of the leaky faucets in her father's apartment.



# I Tried to Be Cool through Instead We Returned to Small Talk

## I Tried to Be Cool through Instead We Returned to Small Talk Summary

In the section "I Tried to Be Cool," Kristina tries to get away from the three boys. When they notice she has been taking drugs, however, they move in to rape her. In "Hands," the boys tear Kristina's clothes as she screams. Adam interrupts the boys' advances and saves Kristina in the section titled, "And Then I Heard." In the Section "Three Raiders Jackets," the boys leave and Adam comforts Kristina. Kristina's dad is not home so Kristina asks Adam to stay with her in "I Held Tight." In the section "Dawn Broke," Kristina and Adam tell each other that they love the other. In the section entitled "Clueless," Kristina lays on the couch after Adam leaves. Since she cannot sleep, she gets up and cleans the entire apartment in the section entitled "I Was Supposed to Sleep?" During this crank high she also writes a long letter to her sister and writes a poem. She finishes up by drinking four beers. The section "After the Fourth," describes the beginning of Kristina's crash. "Used Up" describes Kristina's last few moments of lucidity before she finally falls asleep.

In the section "Woke to Pounding," Kristina describes how is awakened by Adam beating on her door. He tells her there has been an accident. In the section "Coming," Kristina describes the horrible way she looks and feels as she prepares to let Adam into the apartment. In the section "His Demon Showed in His Eyes," Kristina learns that Lince had fallen, or jumped, off the apartment balcony while arguing with Adam. Adam tells Kristina what had happened the night before right outside her apartment in the section, "He Told Me Why Anyway." Lince had come to the apartments and found Kristina and Adam together in her father's apartment. Lince waited for Adam to come out then tried to talk him out of seeing Kristina again. Adam remembers they were arguing, and then remembers seeing Lince lying on the sidewalk. In "My Brain Somersaulted" Kristina comforts Adam, telling him the accident was her fault.

In the section "We Sat on the Floor," Adam and Kristina decide to go visit Lince in the hospital. The two get into Lince's hospital room by lying about their identities in "Fifteen Blocks on Foot and a Bus Ride Later." Kristina leaves Adam alone with Lince. As she waits for him to finish his visit, she realizes how badly she needs food and a shower. She also needs more crank. When Kristina returns to her apartment in the section "Dad Asked Where I'd Been," Kristina realizes that Adam didn't even tell her how Lince was. Although Kristina knows her dad doesn't realize the gravity of the situation, she suggests they go to dinner together. In the section entitled "One Hour," Kristina's dad asks questions about the accident, but Kristina is not able to answer the questions because she believes he wouldn't understand her feelings or her role in what had happened. In the section "Instead We Returned to Small Talk," Kristina writes that the



only thing her father asked her directly was if she and Adam had sex. She felt by the way he smiled that he did not believe her when she told him "no." Kristina wonders if her mother would have believed her.

## **I Tried to Be Cool through Instead We Returned to Small Talk Analysis**

It is in this section that Kristina's personality change first begins to reap bad results. First, she has been caught messing around with another girl's boyfriend. Next, in a strange drug party, Kristina, Adam, Kristina's dad and Lince do drugs together. Later, Lince sees Adam and Kristina together in Kristina's dad's apartment. She waits outside the apartment for Adam and tries to convince him not to see Kristina anymore. Adam refuses. Although it is not for certain if Lince fell from the balcony or if she jumped, it is implied that Lince jumped. Although she survives her fall, it is uncertain if Lince will ever be the same again.

It is important to notice that from the first time she uses crank, Kristina begins to make bad decisions. In an effort to make Adam pay attention to her, Kristina walks out of the bowling alley in an attempt to walk home. Had she been sober, Kristina would probably have realized this walk, especially since the bowling alley is in a bad part of town and Kristina does not know her way home, was a bad idea. She is accosted by three strange men who try to rape her once they realize she is high on drugs. Luckily Adam does come along and scatter the boys. Later, Lince, also high on drugs, apparently jumps off the balcony of Kristina's apartment. As Kristina is so soundly asleep because of her drug crash, she does not even realize what is going on outside her own door.

When Kristina does finally wake from her drugs, she is shocked to realize how bad she looks as a result of her drug use. Later in the hospital, Kristina realizes she has not eaten or showered since her experiment with drugs. It is also very important to note that although Kristina has only done crank once, she already shows signs of addiction. She indicates that more than anything, she wants another dose of crank.



# Dad Went Out through Despite All Trepidation

## Dad Went Out through Despite All Trepidation Summary

In the section "Dad Went Out," Kristina writes that although she needed someone to understand and be there while she cried, her father left her by herself. Kristina's nose is dripping when Adam knocks on her door in, "I Was Mid-Drip." As she wants to know their love for each other was sincere, she lets Adam in. In the section "Okay, I looked Awful," Adam and Kristina reaffirm their love for each other. Although Kristina knows better, Bree accepts Adam's suggestion that they get high together in the section, "So of Course I Did a Really Stupid Thing." In the sections, "Adam," "But First I Had to Pee" and "But That Day" Kristina is ready to have sex with Adam. When she goes to the bathroom, however, she discovers her period has started. Although Adam tells Kristina he does not care she is menstruating, she will not have sex with him. In the section, "So I Said," Adam insists that Kristina had led him on and is now leaving him unsatisfied. Although Kristina too feels unsatisfied, she helps relieve Adam as he suggests. In the section "Girls Get Screwed," Kristina writes about the way that girls always get the short end of the deal when in a relationship with a man.

In the section, "I Considered That," Kristina thinks about the "empty and closed" nature of her family as she begins packing to go home. In the section, "One Day and Counting," Kristina records the words that her mother, father and Adam say to her. She also includes her translation of what she believes these people are really saying to her. Kristina tells Adam to come over in "To Speed or Not to Speed?" and tries to decide if it is a good idea to use crank so close to time to go home. In the sections entitled "A Couple of Toots" and "But Right Then," Kristina joins Adam in taking drugs. Kristina allows Adam to give her a heart-shaped tattoo, a sign of his undying love. In "It Throbbled the Next Day" Kristina compares the pain in the new tattoo to the pain in her heart.

Bree sees Las Vegas for the first time in "I Still Wasn't Down When We Landed." As Kristina looks for her family at the airport terminal in the section "Tightened Airport Security" she indicates she finally begins to come down from the drugs. Kristina describes her family as she spots them waiting in the section, "I Saw Them First." Kristina indicates that just for a second, her mother saw her and smiled. For that moment, Kristina felt as if her mother's smile was all for her. However, in the next section, "Then She Caught Sight," Kristina writes that her mother seems to notice something different about Kristina. Although her whole family greets her, Kristina feels they don't really notice her in "Homecomings Are Strange." In the section "Home Sweet Home," Kristina describes the battling feelings between Kristina and Bree when they arrive at Kristina's home after dinner. In the sections, "Despite All Trepidation" and



"Regardless," Kristina writes that even though her family is irritating to Bree, the new Kristina, she is happy to be home in her own familiar room.

## Dad Went Out through Despite All Trepidation Analysis

Differences between Kristina and Bree become more obvious in this section as Kristina leaves her father's apartment and goes back to her own home. As Kristina searches for her family at the airport terminal, she notes that Kristina is attracted to a mural of Lake Tahoe while Bree prefers the pictures of the Las Vegas showgirls. Bree is also uncomfortable in Kristina's old space. She wants to run back to Albuquerque and Adam. Kristina also feels Bree urging her to find some way to get drugs and get high. Despite Bree's insistence upon finding drugs, and the irritation Kristina feels because her family does not recognize that she has changed, Kristina finds familiar comfort and hope of rest in her own bedroom.

Hopkins includes several examples of concrete poetry in this section of lyrics. In the section "It Throbbled the Next Day," Kristina compares the pain in her new tattoo to that in her heart. The poem is written in the form of four heart shapes depicting both the tattoo and Kristina's physical heart. The words "red and raw" are repeated in each poem. These words tie the four hearts together in one poem as they describe Kristina's eyes, belly, heart and brain. The section "Home Sweet Home" is also an example of concrete poetry. Words in the roof of the house describe the way Kristina's home physically looks. The walls of the house are divided into two sections. The section on the left describes Kristina's reaction to seeing her home again while the section on the right describes Bree's reaction to seeing Kristina's home for the first time.

