

Flirtin' with the Monster: Your Favorite Authors on Ellen Hopkins' Crank and Glass Study Guide

Flirtin' with the Monster: Your Favorite Authors on Ellen Hopkins' Crank and Glass by Niki Burnham

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Plot Summary

"Flirtin with the Monster" is a book of essays that contain critical commentary on the works of author Ellen Hopkins who wrote the best-selling books, "Crank" and "Glass." Both books were fictionalized accounts of Hopkins' real-life daughter who she dubbed "Kristina" and who struggled with methamphetamine addiction. The essays also contain insight into the addiction and its ramifications.

The book begins with an introduction by author Hopkins. She provides a brief synopsis of her real-life struggle with a daughter who was a victim of meth addiction. She explains her arduous journey from disbelieving parent to frantic mother and finally to author. Hopkins explained how she got to an emotional crossroads where she had to let go of her daughter. She also felt compelled to write about her daughter and the damage that meth did to her and the entire family. In writing about this tragedy, she was better able to understand what happened and held the hope that her words would prove to help others.

Hopkins had geared both books toward teenagers. Some critics thought the sentiment and emotion were too rough for teens. Although the stories may have been rough, they contained the raw truth. She wanted to learn what some of her colleagues, other professionals and her family thought of the books and asked each of them to provide critiques of her works. The books were unusual in that the stories were written in verse fiction. It was important for Hopkins to learn the opinions about her works from her respected peers, other professionals who she held in high regard and those she loved. The book consists of two main parts.

The first part contains the essays of other writers and professionals. In this section, topics such as the truthfulness of memoirs; letting go of a loved one who is addicted; a judicial view of meth addicts; and Hopkins' choice to fictionalize a true story are addressed. The second part contains the thoughts and feelings of her family. This second part, of course, are wrought with emotion as family members describe the personal impact of having a loved going through such tragedy and horror.

Throughout the book, there is the fundamental acknowledgment that meth addiction is a monster that wreaks havoc on the addict and her loved ones. It is a powerful drug that has a powerful and unyielding effect over its captives. There is no cure for meth addiction. Recovery is possible but relapses are common and the monster is always waiting in the shadows to reclaim its victims. The books concludes with the comments of young Orion, the eleven-year-old son of Kristina whom Ellen and John Hopkins eventually adopted. Hopkins indicates that she wanted to end the book with Orion because he represents the future.



Introduction and Part I Introduction

Introduction and Part I Introduction Summary and Analysis

Between 1995 and 2002, author Ellen Hopkins had a rough spell. She was having difficulty in her marriage, was in deep debt and she still had a young child to raise. All this was due to the behavior of her middle child Kristina [not her daughter's real name] and her dalliance with methamphetamine also known as crystal meth. The first signs that Kristina was in trouble were her grades. The former A+ student began getting Bs which was acceptable but when the grades devolved to Cs and Ds, Ellen knew that something was very wrong.

Coupling her slide in grades with a new argumentative attitude toward everyone in the house and her newly acquired addiction to cigarettes, Ellen and John, her husband, began to probe into what was behind the aberrant behavior. They expected drugs but those from which she could easily recover such as pot and diet pills. They didn't suspect something much more ominous like crystal meth. Kristina's addiction started a nightmare in the family that did not end for seven years when ultimately she went to prison. She had been found guilty of fraud and theft - the activities that funded her addiction. She had rifled through mail boxes for credit card information and burglarized houses. She stole money and items she could pawn from her parents. Ellen was actually happy to see Kristina go to prison because her death march was at least halted.

In her journey back to normalcy, Kristina realized that the source of her problem, what had sparked her slide was her fervor to be accepted. Kristina, like all addicts, was self-centered, thinking that his addiction is just his problem. But a family member who has an addiction is also problem of the addict's family and friends. Of course, being a parent, Ellen felt guilty about Kristina's deterioration. What could have done to prevent it? Did she unknowingly contribute to her addiction?

Hopkins wrote "Crank" because it was an important story to be told. She was an unpublished author and poet at the time. She obviously put her heart and soul in "Crank" because her heart and soul were part of the story. An editor agreed that it was an important work and it was published in 2004. It had word of mouth success and climbed to the New York Times Bestseller list two years after it was first published. It was a testament to the power of the story and the genuine need to educate the public about meth addiction.

Kristina has brain damage and struggles with one low-wage job after the other. She has had two children to care for since the onset of her addiction. She has stayed clean for years and has had relapses. She will always be an addict and in therapy and recovery. She will remain a worry and heartbreak to her parents. Hopkins has written about addiction, suicide, depression, rape and abuse since her first book. She feels gratified



not by her personal success but by the thousands of messages and letters she receives from readers who she has enlightened and helped.

Part I

Introduction

As a new writer, Hopkins relied on formula and on emulating her favorite authors. But ultimately, she found that the only way to write was from the heart. Her core audience are teens but the popularity of her books is spreading to other demographics. She has heard from people around the world - even soldiers in Iraq. Bestselling books, critical acclaim and awards are flattering and exciting. However, praise from one's peers and other professionals is the most gratifying result of writing. The following contributions are reviews from other authors and other professionals about Hopkins works.

Role Models by Niki Burnham

Role Models by Niki Burnham Summary and Analysis

Niki Burnham has been accused of being a bad influence on teen readers. Her books have foul language, gay characters and characters who smoke. But Burnham believes in educating teens about the real world. A writer's responsibility is to the reader not the publisher or critic or even the reader's parents. Unrealistic and "perfect" characters will not engage the young reader because they can't relate to them. A story is engrossing when the reader doesn't know what to expect - doesn't know how a character will react. Margaret Wise Brown's "The Runaway Bunny" appeals to all ages because the mischievous bunny doesn't listen to his mother and keeps running away. The story engages the young child because he may have entertained the idea of running away when he was angry after being confined to his room on a "time out." The story keeps children engaged and then learns about the struggles the bunny had after he ran away.