Notice also in this section that Kristina still carries the deep desire for love and acceptance from both of her parents. She writes that her father takes off from work for Kristina's last night in Albuquerque so they can spend time together. Instead of spending time together, though, Kristina's father gets high. Although it seems this action doesn't surprise Kristina, it does disappoint her. She turns to Adam and drugs for affection. When she returns home, Kristina notes that just for a moment she feels her mother's smile is all for her. It is this brief instant to which Kristina has looked forward. However, the moment is destroyed when Kristina's mother's face reveals that she has seen something different and perhaps unwelcome in her daughter.



# **I Slithered Down the Hall through Mom Knocked on My Door**

## **I Slithered Down the Hall through Mom Knocked on My Door Summary**

Once home, Kristina showers and studies the infected tattoo in the section "I Slithered Down the Hall." Leigh walks in on Kristina in the bathroom in the section, "The Door Opened." Leigh tells Kristina she hopes the infection in the tattoo is the only infection Adam gave Kristina. Kristina wakes after sleeping late the next morning. In the section, "On the Nightstand," Leigh has left Kristina some left over antibiotics to take for her infection. A note from her mother informs Kristina her father has called asking if she made it home all right. Jake also left a note indicating Adam had called. Kristina returns the call and gets Adam's mom in the section "I Went Straight for the Phone." Lince has opened her eyes, so Adam has gone to the hospital to be with her. In the section "Changed," Kristina prays for the Lord to keep her safe. Kristina's best friend, Sarah, calls in the section, "The Phone, Still in My Hand, Rang." Although Kristina had loved Sarah, Sarah irritates Bree. In the section "I Considered," Kristina decides there is crank in Las Vegas, all she needs to do is find it. Food, however, is Kristina's first need in the section, "Suddenly, However." Kristina is pleased that her mother's kitchen is well stocked with good food.

After she eats, Kristina wants a cigarette, but there are none in her house in the section, "My Luck Ran Out." Kristina's luck does not get any better in the section, "It Got Worse," when her mom comes home with a new swimsuit for Kristina. Kristina realizes the bikini is intended for Scott's company picnic to Wild Waters in the section "All Thoughts of Bad Habits." In the section, "The Tattoo, However, Was," Kristina realizes that while her period would not be a problem during the trip to the water park, the tattoo would be problematic. In "As I Pondered" Adam returns Kristina's call. Adam tells Kristina that Lince is coming home. He then asks for permission to see other people. Kristina feels completely burned. In the section, "Mom Knocked on My Door," Kristina's mom realizes Kristina is upset about something; however, Kristina feels she cannot tell her mother about what happened while she was in Albuquerque. She really needs to use crank again.

## **I Slithered Down the Hall through Mom Knocked on My Door Analysis**

To Kristina's dismay Adam calls the day after she returns home and suggests they give each other permission to see other people. Kristina is deeply hurt and disappointed by Adam's idea of never ending love. It is important to notice the flow of Adam and Kristina's phone conversation as presented in the section "As I Pondered." Hopkins has





written this section in a way so that the reader not only can follow the conversation, but can also understand Kristina's feelings about the direction of the conversation. Her part of the conversation is listed on the left side of the page while Adam's responses are on the right side of the page. Centered between these lines of dialogue are Kristina's changing emotions, portrayed in terms of melted, burned and sizzled, and finally burned to the point of scarring.

Along with the infected tattoo, Adam has now left Kristina with a drug addiction and a broken heart. He has decided to start dating Lince again now that she is showing signs of improvement. Although Kristina changed her whole personality for Adam and gave her heart to him, she has now been discarded. Although both Kristina's mom and her sister try to talk with Kristina about her experiences at her dad's, Kristina does not tell them much. Kristina is more open with her sister, but still does not tell her about the drugs. Kristina now faces the challenge of hiding both the tattoo and her drug addiction from her family.





# Over Lasagna and Garlic Bread through I Pondered That

## Over Lasagna and Garlic Bread through I Pondered That Summary

At dinner that evening Kristina tries to talk only about safe topics in the section, "Over Lasagna and Garlic Bread." However, she is prodded to talk about her father and Adam. In the sections entitled "Later" and "I Tucked That Away" Leigh lays in bed with Kristina encouraging her to talk. Leigh tries to start the conversation by telling about her girlfriend.

In the section, "Wild Waters Day Dawned," Kristina writes she has asked her friend Sarah to go with them. They run into Trent, another friend, while waiting in line. Bree resurfaces in the section "Mom and Scott" as Kristina sees a good looking lifeguard. In the section "Rather Than Face," Kristina asks the lifeguard if he gets a lunch break. Kristina is on the other side of girls' stares and boys' smiles as she lets Bree take over in the section entitled, "Before Bree." After her move on the lifeguard Kristina runs into Chase Wagner, a boy with a bad reputation. Bree is attracted to the boy and stops to talk to him. As her mom, Leigh and Sarah call for Kristina, she leaves Chase in the section entitled "Right Then, Three People."

In "Still, When Brendan Came By," Kristina leaves her friends and turns back to Bree. At the end of the day Kristina is happy with her day despite the fact her mom discovered the tattoo as recorded in the section, "I Went Home." The only other thing Bree could have asked for was crank. In "Grounded UFN" Kristina is grounded indefinitely as her punishment for allowing Adam to give her the tattoo. Two weeks before the start of school Kristina is allowed to go out again in the section "She Cut Me Loose." Kristina's first outing is to the mall where she observes cheerleaders. Kristina believes these girls are using crank as a way to keep them active and peppy. As Kristina pays for her purchases, Chase taps her on the shoulder in "I Pondered That." Kristina is about to turn down Chase's offer for a ride when he offers her a hit of crank.

## Over Lasagna and Garlic Bread through I Pondered That Analysis

Although Kristina has been grounded most of the summer because of her tattoo, she has managed to find a few possible sources for crank. Notice that although Kristina has been away from the drug for so long and had used it only a few times while with Adam, she is deeply addicted. Her thoughts seem to center around getting the drug. Kristina is definitely interested when Chase offers her crank. Notice also that Kristina has become wise to the effects of the drug on others. After just a few moments of observing the



cheerleaders, Kristina decides these girls are using crank to give them their peppy energy and keep them thin.

Notice also Kristina's observation of the way her mother perceives her as described in the section "Grounded UFN." Kristina believes her mother is always disappointed in her. The only thing that seems to please her mother is a report card with straight A's. Kristina believes her mother is worried only about the physical damage the tattoo has done to Kristina's body and is not concerned about the emotional damage of the relationship that it signifies. Kristina also believes her mother wishes Kristina were prettier, like Leigh. Kristina wonders what else her mother is indicating when she asks Kristina why she cannot be more like her sister. She wonders if her mom would like for her to be a lesbian since lesbians cannot get each other pregnant.

Bree's appearance at the water park is another important occurrence in this section. Notice that Kristina indicates she has decided that Bree is the essence of her own personality. It is Bree who defines her and makes her what she is, or has become. It is when Kristina allows Bree to take over and smile at the lifeguard that Kristina realizes Bree has actually not been a stranger all along, but instead a part of herself that has remained hidden. Kristina is surprised at herself and the things that she does under the flirty, flamboyant cover of Bree.



# Did it Show through GUFN Again

## Did it Show through GUFN Again Summary

In the section, "We Drove Down by the River" and "One Spoon" Chase and Kristina get high together. During their drive, Kristina realizes how intelligent Chase is. In "I Had to Explain," Chase asks to kiss Kristina. Kristina writes it is the sweetest kiss she has ever received. As they kiss, a park ranger drives by and the two decide to move on in the section entitled, "In That Quite Hot Moment." Kristina attempts to continue shopping in "Chase Wanted to Walk Around the Mall." She finds herself over stimulated and winds up buying only two pair of jeans and two tee shirts.

In the section "Two Guys in One Day?" Brendan taps Kristina on the shoulder. Since Kristina allows Brendan to walk her to her mom's car, her mom asks for details in the section "Mom Wanted to Hear All About Brendan." In the section "Dear Kristina," Kristina receives a letter from Adam. Initially Kristina focuses on Adam's comment to her to "Be smart." she wonders why suddenly all those around her are worried about her intelligence. As Kristina deals with the emotional effects of her latest dose of drugs, she lets out all of the hurt she feels in the section, "I Did Cry Then."

In the section "I Had to Pick Up," Kristina lies to her mom by telling her she is going with Sarah to get her student I.D. card for school. Instead she rides with Chase. Kristina's stepfather, however, catches Kristina getting out of Chase's truck. As a result Kristina is grounded again. In "GUFN Again," Kristina tries to determine her new identity and decide where she now fits into her world. She wonders if she should let her mom know that she is not the same sweet little girl she once was.