For the teen, life has become complex and she begins to see that everything and everyone isn't perfect. People swear and hurt each other. Teens need examples of the struggles of others to help them when faced with new challenges. Reading about "ideal" characters will not help them learn. They will learn by reading about people like them - imperfect people. The more truthful a story is, the more a teen is drawn to it. Those stories about "perfect" teens will be cast aside and forgotten.

Ellen Hopkins' books are known for their realism. Parents have every right and even a responsibility to know what their kids are reading. However, a teen who reads about Kristina only thinking about her next fix when visiting a friend in the hospital who overdosed, will resonate and stay with that teen. Parents should know what their kids are reading, read it themselves and let the kids know that they are available to discuss it with them.

Reading about a frail teenager near death with tubes running into her body is a stark image that will surely serve as a deterrent to drug abuse. What Hopkins does with that image and her verse is show where meth addiction will lead. No matter how protective a parent is, kids will learn about drugs. Therefore, the best approach is to learn about it together. Teens are becoming adults and feel empowered to take on the responsibility of learning about life on their own. They can compare themselves to a character like Kristina who knew nothing about meth before she became involved in it. Learning about meth before they are faced with it, they can be alert to dangers that Kristina wasn't.



More Than Just a Broken Line by Susan Hart Lindquist

More Than Just a Broken Line by Susan Hart Lindquist Summary and Analysis

To become a bestseller and stay in print, a book has to connect with readers. For a writer, there is a tension between his or her creative vision and what it takes to get a book published. Does a writer compromise creativity in order to get a book published? Ellen Hopkins chose to follow her creative instincts and wrote "Crank" in verse - a genre that was at times, challenging and in a format that was unusual and unexpected. Yet, it became a bestseller just like her sequel, "Glass." Kids are not only reading Hopkins' books of verse, they are memorizing the lines and quoting from it.

The book is popular, despite its unusual format, because the writing is good. Hopkins wrote the story as much for herself as she did for her readers. However, there was not even a touch of self-pity or self-indulgence about her writing. The honesty from her approach is readily apparent to all who read it. She decided to write a work of fiction using "Kristina" as the main character rather than the "true story" because she couldn't presume to know what was in her own daughter's mind. She chose to write "Crank" in the first person narrative to add credibility to the work. The perspective of a story is important to a reader because it creates a connection between author and reader.

Hopkins chose to write in free verse and in the first-person perspective, which allowed her to become Kristina. Writing a story in verse is not just a series of linked poems. Her poems that begin each chapter are a signature of her work. Some critics opine that "verse" is just prose broken into stanzas. But that's not the case in "Crank." Hopkins uses the breaks to increase tension and create surprises. Hopkins' choice of verse mimics the brevity of poetry and underscores the power of a minimum of words. In "Crank" the voice is Kristina's but the writing belongs to Hopkins. Making Kristina an average girl was another way to appeal to a broad range of readers. For those who write, there is an overwhelming deep desire to connect with others and connection is fundamentally about survival.



Love Is an Addiction by Megan Kelley Hall

Love Is an Addiction by Megan Kelley Hall Summary and Analysis

When first falling in love, one finds it hard to eat or sleep. New love is completely consuming. It sounds a lot like addiction. In "Crank," Kristina becomes addicted to a boyfriend and drugs at the same time making them truly interchangeable in her mind. Before drugs became an addiction, Kristina was being prepped for them. She felt abandoned by her family and was desperate to feel loved. She turned to drugs to fill the emptiness inside. But the more she used, the bigger the hole inside became. Her baby filled her emptiness for a time but as soon as she felt the need for the love of a man, she made what was for her a natural association to drugs.

Science proves that the same area of the brain is impacted by both drugs and the emotions of love. To say that love is a drug would not be misspeaking. Infatuation has similar effects as a cocaine high: sleeplessness and obsession. People can become physically addicted to love because its euphoria triggers high levels of phenylethylamine in the brain. The fundamental definition of any addiction is simple: "addiction is something we can't stop doing" (p. 49). Addiction supplants logic with emotion. Whether love or drugs, one becomes addicted to that altered state. Programs to overcome love addiction are similar to twelve-step programs to recover from substance abuse.



Why Kristina Can't Just Quit by Mary Bryan

Why Kristina Can't Just Quit by Mary Bryan Summary and Analysis

Addiction is physical, psychological, societal, neurological and environmental. Addiction is not a symptom of another disease—it is a primary disease. The disease of addiction causes one to drink in excess or take drugs - not vice versa. But there are signposts along the way on the road to addiction. A history of familial substance abuse, depression, lifestyle and heavy use of tobacco are all preliminary factors that can result in addiction. But these predictors do not necessarily spell addiction - they can be absent in an addicted person. By the same token, an individual with these elements in their past does not necessarily become an addict.

An addict is never cured outright but can be treated by changing behavior and removing people, places, and things that the brain associates with the drug. The degrees of addiction vary from mild to extreme. Those with a minimal addiction can operate in the world to work, pay bills, and care for children. Those who use stimulants and alcohol can remain alert although they eventually exhibit dramatic mood swings. In the early stages of abuse, a potential addict begins by trying drugs socially. They like the results of those early dalliances. The drugs minimizes their problems and makes the false promise of helping them cope with life.

As the individual becomes more addicted, he goes to great pains to hide his budding addiction from those close to him. He still has control over whether he uses or not. He feels like he chooses to indulge and tells himself he doesn't have to have the drug. As drug intake increases, new addicts have a great tolerance for their drug of choice but have matching withdrawal problems without it. When they no longer have control, they make elaborate excuses for their behavior and show the beginnings of anti-social behavior. The addict loses the ability to do his work and function. Everything and everyone else in their life becomes meaningless. Their absences at work increase and they avoid contact with worried friends and family. Without help, addiction worsens and without intervention it results in death.

Inside the Addict's Head

As the individual devolves into addiction, he becomes delusional. He and his family and friends, who become his enablers, all agree that things will get better with some changes in his life - a new relationship, a divorce, a new baby, a new place to live. But none of these life changes will diminish the addiction. When the addiction reaches its final stages, there is a distinct impairment of thinking. Drugs alter the brain so that no pleasure is possible without them. The addict abandons and sees no use for those



people and things that used to bring pleasure. The addict begins to associate with other users so that they feel "normal."

Methamphetamine and Kristina Snow

Meth is a stimulant that works in a specific way in the brain. It forces the brain to release dopamine the chemical which creates the high. It blocks the re-absorption of the chemical back into the brain allowing the high to continue longer than does cocaine. The more meth that is taken, the more difficult it becomes for the body to produce it naturally. Meth addiction leads to sleep deprivation, loss of appetite and other mental and physiological deterioration. Since it is stimulant, meth causes addicts to be awake for long periods of time which distorts thinking.

Kristina, like many meth addicts, had the feeling of not belonging long before she began using. A close family member was also an addict which is another commonality among meth users. Kristina deluded herself into believing that she used because she wanted to. Later, she admitted that she needed it to get through the day. In order to fund her habit, she began stealing from her mother. Lies became a part of her behavior and personality changes began to emerge. Kristina failed at school and got pregnant. The sequel to "Crank," entitled "Glass," notes her physical deterioration - sores on her face, dingy hair, rotting teeth.

Is There Hope for Kristina?

Addiction can be stopped if sobriety returns and is maintained. However, relapses are common. There is generally a "treatment team" that controls the movements of the addict so that they cannot make wrong and impulsive choices. They teach the addict to avoid associations and places that will lead back to addiction. In ninety days, the brain is cleared of dysfunctional thinking. It takes two years of sobriety before the body is able to repair. The recovery rate for meth addicts fares better than that of heroin addicts but is less successful than alcoholic recoveries. Treatment generally lasts nine months to two years. But coaching after the formal treatment has ended is essential as is, in some cases, prescribed medications. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is one of the best methods of treating addicts. This method prescribes to a therapy that teaches addicts to change their negative ways of thinking into new and more positive ways.



A View from the Bench by Judge John Tatro

A View from the Bench by Judge John Tatro Summary and Analysis

As a judge for fourteen years, Judge Tatro saw the rise in meth-related crime increase dramatically. When he first became a judge, there were perhaps two such cases per month. Currently, a day doesn't go by without at least one individual appearing before him who is accused of committing a meth-related crime. The majority of these individuals are between eighteen and twenty-five years of age. Judge Tatro has learned that meth is powerful and can addict a person after just one use. It also plays havoc with their physical appearance. Their teeth can turn black and even fall out. The allure of the drug is the pleasure the user gains from the large amount of dopamine that it releases in the brain.

Reading the books "Crank" and "Glass" helped the judge learned what it was like to be a meth addict. Understanding how the addict reacts and the duality of their personalities has been helpful to him. The judge tries to encourage suspected addicts to admit to their problem in open court. It is the first step toward recovery. It has been disturbing for the judge to see the progression of a meth addict in his court. At first, the addict usually appears for minor crimes but as the addiction worsens so does the crime. Sadly, he's also learned of youngsters who appeared before him being found dead from their addictions. Kristina was using for a long period before anyone found out. By that time, it had totally consumed her. That is why the judge sentences a meth user to a term with strict conditions which include regular search and seizure for drugs and alcohol, counseling and drug testing. The program begins with numerous home visits to make sure the addict isn't lapsing into old habits right out of the gate.

It's important to remember that with the proper treatment and attention, people can get clean. If meth addicts complete at least 18 months of treatment, they have an 85 percent chance of staying in recovery. Jailing someone who has relapsed at least puts them out of reach of meth. One important issue for recovering meth addicts is to stay away from other people who use and that often times includes family members. One woman the judge encountered had made her sixteen-year-old son quit school so he could get a job and support her habit. Luckily, the Boys & Girls Club stepped in and returned the boy to school. Obviously, like many meth addicts, the mother had been robbed of her ability to think right. Ellen Hopkins used the term, "monster" to describe meth. It was an apt characterization. It takes a monster to rob a child of his childhood. Children are the most vulnerable and tragic victims of meth addiction. Children born from meth-using mothers are born addicted and have developmental problems.

Not one single organization can stop meth. It must be attacked from all fronts - judicial, law enforcement, social services, churches, friends and families. It is a wide-spread



misconception that only low-income people become meth addicts. It hits all segments of the community—no sector is spared. "The entire community must come together to successfully rise above the monster." (84) In her books, "Crank" and "Glass," Ellen Hopkins has been brave in sharing her family's struggle with meth addiction and she has performed a social service in educating her readers about the reality of the addiction.

Letting a Loved One Go by Gail Giles

Letting a Loved One Go by Gail Giles Summary and Analysis

There comes a point in the meth addiction of a family member when it is time to stop the bleeding - to cut the destruction out of a family. In Kristina's case, the family decided to stop enabling her. But would that be enough to save her? In Kristina's story, help and support were toxic to her. Deep down Kristina felt guilt. Kristina had a problem with self-worth but she hated herself more when her parents continued to help her despite what she was doing to them.

Cutting an addicted person off is the only way to save him. If a fourteen-year-old has a parent who is an addict, how does a child turn his mother or father away? If there is physical or sexual abuse, the child should seek help from social services. If there is no abuse, the child should seek help from a trusted adult.