## Did it Show through GUFN Again Analysis

Kristina begins to realize how much she has changed in this section of the novel. She would rather spend time with friends who can supply her with drugs or a good time instead of her old friends. In the section "I Had to Pick Up," Kristina writes that she lied to her mother. Although this lie bothers Kristina, it does not bother her for long. In the section "GUFN Again," Kristina tries to make some sense out of her new personality and identity. She wonders if she should tell her mother that the Kristina of the past did not exist anymore. In fact, the sentence composed by the single words in the section of lyrics read, "I didn't belong to my mom anymore." This realization that she is turning into someone other than who her mother wants her to be is a big step in Kristina's trip along the road of drug abuse.

Also in this section, Kristina has found another source to help feed her crank addiction. She takes a drive with Chase, who offers her crank. She is surprised that even though she has been away from the drug as long as she has, it still has such a strong hold on her. Although Kristina agrees to go with Chase mainly because he offers her drugs,



once she is with him she is touched by his intelligence and his tenderness. Despite her attraction toward him, Kristina does not think twice when Brendan asks her to go partying with him. Because she knows Brendan looks like the person her mother would want her to date, Kristina allows Brendan to walk her to her car. As expected, Kristina's mother approves of Brendan simply because he looks acceptable. Kristina feels that although Chase is probably a better person, her mother would not approve of him simply because of the way he looks.



# Leigh Headed Back to School through Major Mistake

## Leigh Headed Back to School through Major Mistake Summary

In the section "Leigh Headed Back to School," Kristina phones Chase to bring her drugs as soon as her mother and sister leave the house. Although he doesn't want to, Kristina persuades him to leave her some crank in the section, "Chase Left Me with Goodies." Brendan is on Kristina's mind in the section, "I Watched the Window." She calls Brendan and arranges to sneak out and party with him. As Kristina waits for the time when Brendan will pick her up, Kristina wonders briefly if she has started a series of events that will result in her destruction, or even death, in the section, "I Hid Out in My Room Until Dinner."

Brendan offers to take Kristina to Chamberlain Flat, a popular party spot in the section, "Brendan Was Waiting." Once they arrive at the party in "Saturday Night," Kristina has evolved into Bree. In the section "Brendan Stoked the Fire," Brendan and Kristina go to a secluded spot. When Brendan starts to undress her, she resists and hits him. Brendan slaps her in return. Kristina silences Bree and tells Brendan she is a virgin. In the section, "Paydirt!," Brendan makes Kristina promise to let him be first.

Kristina is still wasted on drugs on her first day of school in the section, "High." In "Mom's Car Wasn't in the Driveway," Kristina arrives home from school, raids the fridge, then falls into a deep sleep. Kristina is awakened in the section, "Which Roused Me," when her mother throws ice water in her face. At this point Kristina sits up in bed and says an expletive to her mother when her mother suggests she come to dinner. In the section, "Major Mistake," Kristina's mother slaps her. When Kristina cries, her mother softens and tries to talk to her.

## Leigh Headed Back to School through Major Mistake Analysis

Although it is clear in the section, "I Hid Out in My Room Until Dinner," that Kristina realizes the danger she is possibly putting herself in by chasing drugs and strange men, she is being called so strongly by the drugs that she cannot stop herself. Kristina likes Chase, she believes Chase likes her, but that does not stop her from going and partying with Brendan. Brendan, however, turns out to be less than a gentleman. Kristina keeps him from having sex with her only by promising that she will allow him to be the one to take her virginity.



The idea of Kristina's virginity becomes an important aspect in this section. Brendan, at first, believes that Kristina is not a virgin. When Kristina insists that she is, Brendan makes her promise to save her virginity for him. In the section entitled, "Paydirt!" Kristina explores the idea of a man's obsession with a woman's virginity. She wonders what it is that makes a man want to be the one to take this quality away from a woman. Kristina notes in the section entitled, "Major Mistake," that she believes Brendan does not love her, only the idea that she is a virgin. Notice that Kristina refers to her virginity as "the big V" or "the V thing." It follows that the poem "Paydirt!," which discusses virginity, is in the shape of a big "V."



# I Did through The Game Replayed

## I Did through The Game Replayed Summary

In the section, "I Did," Kristina goes to dinner as suggested by her mother. She waits for new punishment but instead her mother forgives her and ungrounds her. At this point, Kristina decides to appreciate her life, and resurrect Kristina. Kristina is keeping her resolutions fairly well until she hears from Adam, Brendan and Chase all in the same day in the section, "I Mostly Managed That." In "Backpack Bulging," Chase lets Kristina know that he is aware of her fling with Brendan. At this point, Kristina tells Chase about her summer with her father. In the sections, "So Why," "As I considered My Answer," and "Giselle," Kristina ponders the recent correspondence from the men in her life. In the section, "You Bet I Did," Chase was busy on Friday so Kristina calls Brendan and asks him for a date. She also asks him to buy her some crank. In the section, "I could Hardly Wait for Friday," Kristina reasons she can save her virginity by saying "no" to Brendan.

Brendan picks Kristina up at her house, then drives to a quiet spot in the woods. In "It Started With a Kiss," Brendan rapes Kristina. He calls her a flirt and a tease. Brendan seems shocked when he discovers that Kristina is indeed, a virgin. After he finishes, he asks her what is wrong. It is at this point that Kristina tells him her real name. Kristina has returned. In the section, "But it Was Bree," Kristina writes that it is the outgoing and outspoken personality of Bree that got her up off the ground after she was raped. In the section, "Not a Blink of Remorse," Brendan is disrespectful and hateful to Kristina as her drops her off at her house. In "Brendan Pulled Up," Kristina writes that even after all Brendan put her through, she paid him for the drugs he brought her. Kristina soaks and cleans in the family hot tub in the section, "I Stumbled up the Driveway." In the section entitled "Exhausted," Kristina responds to Adam's letter. In her response, she tells Adam she had just been raped. It is in the section, "Close to Empty," that Kristina decides that she must stay high in order to make it through her life after the rape. In the section "Brain Waves," Kristina tries to make herself realize that what has happened to her is all her fault. Kristina lies to her family about her date in the section, "The Game Replayed."

## I Did through The Game Replayed Analysis

It is in this section that Kristina's drug addiction causes her to make a gamble that she loses. She has come to the point where she must depend on Brendan for drugs. Even though she knows he will expect sex the next time they see each other, Kristina needs the drugs so badly that she turns to him anyway. It is assumed that Kristina did not believe that Brendan would really rape her, that he would stop when and if she said "no." However, Brendan is not the person to accept no for an answer. Kristina has already recognized this about Brendan in the section, "We Bumped Up the Road." Brendan is surprised to discover that Kristina actually is a virgin, however, he does not stop nor does he apologize to her. Throughout the remainder of their evening, Brendan



is hateful and abusive to Kristina. Kristina pays for the eighth ounce of crack he brings her even though she suspects he had stolen some of the contents of the package.

Instead of telling someone about the rape, Kristina keeps what Brendan did to her a secret. Kristina turns to drugs in order to cope with her emotional pain. At this point in Kristina's life she feels as if she must have crack just to get through her day. Instead of using the drug on an occasional basis, Kristina needs it daily. As a result of the rape and the ensuing emotions, Kristina has taken a big step up the drug use ladder. She is no longer able to subsist just on drugs people offer her. She now has to buy her own stash for daily use.





# Answer Before They Ask through Intervened

## Answer Before They Ask through Intervened Summary

Kristina tells Chase what Brendan did to her in the section entitled, "Answer Before They Ask." Chase insists Brendan knew what he was doing, and tells Kristina the rape was not her fault. To her surprise, he even cries with her. Although Kristina wants Chase to make love to her in section, "Relief, Disappointment," Chase insists they wait until she is healed, both physically and emotionally. Chase tells Kristina that waiting makes him want her and love her even more. In the section, "Tried to Beat Mom Inside," Kristina tells her mother that Chase is her boyfriend. Kristina tries to tell her mother that Brendan was not nice or polite but was instead "all over her." Kristina's mother is not understanding of the situation. Kristina tells her mother that she feels her mother does not care about Kristina. Kristina continues her attack against her mother in the section, "Leveled." Kristina tells her mother she shouldn't judge people by the way they look. She suggests that their family looks normal on the outside, but is not so on the inside.

Since she is unable to get in touch with Chase, Kristina rides her bike to Trent's house to see his sister in, "No Answer." In the section, "Timing is Everything," Kristina shows Robyn her own crank bindle. Robyn agrees to buy some crank for Kristina. In the section, "This Time," Kristina's irritation toward her family causes her stepfather to come to her for a talk. Kristina denies drug use when Scott asks her if she has been using drugs.