Gail Giles suffered from emotional and physical abuse as a child. At the time, it was more acceptable. When she matured and realized that her friends didn't live under such abuses, she decided that she could make a change. She did the healthy thing and cut them off. As a high school teacher, she encountered kids who were going through what she had as a teenager. It's important for such children to find a replacement parent who really cares about them. It could be an aunt, a teacher or a friend's parent. Had Kristina stayed in her family, she would have poisoned all of them. It's not an easy thing for someone to cut off a loved one. That parent will continue to love that child and hold onto the hope that the severing the relationship will help them recover.

The Secret's Out by Terri Clark

The Secret's Out by Terri Clark Summary and Analysis

In verse and lyrical tones, Ellen Hopkins speaks for the voiceless. She tells the secret stories of so many teens. The endings are not always happy but neither is life. She strives to give her readers honesty. Hopkins takes on tough subjects like abuse, suicide, self-mutilation, prostitution, addiction, incest and other difficult topics. Ellen wrote "Crank" from her daughter's perspective so she could gain a better understanding of what her daughter was going through. She chose to fictionalize the story to save her family from unwanted focus. By exposing her secrets, Ellen felt a new freedom. It allowed her to write with honesty since she had shared everything and had no more secrets to reveal.

Kristina considered an abortion knowing she was in no shape to take care of a baby. But she finally told her mother and step-father who promised to be there for her and the baby as long as she finished school. Kristina had to have a level of trust to tell her parents her secret. What if she hadn't? There are always "What if?" questions when you consider revealing a secret about yourself.

Hopkins' books show the readers that strength of character is necessary to confront hidden truths. In the case of abuse, secrets are kept by families. But what kind of legacy is that to pass down from generation to generation? People learn that it's better to tell your secret in your time and in your words rather than wait until someone else learns about it and tells everyone his version. Secrets can be as hurtful as lies. With an addiction like Kristina was struggling with, each lie she told led to another. But she felt forced to lie so that her drug wouldn't be taken from her.



The Importance of Being Between by Micol Ostow

The Importance of Being Between by Micol Ostow Summary and Analysis

Micol Ostow is an author and is half-Puerto-Rican and half-Jewish and proud of it. But he hasn't always felt that way. Anyone the deals with having a diverse background can relate. To not embrace every facet of ourselves is to ask for trouble. Mind, body and spirit is who we are collectively.

Kristina had appeared to be the perfect girl and the perfect student. But she had a dark side, an alter-ego she called "Bree." At first Bree only emerged when Kristina was alone but she began to gain power. Kristina liked Bree better than she liked herself.

Freud contended that our mind is driven by three basic forces: the super-ego, the id and the ego. The id represents our unconscious desires, our secret selves. The "id" is responsible for our impulses and raw instincts. The super-ego is what counter-balances the impetuous "id." The super-ego is our conscious. It's what makes us feel guilty about not doing something we promised to do. It urges us to be responsible. The super-ego is the receptacle for everything we've learned about how we should act and what's acceptable in society. The ego is the force in between that tries to find a compromise between our desires and our learned limitations.

Bree first emerges in Kristina's story when she visits her deadbeat father for the first time. She is stunned by the distance that stands between them. He hasn't even told his current girlfriend that he had a daughter. When a neighbor, Adam, comes over and is obviously attracted to her, Kristina introduces herself as Bree. By being Bree, Kristina is free to abandon the behavior that she has been taught to have. After she gets into a sexual relationship with this man, she has her first dalliance with meth. During that visit, Bree became hooked and so did Kristina.

The clinical term for creating another personality is dissociative identity disorder. There is controversy about this condition among professionals but most agree that the condition usually manifests in people who had been sexually abused. By allowing Bree to make all the bad decisions, Kristina frees herself of the responsibility.

Kristina eventually admits that she and Bree are one in the same and that Bree has always been there deep inside her. But Kristina often speaks in terms of "we" and "our," still not ready to let go of Bree as a separate being. It was Bree who got them addicted to drugs. As much as Kristina wanted to believe that being addicted to meth was Bree's doing and was out of her hands, in the end she knew that it belonged solely to her.



Reality-Based Memoir vs. Non-Fiction by Cinda Williams Chima

Reality-Based Memoir vs. Non-Fiction by Cinda Williams Chima Summary and Analysis

Even though Ellen Hopkins was telling true stories in "Crank" and "Glass," she decided to make it a fictionalized account inspired by true events. Recent scandals about true stories not really being truthful have made the reading public skeptical. Two recent examples are: "A Million Little Pieces" and "Misha: A Memoir of the Holocaust Years," which were both proven to be mainly fiction.

The purpose of a memoir is to tell the truth, deliver a story and help both the reader and writer make sense of an experience or life. Some critics are a little more lenient as to what the "truth" is although journalists are more prone to demand verifiable facts. Novelist Anna Quindlen vows to never write her memoir because she has a bad memory and would only write that which she knows is true - no made up fill ins for gaps in a story for her. An "arm-chair" memoirist feels fine about filling in missing details from one's imagination. Freelance journalist Lindsay Beyerstein is lenient about the facts of a memoir more than other forms of non-fiction. But, she draws the line on massive frauds like those mentioned above.

But who owns the truth? Even historical accounts taught in school have proven to be wrong which was demonstrated in James Loewen's book "Lies My Teacher Told Me." Loewen wrote about how twelve commonly used high school history books skewed and slanted the facts. Some memoirists choose to use fiction to make a story more readable and engaging to the public. Just by its nature, a memoir is a slanted account of events because it is from the perspective of just one person. Often names and events in a memoir are changed to protect identities and avoid law suits. Sometimes real events don't translate as credible in writing and are fictionalized to be more believable!