## Answer Before They Ask through Intervened Analysis

In this section, Kristina finally tells someone about the rape. Chase knows there is something wrong with Kristina and will not leave her alone until she tells him what it is. When he learns that she has been raped, he first threatens to kill Brendan, then breaks down in tears. Kristina is surprised to see Chase cry. However, these tears are a sign that Chase really cares about Kristina and sympathizes with her pain. Meanwhile, Kristina's mother and stepfather are getting more and more suspicious that Kristina is using drugs. Unlike Chase, however, they do not try to determine the cause of her emotional distress. When Kristina tells her mother that Brendan was all over her during their date, her mother is not sympathetic toward Kristina, she only laments the idea that Kristina's new boyfriend is not good looking. It is at this point that Kristina stands up to her mother concerning her mother's obsession with outside appearances. Although things may look great on the outside, Kristina points out, they may be rotten to the core on the inside.



# Robyn was Game through Chase was Right There

## Robyn was Game through Chase was Right There Summary

In the section, "Robyn Was Game," Robyn and Kristina do drugs together at the air show. They also show out by kissing in front of the crowd like lesbians. The section "Wolf Whistles," describes the way in which the people watching Robyn and Kristina looked at them. It is also in this section that Kristina realizes that she has no desire to be a lesbian. Robyn and Kristina watch as both Kristina's mother and her stepfather attempt to attract younger people in the section, "We Found Our Box." After watching a portion of the air races Robyn and Kristina go to partake of drugs in Robyn's car in the section "Three Races." On their way back to their seats Kristina sees Brendan. Brendan is with a young, attractive girl. Kristina, or Bree, asks if he's raped anybody else.

After this encounter, Robyn asks Kristina to tell her what went on between the two in the section, "Robyn Wanted the Whole Story." Robyn shares her own rape story with Kristina in this section. Robyn says she started using crank to get her through her rigorous schedule. During a spell where she was unable to get drugs, Robyn got into a car with a strange man after he showed her a bindle. The man drove her into the desert, then began to rape her. Robyn tells Kristina the man was dirty and mean, she still has physical and emotional scars from what he did to her. In the section, "Now, You Might Think," Kristina writes that neither she nor Robyn woke up and changed their ways after their rape experiences.

In the section, "Before I Met the Monster," Kristina writes that before drugs her life had a familiar daily rhythm. In the section, "But Now Nothing," Kristina writes that after drugs, nothing felt right or familiar except getting high. In the next four sections Kristina shares some of her most troubling problems with the reader. "Problem Number One: School" indicates that just getting up, getting dressed and getting to school is a challenge for Kristina. She admits she is often tardy to classes and regularly misses classes. In the section, "Problem Number Two: Relationships," Kristina writes that every relationship from old friends to family is made more difficult because of her drug addiction. Kristina discusses the difficulty of finding affordable drugs and staying high in the section, "Problem Number Three: Connections." Kristina writes about her biggest problem in the section, "Problem Number Four: Feeling Good."

Kristina's upcoming seventeenth birthday is the topic of the section, "I Would Celebrate Several Ways." One celebration includes a family trip to San Francisco to visit Kristina's grandmother. Although her grandmother is suffering with dementia, she is lucid enough to give Kristina a locket which is a family heirloom as a birthday gift in the section "In One of Her Better Moments." In the section, "Celebration Two," Kristina gets a cake and presents from her family. Later, in a private conversation, Kristina's mother confesses



she has had some fault in the troubles she senses Kristina is having. Because she is planning to go out with Chase, Kristina is kind to her mother in the section entitled, "Half of Me." However it is indicated that Kristina wanted to scream at her mother that Kristina felt her mother was much of the reason for her problems.

Chase had a special party planned at his house for which he picked Kristina up at her house in the section, "Let's Just Say I Got to Go." Chase and Kristina indicate, however, that they will be going to a concert. Chase promises Kristina's parents that he will have Kristina home on time. On the ride to his house, he tells Kristina he has the drug Ecstasy for them to try. In the following section, "Ecstasy is Hard to Describe," Kristina tries to explain what taking the drug Ecstasy is like. Kristina describes the effects of the drug as leaving her with peaceful feelings and a desire to forgive all those who had done her wrong. In the section "Chase Was Right There," Kristina writes that Chase makes love to her.

## **Robyn was Game through Chase was Right There Analysis**

Robyn's story is a very important addition to Kristina's story. Robyn started taking drugs in order to allow herself to keep up with her rigorous schedule. She becomes addicted, just as Kristina has. Also, just like Kristina, Robyn was raped by a man from whom she tried to get drugs. The similarity of these two stories shows the reader how common it is for young women addicted to drugs to put themselves in positions where they will be abused in order to feed their drug habits.

Also in this section, Kristina takes another step up the drug ladder. Although Chase does not force her, he brings Ecstasy for her to experiment with him. It is indicated by Kristina that perhaps if her mother had treated or spoken to her in a different way the day of her party, Kristina might not have put herself into the position that she did when she took the Ecstasy. One of Kristina's family members, however, does make Kristina feel loved and treasured on her birthday. Her elderly grandmother gives her a locket that belonged both to herself, her mother, and her grandmother. Kristina writes that the locket feels like a piece of love hanging around her neck.



# I was Aglow through Cause and Effect

## I was Aglow through Cause and Effect Summary

In the section, "I Was Aglow," Kristina accepts a second dose of Ecstasy, then also snorts some crank. She writes that although she should have been afraid of the drug combination, the Ecstasy had taken away all of her fear. In the section, "Unforgettable Birthdays," Kristina writes that her seventeenth birthday was unforgettable because it was the first time she had willingly had sex with a man, and the first time she had mainlined drugs, or taken them by injection. Kristina writes she felt like dancing until dawn in the section, "Elevation." In her blur of drugs, Kristina allows herself to be cut and her blood drunk by other partiers in the section entitled, "I Don't Know." Kristina feels as if she is on fire. She faints and is taken outside. Kristina wakes to see Chase over her. He tells her that he loves her. In the section, "I Was Cinderella," Kristina tells Chase she loves him also. At this point Chase's watch warns them it is 2 a.m. They don't arrive back at Kristina's house until 3 a.m. Even though Chase walks Kristina to the door and tries to make excuses for their tardiness, Kristina is grounded again in the section, "If You Guessed." In the section entitled, "Exiled," Kristina actually sees things from her mother's point of view as she waits in her room to come off her ecstasy high. Kristina writes that the biggest problem that she found during this time of introspection was that Bree didn't care about Kristina.

Kristina helps her mother can tomatoes in the section, "I Spent the Next Day." The two talk and although Kristina's mother asks her about drugs or drug use, Kristina denies using anything but marijuana. At the end of their conversation Kristina is still grounded, but her mom doesn't appear to be angry with her any longer. In the section, "Burned Out," Kristina comes down from the drugs she took at the party. She goes from euphoria to depression, in a downward fall that seems out of control. In the section "Jerked Awake," Kristina is awakened by the sound of her mother and Scott arguing about Kristina in the hallway outside her room. Scott correctly believes Kristina is crashing. Her mother, however, thinks her daughter is only sick and running a fever. Scott suggests they keep a tight rein on Kristina until her next report card comes. If they approve her grades, Kristina will be free again. In the section, "Report Cards?" Kristina doubts she can bring her grades up quickly enough to ensure her freedom. Because she feels she can't live without Chase, she sneaks out her window determined to hitchhike her way to Chase's house.

In the sections "Anyone Could Have Come Along" and "He Got Out of His Car," Kristina attracts a policeman as she attempts to hitchhike. Because she lies and says her parents are not at home, he takes her to a juvenile detention center. Kristina tells the cop her name is Bree Wagner. In the section "I Wasn't Scared - Yet," Kristina calls Chase, who she pretends is her brother. After four hours in a holding cell, Kristina is given a bed in a dormitory. Her three roommates are all crank users. One of them named Lucinda gives Kristina a new crank connection in the section, "Tough Girls." Kristina is not picked up by her parents until early Monday morning.



## I was Aglow through Cause and Effect Analysis

Kristina's seventeenth birthday brings a number of firsts for her. She has sex with Chase willingly, she uses Ecstasy in injection form and she participated in some sort of strange ritual where her wrist is cut and others drink her blood. Note that in Hopkins' description of the party and the events of the party, the details become more indistinct as Kristina gets higher. It is indicated in the novel that the combination of drugs Kristina has taken is dangerous as it causes the body to overheat. Kristina's ability to make good decisions has been so damaged by the drugs she has already taken that she doesn't even realize she should be afraid of what she is doing to herself.