Requiring a memoirist to provide the truth, unaltered and uncondensed is asking for the impossible. Besides, who has greater motivation to change a story than a memoirist? Announcing in the author's notes that some of the work is fiction will drive some readers away. As a memoirist herself, Chima has chosen to withhold facts that might prove hurtful or embarrassing to others. Fiction often tells more about the author than the writer.

In writing fiction, Chima often portrays a family with an absent father which probably reflects her own strong connection with her mother and her troubled past with her father proving that the truth can come out in indirect ways. Hopkins told Chima that she chose fiction to "serve the needs of the story and its intended audience." (134) Hopkins did not want to tell the story of her troubled daughter from her point of view - that would have

been a memoir. Hopkins feels that another writer who had not lived through her ordeal could not have written "Crank" because she or he hadn't lived through it like she had.



Part II

Part II Summary and Analysis

Part II contains the thoughts and feelings of Ellen's family: Her husband, her daughter Kelly, Kristina and her son, Orion. Orion's thoughts are last because he is the future.

Although things had settled down seven years ago, the six years of disruption had left its mark on John. He was still angry. The first time that Kristina screamed at him that he was not her father, he felt a sting that endured. He had thought of Kristina and her brother as his own. He had been their only father since Kristina was five-years-old. They were a family. They went to the beach and to museums. They had good clothes and the latest toys and a myriad of pets.

When Kristina was fifteen, the family's German shepherd, Blitz, scratched relentlessly at her door one night. When he wouldn't stop, John opened the door and found that Kristina's window was open and that she was gone. John woke Ellen who figured that Kristina probably went to a party. Her sister, Kelly, would know. They went to Kelly's room only to find that she was gone, too. Instead of calling the police, John and Ellen decided to wait for them in the dark living room. They heard thuds upstairs coming from Kristina's room. She came down in her pajamas claiming she had to let twelve-year-old Kelly in who was the one who had climbed out of Kristina's window. John and Ellen confronted her with the truth. They had been in her room and she hadn't been there.

Eventually, Kristina and Kelly grew apart and Kristina no longer included her in her activities. The two began to argue bitterly sometimes coming to blows. As the people that Kristina began to associate with became rougher, her lies grew bigger.

John and Ellen began to suspect drugs. They could smell cigarettes, which was a new habit for Kristina. Kristina lied about everything and became sullen and combative. One Friday night she sneaked out and didn't come back all weekend. On that Monday, they learned that she had been arrested for drug violations and was in juvenile hall. She had to undergo counseling sessions and do community service. Kristina graduated from high school but her behavior only worsened. John, Ellen and Kelly went out for dinner one night before Christmas. When they returned, Kristina had had a party and her friends all took all the presents that were under the tree. Shortly after that, John and Ellen showed Kristina to the door. They had Kelly to worry about.

Weeks would go by without hearing from her. When they did see her she was always with a new man. Her hair was falling out and her teeth were rotting. Not long after she moved out, she was pregnant. She refused to marry the man who reportedly proposed to her. After Hunter was born, Kristina eventually began leaving him with the father while she saw other men. She broke up with the "father" who she admitted wasn't the father - she didn't know who that was. She moved in with Brad and his three children. That didn't work out and soon Kristina was home again, of course, bringing her problems with



her. After showing no regard for the baby and endangering him, John and Ellen got legal custody of Hunter.

Kristina started stealing and passing forged checks - including those of her mother - and was in and out of jail and then in and out of prison. She continued having thuggish boyfriends and more babies. Worst of all she continued her meth addiction. Although it was sad and it haunted him, John realized that the best and only thing they could have done was to let go.

It's hard enough when your best friend dies but when she turns her back on you, that's even harder. Kelly lost her best friend, her older sister Kristina, the summer Kristina turned fifteen. It all started to change when Kristina returned from a two-month visit to her father. Kelly was jealous when she saw the "new" Kristina at the airport - tall and tan and glamorous. Kristina shared her secrets with Kelly making her swear not to tell their parents. Soon she convinced her that she needed to run in the same crowd that Kristina did. It was the end of Kelly's doll-playing years.

They hung out at the 7-11 and Kelly was amazed and envious with the number of boys who asked for Kristina's phone number. Kristina didn't hesitate to give her number out to any boy who asked. Kelly learned that Kristina had smoked and tried pot even before she visited her father. The two began sneaking out to go to parties after their parents were asleep. They would crawl out of the window and swing down to the patio deck. Kristina was strong enough to go in the reverse direction when they returned but Kelly wasn't. Kristina had to go downstairs and let her in - that's how they got caught.

At these parties, attended by older teens and people in their twenties, was the girls' introduction to meth. The first time it was offered, neither Kristina or Kelly tried it. At one party, Kristina's arm was cut so that the others could "drink her blood" and she could become part of their brotherhood. Soon after, Kristina began to use meth which was the beginning of a growing distance between the sisters. Kristina no longer wanted to share her secrets with Kelly and shut her out for the next several years. When Kristina had a miscarriage, her parents grounded her for months but she continued to sneak out.

When Kelly was a high school freshman, Kristina was a senior. Kelly was pulled in with the stoners and although she would smoke cigarettes and pot, she never took meth. After she graduated, Kristina was pregnant again. She was going to have an abortion until Kelly told their mother. She decided to have the baby, Orion (Hunter in "Crank"). After Kristina proved to be more interested in meth and partying, her parents got legal custody of Orion and eventually adopted him. Without telling her parents, Kristina married Trey who was deeply involved in selling drugs. They both wound up in jail. Kristina had another baby, a little girl, who wound up living with Trey's parents when he and Kristina both were sent to prison. Every time Kelly has seen Kristina in the intervening years, her physical state has become more deteriorated and she's a harder and meaner version of herself.

Kristina's habit not only damaged her it hurt her family and friends. "The drug reaches out and grabs everyone it can" (p. 163).