Later, Kristina's stepfather realizes that she is crashing from drugs by the way she is sleeping after the events of her seventeenth birthday. When Kristina learns she is about to be put on house arrest by her parents, she panics and attempts to run away. Instead she is picked up by the police and taken to a juvenile detention center. Since it is Monday morning before Kristina's parents pick her, it is assumed that they left her in the detention center, hoping it would teach her a lesson. Instead, Kristina becomes friends with the girls she meets and even leaves with contact information for a man from whom she can buy drugs.



# Back in My Room through My Mom ?!?!

## Back in My Room through My Mom ?!?! Summary

Kristina realizes that her mother has searched her room when she arrives home in "Back in My Room." In the section, "Resolutions," Kristina resolves to do things such as bringing up her grades, helping her parents and reconnecting with old friends. Kristina realizes that the resolutions will be hard to keep in the section entitled, "Other Problems." In the section, "By Wednesday," Kristina gets no further in the week than Wednesday before she calls Chase to pick her up and take her to buy drugs. In the sections, "The Good...," "...The Bad...," and "...And the Ugly," Kristina reunites with Chase, and learns he has been accepted to a film school at the University of Southern California. In these same sections, Kristina also learns that her mother has restricted her access to her own bank account leaving her with no way to get money to buy drugs. At home, however, Kristina checks the mail and finds her mother's new credit card and PIN number.

In the section, "I Did Think Twice," Kristina uses her mother's credit card to buy drugs from a man named Roberto. She plans to start selling crack in order to help pay for her habit. In, "I Became an Instant Celebrity," Kristina is buying and using more and more crack each day until one day she wakes up vomiting. In the section, "Clear Blue Easy," Kristina debates what she should do now that she has found out that she is pregnant. In the sections, "I Went Through," and "Saturday," Kristina writes that she stays away from drugs while trying to decide what she should do about her baby. She finally calls Planned Parenthood and Chase. In the section, "My Appointment Was at Two," Chase picks Kristina up for her appointment. On the way there, he pulls his truck off the road and asks Kristina if she will marry him.

It is in the section "I Already Knew My Options," that Kristina realizes that Brendan is the father of her baby and not Chase. Kristina tells Brendan who the baby's father is in the section, "He Drove Me Home-Slowly." Chase is still willing to help Kristina with the baby. Before Chase drops Kristina off at her house, he suggests that she talk to her mom. Kristina wonders if she should or even can tell her mother what has happened to her, in the section "My Mom?!?!"

## Back in My Room through My Mom ?!?! Analysis

In this section of the novel, Kristina is faced with a life-changing problem. The way in which she handles this problem will affect not only her life, but also that of her unborn baby. Believing Chase is the father of the baby, she calls Chase for support. Even though he has been accepted to a college with a great film school, Chase accepts responsibility for the baby, and asks Kristina to marry him. Even after Chase learns the baby is not his, he stands firm in his promise to take care of Kristina and her child. This

unselfish offer to take responsibility for a child that is not even his speaks well of Chase's character.



# The Kitchen was Warm through Happy Endings

## The Kitchen was Warm through Happy Endings Summary

In the sections, "The Kitchen Was Warm," "Somehow She Didn't Notice," and "I Opened My Mouth," Kristina considers talking to her mother about her situation. However, Scott comes in just as Kristina is about to talk. In the sections, "Omens! Great!" and "I Thought About Calling Leigh," Kristina makes some calls. Her dad isn't at home, and Adam is with Lince, so she calls Robyn. Robyn tells Kristina about a girl who decided to put her baby up for adoption but once she saw the baby, she decided she wanted to keep it. The young mother killed her baby while under the influence of crank.

In the section entitled, "Snow Day," Kristina reads a newspaper detailing the effects of crank on the user's brain as well as on the unborn fetus. This same paper carries a photo of Roberto, Kristina's new connection, in a set of handcuffs. In the section, "Too Much," Kristina decides to have an abortion. Chase refuses to help Kristina when he learns she plans to have an abortion. Therefore, in the section, "I Needed Two Things," Kristina goes to Brendan for the money. Although he is not cooperative, when Kristina threatens him with a paternity test, Brendan agrees to give her the money. In the section "Mesmerized," however, Kristina believes she feels her baby move. Seeing this as sign she is not to abort the child or give it away, Kristina decides to carry the baby and raise it herself. Kristina finally tells her mother about her baby in the section, "More Choices." Her mother and Scott agree to allow Kristina to live with them as long as she finishes school. Although Chase still wants to marry and support her, Kristina encourages him to go to USC.

In the next five sections, Kristina discusses the high and low spots of her pregnancy. She indicates the most joyful time was holding her son for the first time, realizing he was physically perfect, despite her drug use. Kristina writes that the worst thing about her pregnancy was her struggle with her drug addiction. The final section of the book is entitled, "Happy Endings." In this section Kristina admits that being a mother is hard work. Because of the drugs, her son cries more than normal and doesn't sleep like regular newborns. She enjoys watching her mother interact with her son, realizing that she must have been the same way with Kristina as a baby. Crank is still a part of Kristina's life. She indicates that it is a drug from which no one can ever really move completely away. She is currently fighting an urge to go in search of a drug fix.





## The Kitchen was Warm through Happy Endings Analysis

Brendan's reaction to the news that Kristina is pregnant with his baby shows the reader exactly how insensitive of a person that he really is. He does not care about the life he has created, or the person he has violated to create it. Brendan does not even want to take enough responsibility for his actions to help fund Kristina's abortion. It is only when Kristina threatens to have a paternity test run on the fetus that Brendan agrees to pay for the operation in order to have his indiscretions covered up. Chase, on the other hand, will not support Kristina in getting an abortion. When she asks him to help pay for the procedure, he will have no part of this decision. When he learns that Kristina has decided to keep her baby, however, Chase again offers to marry Kristina and care for her and the baby. Kristina is unwilling to hold Chase back in the pursuit of his dreams. She insists that he go on to college.

Once Kristina tells her mother and stepfather about her pregnancy and the initial anger dies down, her mother and Scott agree to allow Kristina to stay at home as long as she finishes high school. After the baby is born, Kristina watches her mother interact with her son and wonders if she was the same way with Kristina.

It is in this section that Kristina faces the biggest challenge for a drug-addicted teenager. In order to do what is best for her baby, she must stop taking drugs while she is pregnant. Even at the point that Kristina discovers she is pregnant, she is already six weeks along. During this period of six weeks, she has taken crack as well as Ecstasy. It is not certain until the baby is born if he will be born normal or if he will suffer effects from Kristina's drug use. Throughout the rest of her pregnancy, however, Kristina attempts to stay away from crack. She admits to the reader that she does use the drug a few times during the remainder of her pregnancy, even though she tries hard to stay clean. Even after the baby is born, Kristina writes that she is not free from the call of crack. Even as she tries to take care of her son, the urge to do drugs sometimes outweighs the need to be a good mother.



# Characters

## Kristina Georgia Snow

Kristina Georgia Snow is the main character and narrator of this novel. She is the daughter of Marie and stepdaughter of Scott. She has one sister, Leigh, and one half-brother, Jake. Kristina begins doing drugs during a court ordered visit to her father. Kristina indicates that it is emotional distress from learning that her father is exactly like her mother described him, as well as the elation of her first love that make her susceptible to drug use. After her first use of crank, Kristina is addicted. As soon as she begins coming off her first crank high, Kristina begins craving another hit.

Once she is back home, Kristina continues to crave drugs. Her personality changes drastically. She becomes disobedient and uncooperative with her parents. Although she was once a straight "A" student, Kristina is now cutting classes and making failing grades. She puts herself in jeopardy in order to get drugs. She agrees to go on a date with a man whom she knew might rape her if she dated him in order to get drugs. As a result of this rape, Kristina becomes pregnant. Although at first she plans to abort her baby Kristina decides to keep her baby after she believes she feels the baby move. Even while pregnant, Kristina continues to do drugs occasionally even though she knows how dangerous it is for the baby.

## Bree

Bree is the happy go lucky part of Kristina's personality whom Kristina believes to be the core of her own personality. Kristina believes that she has made Kristina to be who everyone wanted her to be. Bree, was who Kristina believed she wanted to be. Bree takes charge and carries Kristina through the difficult times when Kristina could not handle the stress or emotion of the situation. It is Bree who first talks with Adam, and who first flirts with Brendan. Although Kristina knows better, it is Bree who agrees to continue taking drugs whenever they are offered. Although it may seem that Bree is the one who gets Kristina into all of her troubles, Bree also helps Kristina through some difficult situations. For instance, after Brendan rapes Kristina, it is Bree who helps Kristina pull herself together and get back in the car with Brendan to go home.

## The Monster

The monster is the term that Hopkins gives to the drug crank. Although crank is in reality an object and not a person, Hopkins writes about this drug as if it had the characteristics of a person. The term "monster" indicates this drug is something to be feared and from which one should stay away. Kristina, however, does not stay away from this monster and thus becomes its prey. At one point Kristina describes the monster as an octopus who weaves its tentacles around its prey and will not let go. Kristina writes that it is nearly impossible to ever walk away from this drug once one begins taking it.



## Buddy/Adam

Adam, also known as Buddy, is the boy whom Kristina begins dating while she is visiting her father in Albuquerque. Adam is Kristina's first boy friend. Although Kristina is deeply in love with Adam, he is not as dedicated to her as he indicates. When Kristina returns to her home in Reno, Adam immediately calls Kristina and requests permission to see other people. He intends to begin dating Lince again. It is Adam who first encourages Kristina to try crank thus leading to her addiction. Adam also gives Kristina an amateur tattoo in the form of a heart. He indicates this is a symbol of his unending love.

## Chase Wagner

Chase is a boy from Kristina's high school who she happens to meet up with during her visit to Wild Waters. Although Chase is known as being a bad boy, Kristina is surprised by his tenderness and intelligence. Chase brings Kristina drugs and in some ways encourages her drug use, but at the same time, he seems concerned that she uses drugs with the frequency that she does. There are times, for instance, that he refuses to bring her drugs. He also tells her that he has set limits for himself that he will not cross when it comes to drug use. Although Chase is not the father of Kristina's baby, he offers to marry Kristina and take care of her and the baby. Kristina, however, insists that he go on to college as he had planned. Of all the boys that Kristina has dated, she believes that it is Chase who really loved her.

## Brendan

Brendan is the attractive life guard with whom Kristina flirts at Wild Waters. Kristina's mother approves of Kristina's relationship with Brendan because he is attractive. However, Brendan rapes Kristina during their second date. He is also hateful to Kristina and treats her in an abusive manner after the rape. Brendan's ugly personality continues to show when he at first insists that Kristina's baby is not his, and then refuses to help Kristina pay for an abortion.

## Robyn Rosselli

Robyn is Trent's sister. She is a cheerleader at Reno High School. Kristina suspects, correctly, that Robyn is doing drugs in order to maintain her slim weight and peppy energy. Once Kristina lets Robyn know that she also uses crank, the two become close friends. Robyn shows Kristina how to smoke crank, and also buys crank and resells it to her. Many of Robyn's stories about her life after using crank, such as her rape, parallel those of Kristina. The inclusion of Robyn in this story stresses the idea that drug addiction is something that can happen to any teen, even on who appears to have their life together.



## Dad

It is important to notice that nowhere in this story is Kristina's father given a name. He is always referred to as "Daddy" or "Dad." This may indicate that the only importance he had in Kristina's life was his ability to be her biological father and give her life. He never develops into a father whom Kristina can relate to as a person or a role model. In fact, Kristina's father, if anything, encourages her to pick up bad habits by ignoring her and treating her as if she is not important. Kristina's father works at a bowling alley where he is paid in cash. Most of his money goes to support his drug habit. Kristina witnesses him high on both crack and marijuana. It is during this time with little or no parental supervision that Kristina gets involved with Adam and with crack.

## Leigh

Leigh is the daughter of Marie and Kristina's father. She is Kristina's sister and Jake's half-sister. At the time of the story, Leigh is enrolled in college. She has recently announced that she is a lesbian. Kristina is perhaps closer to Leigh than to any other member of her family. While Kristina is high on crack the first time, she writes a four-page letter to her sister telling her about Adam. Kristina tells Leigh more about what happened in Albuquerque than anyone else. Leigh knows first about Kristina's amateur tattoo. Leigh tries to help Kristina by disinfecting the area and giving Kristina some antibiotics to take. One night Leigh lies in bed with Kristina, trying to get her to talk about what is happening with her. Leigh tries to start the conversation by sharing with Kristina about her own lesbian lover. When Kristina finds out that she is pregnant, she almost calls Leigh for advice but then decides not to. She believes that Leigh will tell their parents what is going on in an attempt to help Kristina.

## Marie

Marie is Scott's wife and mother to Leigh, Kristina and Jake. Although Kristina remembers being close to her mother as a young child, they no longer have this close relationship. Her mother has remarried, and has another child by this second marriage. Both of these people take her mother's attention away from Kristina. In addition, Kristina's mother is trying to write a book in order to win her some sort of late in life fame. This attempt to write a book also takes time away from Kristina. Kristina's mother does not want her to go visit her father. However, Kristina convinces her mother she can take care of herself. When Kristina returns from Albuquerque, her relationship with her mother is not the same. Kristina's mother begins to worry about her daughter when she first returns from her visit to her father, but is not able to determine for sure what is wrong. She is in denial that her daughter may have a drug problem. Kristina's mother is very affected by appearances. She would prefer Kristina have a good-looking boyfriend even if he does not treat Kristina well. When Kristina's mother finally learns that Kristina is pregnant, she and Scott agree to help her care for the baby as long as Kristina finishes high school.



## Scott

Scott is Kristina's stepfather. In Kristina's opinion, he is stern with unachievable expectations. Kristina does not have a close or loving relationship with her stepfather. It is Scott who catches Kristina getting out of Chase's truck when she was supposed to be with Sarah. Despite Scott's firmness, he does appear to care about Kristina. Although he hates confrontation, he tries to talk to Kristina about her changed personality. Kristina doubts, however, that Scott really wants to know the truth, even when he point blank asks her if she is doing drugs. It is Scott who realizes even before Kristina's mother does that Kristina is indeed doing drugs. Scott realizes from the way Kristina is sleeping that she is crashing from drugs and not simply sick. When Kristina is given her sentence for breaking curfew, Kristina notes she believes Scott wanted her to get jail time instead of just community service.

## Jake

Jake is Kristina's little brother. Jake is her half brother, the son of Kristina's mother and Scott. Jake was a late in life child and was unexpected. He has taken over Kristina's spot as the baby in the family. Kristina refers to Jake as being spoiled. It is Jake who talks to Adam the first time Adam calls Kristina's home. Jake tells Kristina that Adam first asked for Bree. He asks her who Bree is. When Kristina is grounded and forced to pull weeds as a punishment, she convinces Jake to help her. Generally, Kristina's attitude toward Jake is that he is a pest who asks too many questions.

## Lince (Lynx)

Lince is Adam's girlfriend before Kristina visits Albuquerque. When Adam meets Kristina, he attempts to mess around with her behind Lince's back. However, Lince discovers their relationship. Because she is high on drugs and angry with Adam, Lince assumedly jumps from the balcony outside Kristina's dad's apartment. Lince claims this is her way of getting back at Adam for dating Kristina behind her back. Although it is not believed Lince will survive, she does eventually regain consciousness and is able to come home from the hospital. In one of her last phone calls to Adam, Kristina learns that Lince is pregnant with Adam's baby.

## Lucinda

Lucinda is one of Kristina's roommates during the short time she spends in juvenile hall. Lucinda is in juvenile hall because she was involved in a drive by shooting. Lucinda is a gang member. During their time together, Kristina and Lucinda strike up a friendship. Lucinda shares with Kristina the name of a member of the Mexican Mafia from whom Kristina can buy crank.



## **Roberto**

Roberto is the member of the Mexican Mafia from whom Kristina begins buying crank both for her own personal use and for resale. Lucinda, one of the girls that Kristina meets during her weekend in juvenile hall, puts Kristina in touch with Roberto. One of Roberto's guidelines is that he will not sell quantities of crank weighing less than one-half of an ounce. Shortly after Kristina learns she is pregnant, she reads an article in the paper that announces Roberto has been arrested for drug sales.

## **Sarah Baker**

Sarah Baker has been Kristina's best friend since they were in the 4th grade. Sarah's constant chattering drives Bree crazy. For this reason, once she has come back from Albuquerque, Kristina tries to stay away from Sarah. Kristina dodges Sarah at school and also turns down offers to spend time together. Sarah is one of the people whom Kristina tries to dodge while she is flirting with Brendan at Wild Waters.

## **Trent Rosselli**

Trent was one of Kristina's good friends before she starts doing drugs. Trent has recently announced that he is gay. For this reason, many other children who attend school with Trent have started picking fights with Trent. Kristina, however, accepts Trent as he is because her sister is also gay. Trent is one of the friends that Kristina dodges as she tries to flirt with Brendan at Wild Waters. As Kristina's drug addiction develops, she becomes closer friends with Trent's sister Robyn who also takes drugs.