Kristina never had evil intentions. After meth took over her life, she was unable to do anything about it and hung on for dear life. She doesn't blame anyone. She had a privileged childhood. Had she not developed her alter-ego who dominated her actions, she could have been a high school valedictorian and gone on to college. Kristina attributes her being overwhelmed by meth and the lifestyle that came with it to a deep yearning to be accepted. She was a late bloomer and thought she was being left out of the social whirl. Despite having years of intensive therapy she still can summon up those old feelings of inadequacy in an instant.

Boys began to notice Kristina and made her feel powerful and she became addicted to maintaining that power. Deep down she still felt inadequate and it took the manifestation of "Bree," her alter-ego, who was strong and a leader of the pack. Bree did what she wanted, spoke her mind and didn't care what anyone thought. Girls and boys alike admired the brash girl. She became the center of attention and wanted to stay there.

Kristina's first step toward the dark side was when she began smoking cigarettes. Even though she had a bad reaction to cigarettes, she pressed on until she became accustomed to them. She soon forced herself to drink and smoke pot neither of which set well with her. Both alcohol and pot made her feel detachment from the world, from reality but she didn't like how out of control she felt with alcohol. Next, she decided to have sex. At fifteen, she was one of the last hold-outs in her group.

At seventeen, everything in her life was deteriorating - her school work, her relationship with her family, and her mental and physical health. She remembers the first time she took crank down to the finest detail. She soon began to crave it and was hooked and it became her all-consuming passion. After getting into meth, she trafficked it and even produced it. A dealer who she made meth with suddenly took a gun from waist and shot another guy in the head. Meth poisoned more than her body, it poisoned her entire life.

Kristina is clean now and enjoys everyone moment of life. She still thinks about how it was to get high, how exhilarating it felt. But thus far has had the strength to fight the temptation off. But she knows that a meth addict is never safe, never fully recovered.

Orion knows that he was "Hunter" in "Crank" and "Glass." His parents are really his grandparents but they adopted him at age four and to him they are Mom and Dad. He has seen "Kristina" maybe ten times in his life, mainly at Christmas. He knows that his mother left him and her family because she wanted to do drugs. She even stole from his family to buy them. Orion had some ADD issues which his teacher thought was connected to his mother having been a crank addict when she was pregnant with him. He knows he has two sisters and a brother but they are scattered all over and will probably never get to know them.

Orion has a good life and his parents love him. They give him a lot of attention and they do a lot together. Soon he'll be a teenager and is aware that he could be predisposed to addiction and knows that he has to always remember that.



Characters

Ellen Hopkins

Ellen Hopkins is the author of "Crank" and "Glass" among other works. These two bestselling books were written in the unusual style of verse fiction. They tell the story of "Kristina" a pseudonym for her real-life daughter who struggled for years with a meth addiction. The story also tells how crystal meth, which Ellen dubbed the "monster," nearly destroyed Ellen and her family as well.

When her daughter first became addicted to methamphetamine, Ellen went through a period of denial and disbelief - a natural reaction to such a tragic departure for one's child. At the time, Ellen was an unpublished writer and poet. After the full impact of Kristina's addiction began to dawn on Ellen, she fretted and worried about how she could help her daughter and if she could have done something to have prevented her daughter's life-changing choices.

A crossroads came when she and her husband had to finally draw a line in the sand. Kristina had destroyed herself. They could not allow her to destroy her younger sister who they still had to raise. It was time to show Kristina the door. Ellen would never stop loving her daughter but she knew that her fate was out of her hand. All she could do is stop the bleeding that was taking place inside her home.

Ellen needed a way to express the deep emotions that this six-year ordeal had engendered and the irreparable damage and hurt that it had caused. That's when she felt compelled to tell Kristina's story which began with "Crank" and was followed by "Glass." These books became best-sellers, although slow moving word-of-mouth best sellers, and are a favorite of teenagers, her target audience. Ellen holds out the hope that her books have helped other young people and their families avoid the tragedy of her own.

Kristina

Kristina is the main character in two of Ellen Hopkins' popular bestselling books. Kristina is the pseudonym for Hopkins' real-life daughter who was addicted to methamphetamine and, while in self-destruct, nearly destroyed her entire family. The addiction wreaked havoc and caused damage that is irreparable. Kristina was fifteen-years-old when she began her journey down a very dark path. Her biological father had abandoned her and her mother. He was an addict himself and never showed any interest in his daughter. From her father's dismissal a feeling of worthlessness grew within her. She had a deep and relentless desire to fit in and become one of the popular girls.

At fifteen, she began to experiment with drinking, pot and sex. She became rebellious at home, sneaking out her window after her parents were asleep to party with her friends,



most of whom were much older than she and her little sister who she often dragged along with her. The first time Kristina was offered meth, she turned it down. However, it wasn't long before she caved into peer pressure and tried it. As with many young teens, she was hooked after the first time. So hooked that it literally ruined her life.

Kristina was in and out of jail and then in and out of prison for years. She lied, cheated and stole. She trafficked the drug and even helped produce it. She was an eye witness to a brutal murder at the hands of one of her fellow addicts. Of her four children, at least two of them were raised by other family members. Her relationship with her family is damaged forever. They remain in contact but visits are rare and strained. At the time of this writing, she was clean but she has had many relapses through the years and is aware that the allure of the drug could knock her off the wagon in an instant.

John Hopkins

John Hopkins is Ellen Hopkins' husband and the step-father of Kristina. He loved Kristina like his own and was terribly hurt when she turned on him. It was a hurt he never fully recovered from.

Kelly Foutz

Kelly is Kristina's younger sister by three years. When Kristina first began to party, smoke pot and drink she lured her little sister into tagging along. When Kristina got into more serious drugs - like crystal meth - Kelly lost her best friend and sister forever.