## **Hunter Seth Snow**

Hunter Seth Snow is Kristina and Brendan's baby. Hunter was conceived as the result of a rape. Until Kristina believes that she has felt her baby move during an appointment at an abortion clinic, she had decided to abort the child. It is this sensation that makes Kristina realize her baby is a living organism and causes her to decide to carry Hunter to term. Despite her drug use during the pregnancy, Hunter is born normal.



## Objects/Places

### **Crank**

Crank is a form of methamphetamine.

### **Reno**

Reno is the city where Kristina lives with her mother, step-father, and younger brother.

### **Albuquerque**

Albuquerque is the city where Kristina's father lived.

### **'92 Geo**

This '92 Geo is the car that Kristina's father drove.

### **Bowling Alley**

This bowling alley is where Kristina's father worked. It was also the place where Kristina first used crank.

### **Bedzilla**

Bedzilla is the term Kristina uses to describe the dirty, stinky bed that she sleeps on at her father's apartment.

### **Pepsi and Cosmopolitan**

These are the items that Kristina goes to the market to buy when she runs into Adam.

### **Adam's Apartment**

Adam's apartment is the place where Kristina and Adam go to talk after they met at the market.



## **Red Rock Canyon**

Red Rock Canyon is the place where Kristina and Adam go skinny dipping.

## **Good California Green**

Good California green is a term for marijuana.

## **Razor Blade and Mirror**

A razor blade and mirror are two items used to prepare crank for snorting. Adam pulls out these items miraculously when Kristina tells him she wants to get high.

## **Roller Coaster**

It is the excitement and fear felt when riding this amusement park ride to which Kristina compares her feelings of anticipation before using crank.

## **Raiders Jackets**

Raiders Jackets are the jackets that the three boys who tried to rape Kristina outside the bowling alley were wearing.

## **Bindle**

A bindle is a paper packet that contains a drug, such as crank.

## **Heart-Shaped Tattoo**

It is this amateur tattoo that Adam claims is a sign of his unending love.

## **Ampicillin**

Ampicillin is the antibiotic that Leigh gives Kristina to take for the infection that has developed in her tattoo.

## **Wild Waters**

Wild Waters is a water park that Kristina and her family visit for Scott's company picnic.





## **Lazy River**

Kristina is enjoying this water attraction when she catches sight of Brendan.

## **Chamberlain Flat**

Chamberlain Flat is the place where Kristina and Brendan go to party.

## **Big V**

Kristina uses this term to refer to her virginity.

## **Eight Ball**

An eight ball refers to a certain measurement of a drug. It is this amount of crank that Kristina asks Brendan to get for her.

## **Hot Tub**

It is in this tub outside her family's house that Kristina washes away the smell and dirty feeling that Brendan's act of raping her left.

## **Twenty-Four Karat Gold Locket with an Inlay of Diamonds**

This locket is Kristina's seventeenth birthday gift from her elderly, demented grandmother. It is a family heirloom.

## **E**

E is a drug called Ecstasy. Kristina takes this drug, along with crank, the night of her birthday party at Chase's house.

## **Wittenberg**

Wittenberg is the juvenile detention center where Kristina is taken when she is picked for breaking curfew.

## **La Eme**

La Eme is one name for the Mexican mafia.

## **New Credit Card and PIN**

Kristina finds these items in her family's mailbox the day she discovers her mother has locked her bank account. Kristina uses this credit card to purchase her stash of drugs.



# Themes

## Anatomy of Addiction

One of the main purposes of this book is to illustrate how quickly a person can become addicted to drugs and how far they will go to acquire drugs to feed their habit. Kristina is introduced to drugs while she is visiting her good-for-nothing father. It is important to keep in mind that Kristina has already witnessed first-hand the effects that crank can have on a person. She sees how her dad uses all his money buying drugs. He lives in a bug infested apartment with no cable television because his money goes to drugs. Kristina witnesses as he goes for 48 hours with no food and no sleep after snorting crank. She also sees his fall when he sleeps 18 hours straight. Despite this firsthand knowledge, however, Kristina does not think twice about trying the drug.

It is not until Kristina returns home that she realizes how strong a hold crank has on her. Although she has used it only a few times with Adam, getting this drug is all that she thinks about. Even after she has gone a long portion of the summer drug free, Kristina is surprised how eager she is to take drugs again when Chase suggests. Kristina begs Chase to give her a stash of drugs. He does so but Kristina realizes that she must find her own supplier. Although Kristina knows that Brendan expects her to have sex with him if she goes on another date with him, the need for crank is stronger than her concern for her own virginity. It is at this point that Kristina goes from a drug user to a drug buyer.

After Brendan rapes her and Kristina finds she must use drugs on a daily basis just to keep herself going, she decides to start selling the drugs. The first purchase that she makes from Robyn, Kristina intends to keep only some of the stash for herself and sell the rest in order to pay for her habit. She comes to discover that she is soon using more and more crank, and still not having enough money to pay for her habit.

Kristina is challenged to stop using drugs when she discovers that she is pregnant. Kristina reads a newspaper article and is disturbed to learn the effects of crank on a developing fetus. Even with the knowledge of what damage she might be doing to her unborn baby, Kristina is not able to break completely away from the drug. Even after her baby is born, healthy and normal, Kristina still puts her need for drugs above her need to care for her infant.

## Identity

Identity, specifically Kristina's search for an identity, is one major topic in this novel. Up until the point she visits her father, Kristina had a very solid idea of who people expected her to be. She was a good girl, a straight "A" student, and she caused her parents few problems. However, this good girl Kristina also had an idea of her father and her relationship with this man that turned out to be a big disappointment. Although



she has seen herself in her mind as daddy's little princess, she realizes how wrong this vision has been when she actually meets her father again after eight years. Kristina's father is distant and does not seem to be impressed with Kristina's good record and scholarly achievements. This disappointment, in conjunction with her mother's recent marriage, has left Kristina feeling lonely and ripe for a new identity.

Kristina is surprised when what she eventually comes to believe is her "real" self comes out in her relationship with Adam. When this boy asks Kristina her name she tells him that she is Bree. At this point, Bree begins to take a stronger and stronger hold over Kristina's personality. Although Kristina tries on several occasions to resurrect her old dependable self, Bree always wins out. At one point, when Adam realizes that Kristina's given name is not Bree, he asks her why she told him that Bree was her name. Kristina replies that Kristina is who people have created and molded her to be, but that Bree was who she wanted to be. Adam is satisfied with this explanation. He is not overly concerned with Kristina's identity. Chase, however, does not like for Kristina to refer to herself as Bree. He tells her, when they sit waiting at Planned Parenthood, that he prefers the sound of Kristina instead of Bree. This preference on Chase's part shows that he would prefer the good girl Kristina to the naughty girl Bree.

It is also interesting to note that Adam, Kristina's first boyfriend, is also suffering from a sort of identity crisis. He is known to most people by the nickname Buddy. His given name, however, is Adam. Adam tells Kristina that he would prefer not to use his given name because it is such a heavy name to live up to. However, when he is with Kristina, he allows her to refer to him as Adam. In the section, "So of Course I Did a Really Stupid Thing," an allusion is made to the Biblical Adam. It was this Adam and his mate, Eve, who fell from grace and were banished from the Garden of Eden. It should be noted that Kristina's association with Adam or Buddy that initiates her own fall from grace.

## Appearances

The way things appear is a very important theme in this novel, especially in the relationship between Kristina and her mother. The importance of appearances becomes apparent when Kristina meets Brendan, and then again when she meets Chase. Brendan is a lifeguard. He is tall, muscular and attractive. Kristina allows her mother to meet Brendan because she knows her mother will approve of Brendan based only on appearances. Brendan's personality, however, is not nearly as attractive as his body. He rapes Kristina, leaving bruises on her body, then is hateful to Kristina and belittles her. Although he charges Kristina for the full price of the crank he finds for her, it is obvious that he has stolen some of the drugs before he gives the bundle to Kristina. Although Brendan is the father of Kristina's baby, he at first denies being the father, then tells Kristina he has no money. It is only after Kristina offers to tell his mother, girlfriend and probation officer that Brendan agrees to pay for an abortion. Brendan takes no interest in the life he has contributed to bringing into the world.



Chase, on the other hand, is not a boy that Kristina's mother approves of by looks alone. Chase also has a reputation of being a bad boy. However, when Kristina gets to know Chase she finds that he is more intelligent and kinder than the other boys that she has met in her past. Although Chase does provide Kristina with drugs, he does not encourage her to partake in these drugs to excess. In fact, he does not like the idea of leaving Kristina a stash of drugs on the day she invites him to her house the first time she is grounded. When Kristina tells Chase she has been raped, he cries with her, sharing her pain. When Kristina tells Chase she is pregnant, Chase offers to marry her and take care of the baby. Chase even supports Kristina and remains firm in his desire to marry her even after he learns the baby is not his. He encourages Kristina to keep the baby and will not help her fund an abortion.