Orion Hopkins

Orion is Kristina's first-born. He was only a toddler when, neglected by his mother, Ellen and John won legal custody of him. They eventually adopted him. He was eleven when he contributed his comments to this book. He is happy and feels loved by his parents but is aware of who his biological mother is, how drugs ruined her life and that he might be predisposed to addiction.

Judge John Tatro

Judge Tatro saw many meth addicts come through his court. When he recognized a convicted criminal as a meth addict, he made sure that any sentence he handed out to them included follow-up by law enforcement and an intense and lengthy period of counseling.



Trey

Trey was Kristina's first husband and is the father of her first daughter. They were both in prison when their daughter was just a toddler. She has been raised by Trey's family who live in Arizona.

Kristina's Father

Kristina's father abandoned her when she was just a toddler. He was an alcoholic and a drug addict. When she visited him one summer, they did drugs together. He was at least partially responsible for launching her on the road to drug addiction.

Micol Ostow

Micol Ostow is a writer and contributor to "Flirtin with the Monster." He is half Jewish and half Puerto Rican and understood what it means to be "different" during one's teen years.

Mary Bryan

Mary Bryan is a drug and youth counselor and a contributor to "Flirtin with the Monster." In her essay, she explains the power of methamphetamine and why Kristina and others like her just "can't quit" the drug.



Objects/Places

Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine addiction is the subject of Ellen Hopkins' two books, "Crank" and "Glass." Meth addiction is one of the most common among teenagers. It often addicts its teen victims after only one use.

Judicial System

Judge Tatro, who is a contributor to "Flirtin with the Monster," described the dramatic increase he had seen in young meth addicts coming through his court over fourteen years.

Memoir

A memoir is a truthful account of a person's life. However, in recent years, several high-profile memoirs were exposed as frauds and the genre's credibility suffered. It was one of the reasons that Ellen Hopkins decided against writing "Crank" as a memoir.

Verse Fiction

"Crank" and "Glass" by Ellen Hopkins were both written in the unusual style of verse fiction. Although it is lyrical and poetic in nature, it is also a dramatic format that adds intrigue and interest to a narrative.

The Hopkins Family Home

When Kristina was fifteen-years-old she became involved in alcohol, pot and eventually crystal meth. She would sneak out of her second-floor window after her parents were asleep to go party with her fellow druggies most of whom were much older.

The 7-11

Kristina and her younger sister, Kelly, would hang out at the local 7-11 where Kristina would meet boys. Kelly was astonished at how Kristina willingly gave her phone number to any boy who would ask for it.



Arizona

When Kristina was fifteen-years-old, she went to visit her biological father in Arizona. He had no interest in her and hadn't even told his current girlfriend that he had a daughter. Father and daughter got high together during her stay.

Prison

Kristina was in and out of jail and eventually wound up doing time in prison. She lost custody of her daughter when she was just a toddler because she was doing time.

Themes

Writing As A Public Service

In "Flirtin with the Monster," a series of critical essays about the works of Ellen Hopkins, particularly her bestselling books, "Crank" and "Glass," there is a sentiment that is often repeated from the independent contributors. Many felt that Hopkins was courageous in airing a personal tragedy that almost destroyed her family in order to provide information that would serve as a deterrent for other youngsters who are being tempted by drugs, in particular methamphetamine.

In her piece entitled, "The Secret's Out," Terri Clark lauds Hopkins for bringing raw honesty to a problem that many teens and parents are not aware of. By describing the debilitating impact of a meth addiction in vivid and graphic detail, Hopkins' works can serve as a wake-up call to child and parent alike. Also praising Hopkins for bringing realism to a real problem is Judge John Tatro who cites the educational value of Hopkins' books by "providing an insider's view of addiction." He acknowledges that it was courageous and self-sacrificing for Ellen to share her family's very personal story with the world at large.

Writer Gail Giles describes the painful decision a parent has to sometime make when dealing with an addicted child. She points to Hopkins' account of throwing her daughter out of her house as a necessary step in the healing of the family and in the recovery of the child. By shining a light on how addiction impacts the entire family, Hopkins brought stark reality to a tragedy that sometimes starts with a youngster just wanting to get attention and impress his peers.

"Crank" became a bestseller, but it wasn't by any means on a fast-track. Two years after it was first published, the book became a bestseller mainly through word of mouth. Teens and parents around the world became advocates of the book and of "Glass," its sequel. Hopkins remains hopeful that her works have helped youngsters avoid the same traps as her daughter fell into and helped parents become more aware of the addiction and how to help their children resist its temptation.

Victimization

A theme that runs through the majority of the essays that were contributed to "Flirtin with the Monster" focused on the victims of addiction. The victimization by "monsters" like methamphetamine go far beyond just the addict. As Kelly, Kristina's younger sister wrote in her essay, "The drug reaches out and grabs everyone it can." (163) Kelly laments that the addiction took her best friend away. The two sisters had been close until crystal meth got in the way. Paraphrasing Kelly, it's terrible losing a sister to death but when she turns her back on you, it's just as harmful perhaps even more so.



John is Kristina's step-father. Although he never officially adopted Kristina, he was really the only father she knew. He loved her like a daughter and when she struck out at him, propelled by the poison of her addiction, and screamed that he was not her father, it was a pain that was deeply felt and one that he never fully recovered from. Ellen, a loving and caring mother, went through sheer hell seeing her daughter - a formerly shy, sweet girl and an A student - turn into someone she didn't know. It can never be an easy decision to show your daughter to the door which Ellen finally realized she had to do in order to save the rest of her shattered family.

The addiction that Kristina fell victim to struck out in practical as well as emotional ways. So driven by the need and craving for crystal meth, Kristina stole from her parents and rifled through neighbor's mail boxes trying to find the means to support her destructive habit. The family preparing for Christmas had all the presents under the tree stolen by Kristina's friends who she invited over for a party while the rest of the family was out.