Initially, Kristina does not tell her mother that Brendan, the "perfect" boy raped her. Kristina only tells her mother that Brendan was all over her during their first date together. It is obvious that Kristina's mother is upset that Kristina is no longer dating Brendan simply on the basis of the way he looked. Kristina feels her mother has no understanding of the idea that even if a person looks good, they may not act that way. Kristina tries to make this point to her mother by suggesting she look at their family photo albums. It seems that Kristina may be suggesting to her mother that even though their family looks good in photos, in real life things are not that great.



# Style

## Point of View

This story is told from the first-person point of view of Kristina/Bree. This first person point of view is important to the story because the reader must be able to know Kristina's thoughts and emotions in order to understand why she does the things she does. Any other point of view would yield a less powerful account.

This story is told through what might best be described as lyrical poetry. For this reason, most of the novel is told through exposition instead of dialogue. In places where there is dialogue, Hopkins generally uses italicized words to indicate when a person other than Kristina is speaking. There is little use of quotation marks throughout the entire story.

## Setting

There are two main locations in which the action of this story takes place. The first is Albuquerque, the city where Kristina's biological father lives. It is in Albuquerque that Kristina meets Adam and first begins doing drugs. Settings visited in Albuquerque include the apartment complex where Kristina's father, and Adam and Lince's families live. Another important setting is the bowling alley where Kristina's father works and where she first snorts crank. Adam and Kristina also visit the hospital where Lince is treated after she jumps/falls from the balcony outside Kristina's father's apartment. Approximately the first third of the book is set in Albuquerque.

The remaining two thirds of this book are set in the city of Reno. It is in Reno that Kristina lives with her mother and stepfather. Settings in Reno include Kristina's bedroom, the bathroom and kitchen of her home. Kristina meets Brendan at a water park called Wild Waters. The two later join a group of teenagers at a place called Chamberlain Flat for a drug party. Another popular setting in Reno is a place called The Avenue. It is on The Avenue that Kristina sells and takes drugs before going to school. Chase Wagner's home is used as the setting for Kristina's seventeenth birthday party. Near the end of the book Kristina and Chase visit a Planned Parenthood clinic to learn options for Kristina's pregnancy. Kristina also visits an abortion clinic.

## Language and Meaning

Hopkins makes powerful use of language in this story. One major example of this use of language is her reference to crank as a monster. By calling the drug a monster, Hopkins personifies the drug, giving it life and personality. For those who have experienced drug use or drug abuse, they realize this personification of a drug is quite correct. The drug is a monster in the way it takes control of a person in the form of addiction. The term "monster" also indicates crank is bad, scary, and should be avoided.



Hopkins also uses the language in her story to appeal to teenagers. The novel is not written in technical or scientific terms, it is written in the language of the teen. Popular acronyms such as GUFN and LMAO are used in the text. These phrases help the teen to relate to the story and to the position in which Kristina finds herself.

## Structure

The story is constructed of nearly 300 short poems or lyrical sections. Since there is no rhyme scheme in these sections, it is hard to define them as poems, the term lyrics almost fits these short sections better. Some of these sections are only a few words long while some cover multiple pages. Each set of lyrics is defined by a bolded title at the top of the page. This title either refers to the main topic of the section, or is the first few words of the first sentence of that particular section. The story is told in a chronological form with no flashbacks. The plot, though powerful, is fairly simple with no subplots.

Author Hopkins uses the physical structure of these lyrical sections to help convey her thoughts. For instance the section, "Home Sweet Home," is a concrete poem in the shape of a house. The words that form the roof of the house describe the physical appearance of the home. The words that describe Kristina's reaction to seeing her home again make up the main part and foundation of the house. These words are divided into two columns, the left describing Kristina's reaction to seeing her home again, the right describing Bree's reaction to seeing the house for the first time. The house is divided, just as Kristina's personality is divided between her desire to be Kristina again and her desire to see where her new personality of Bree will take her.



## Quotes

"Bree is / no imaginary playmate, / no overactive pituitary, / no alter ego, moving in. / Hers is the face I wear, / treading the riptide, / fathomless oceans where / good girls drown" (pg. 8.)

"I've been alone since my mom met Scott. / He sucked the nectar from her heart / like a famished butterfly. No nurture, / no nourishment left for Kristina" (pg. 13.)

"She was right. And I still had not forgiven her. Maybe he wasn't perfect. But he was still my dad" (pg. 37.)

"I kept to the shadows, / observing the game / I hadn't dared play, / absorbing the rules / with adhesive eyes" (pg. 43.)

"I couldn't believe / his confession: / No one can measure up to your mom" (pg. 64.)

"We used to / do coke, till "Just / Say No" put the stuff / out of reach. Now it's crank. / Meth. The monster. It's a bitch / on the body, but damn do you fly" (pg. 68.)

"Fire! Your nose ignites, / flameless kerosene / (and, some say, Drano) / laced with ephedrine / you want to cry / powdered demons bite /through cartilage and sinuses, / take dead aim at your / brain, jump inside / want to scream / troops of tapping feet / fall into rhythm, / marking time, right / between your eyes / get the urge to dance / louder, louder, ultra / gray-matter power, / shock waves of energy / mushroom inside your head / you want to let go / detonate, / annihilate barriers, / bring down the walls, / unleashing floodwaters, / freeing long-captive dreams / to ride the current / through / arteries and capillaries, / pulsing, rushing, / raging torrents / pounding against your heart / sweeping you away" (pg. 90.)

"I mean, there I was, / snorting crank / with my dad, / my boyfriend, / and his other / girlfriend" (pg. 102.)

"Inter-family communication / must be an acquired skill" (pg. 154.)

"Kristina is who they made me. / Bree is who I choose to be" (pg. 162.)

"Chase Wagner and Bill Shakespeare. Talk about your strange bedfellows. I was in line for that ménage à trois" (pg. 274.)

"It was the first time in a long time I'd out and out / lied and it bothered me. For about five minutes" (pg. 291.)

"I wondered if I should / confess that her sweet, intelligent / little Kristina did not exist / anymore" (pg. 294.)





"And it occurred to me for one uneasy moment / that every move I had made lately might have / started a landslide. / What if I couldn't go back? What if I died in the crash?" (pg. 300.)

"Forgiveness / granted, I made some / decisions: appreciate / family, focus on / school and hunt / for Kristina" (pg. 327.)

"If you acquaint your self with your self, you don't always like the person you find inside" (pg. 443.)

"Crank, You See / isn't any ordinary / monster. It's like a / giant octopus, / weaving / its tentacles not / just around you, / but through you, / squeezing / not hard enough to / kill you, but enough / to keep you from / reeling / until you try to get / away" (pg. 468.)

"I didn't need it all, of course. / The plan was to sell some, / so my own stash would be free" (pg. 447.)

"That's what I became that day. A dealer. / I had just taken a very big step up / in the hierarchy of the monster" (pg. 447.)

"How it eats big holes in the brain, destroys / the pleasure center. How it shows up / in X rays as big black dead spots spoiling gray matter" (pg. 515.)

"Crank is more than a drug. / It's a way of life. You can / turn your back. But you can / never really walk away" (pg. 537.)



## Topics for Discussion

Discuss the relationship between Bree and Kristina. In what ways are these two personalities different? Do they have any similarities?

According to the book, crack has a variety of bad effects on the user. Discuss some of these effects including the physical and mental detriments of drug use as well as the effects of drug use on interpersonal relationships.

Explore the different lyrical devices that Hopkins uses in her poetry. Discuss the way in which her use of poetry, wording and timing enhance the meaning of her story.

Compare and contrast two of Kristina's three boyfriends, Adam, Brendan, and Chase. In what ways did these boys contribute to her drug use and in what ways did they discourage it?

What, in your opinion, is the reason Kristina began using drugs? Do you believe things would have turned out differently for Kristina had she avoided crack?

Why does the author refer to crack as a monster? What does this allusion say to the reader about the qualities of crack?

Describe Kristina's relationship with her family. Include her birth mother, birth father, stepfather, sister and brother. In what ways did her family relationships contribute to her drug use?

Discuss your opinion of Kristina and the decisions that she has made. Do you have any respect for her? Why or why not? Had you been in her position, do you believe you would have made the same decisions she did? Why or why not?