Part II of the book which contains the essays of family members is undoubtedly the most heartfelt for the author. The contributions from her family places in posterity the real damage that meth addiction did to her family. She can never take that misery away and the only resolution that anyone in the family has is that those horrible years are over. However, as witnessed by the emotion it wrought, that time will always remain a part of their lives. Ellen saw to it that the last commentary in the book was that of Orion, Kristina's first-born who Ellen and John eventually adopted. He has a mother who he has seen only a dozen times in his life. He was cheated out of a real relationship with her. He was only a baby when he was separated from his mother by a looming and diabolical monster that destroyed any hope of a mother and son relationship.

Memoir vs. Fiction

In the essay entitled, "Reality-Based Memoir vs. Non-Fiction" by Cinda Williams Chima, the choice that Ellen Hopkins made to fictionalize a true story versus writing about a true event in the form of a memoir is discussed by the writer. Hopkins had a choice when deciding to write about her daughter to either write the story as a true and factual account or to fictionalize it. There are pros and cons for each option.

The main benefit of writing a memoir versus a fictional account is the real emotion and insight that the writer is able to bring to the story. Unfortunately, due to some authors who have taken too many liberties with the truth, there is currently a prevailing skepticism about the credibility of memoirs. There are some recent very high profile examples. Jamie Frey wrote "A Million Little Pieces," the gritty, allegedly true story of the author's experiences with crime, addiction and finally redemption. It was lauded by critics and was featured on Oprah. However, the book was exposed as a fraud and leveled a serious blow to the genre of memoirs in general.

When the public feels duped, when it has been lied to, it becomes skeptical and suspicious. A reader certainly doesn't want to be taken again - fool me once, shame on you but fool me twice, shame on me. The public was "taken" by Frey and by others who



followed in his dubious footsteps. Although Ellen would be writing a truthful account, with no intention of any fabrication, she did not want the specter of the recent frauds to put the story of her daughter's struggle in a bad light. Another reason some authors decide to present their true story as fiction is to save their family and loved ones from embarrassment and exposure. The defense of that is obvious as is fictionalizing a story to keep from being sued—another reason not to write a memoir.

There are varied opinions about the "truthfulness" of a memoir. Just by the very nature of a memoir, it is a slanted account. It is written from the point of view of one person involved in the story. There is a natural bias in anyone's viewpoint. When conversations are recreated, they cannot be exact or completely accurate. The writer's brain is not a computer and will not retain a complete and accurate history of any event. So with all these built-in pratfalls, some memoirists feel that it is safer to fictionalize a story rather than being called out on some inaccuracy, as unintentional as it may have been.

As an "arm-chair" memoirist, a writer has no problem with filling in some gaps that are missing. Other writers, especially journalists whose life is dedicated to fact-finding, would never dream of "making up" a part of a story that is unknown or forgotten. But the debate can go to another level. What exactly is truth and who is the arbiter of it. History text books have proven to be inadequate and even inaccurate. Besides, what is history based on other than the accounts of humans who forget, exaggerate and even lie about events?

Ellen Hopkins, like many other authors who were planning to write their own story, debated about the best way to proceed that would place her story in its best advantage and give proper focus to a true story that was near and dear to her heart. She chose to fictionalize the story instead of making it a memoir about how her daughter's addiction impacted her. She felt that by writing the book as "Kristina" she could educate the readers as well as herself. She feels she made the right choice.



Style

Perspective

"Flirtin with the Monster" is a conglomeration of essays about the works of Ellen Hopkins, most notably her popular best-sellers, "Crank" and "Glass." These books were fictionalized accounts of the struggle of Hopkins' real-life daughter with addiction to methamphetamine. In these two books, Ellen made the perspective from that of Kristina. She wanted to tell her daughter's story and hoped that she and her readers could learn from the young girl's account of her experiences with the "monster" known as crystal meth.

"Flirtin with the Monster" is presented from a variety of perspectives since it is a series of independent essays. The book is divided into two main parts. Part I contains the essays and critiques by writers and professionals of Hopkins' works and her choices in creating a fictionalized account of her real daughter's tragedy. Judge John Tatro provides comments from a judicial point of view. When he recognized a defendant as a crank addict, he made sure that any sentence he handed down included counseling and follow-up by law enforcement.

Mary Bryan is a youth and drug counselor and she added to the discussion by explaining how powerful meth is and how an addict just can't "quit." Cinda Williams Chima, in her piece, addressed Hopkins' choice to fictionalize her story rather than write a memoir which, she points out, is wrought with many drawbacks. Writer Susan Hart Lindquist explained why Hopkins' books worked even though she made the unusual choice of writing them in verse fiction.

Part II contains the reaction of Hopkins' close family members to Kristina's addiction. Having lived through the struggle, their comments are heart-felt and personal.

Ellen Hopkins is an accomplished writer and poet. In addition to the books about her daughter, she has written many other books about human suffering and addiction that are generally geared to teenage readers.

Tone

"Flirtin with the Monster" is a collection of essays that focus on the works of author and poet Ellen Hopkins, in particular her two most famous books, "Crank" and "Glass." The books are fictionalized accounts of Hopkins' real-life struggle with a young daughter who became addicted to methamphetamine and the resultant damage it did to the entire family. Hopkins' books are known to portray a real and gritty message to her readers. Although Hopkins targeted her works, which were written in fiction verse, to teenagers, the books became popular best-sellers and have been consumed by a much broader demographic. One on-going critique of her work over the years was that her writing was too rough for her targeted audience—teenagers. She wanted to learn what some of her



peers, other professionals and her own family thought of that criticism and of her books in general which is the premise of this book.

The responses to Hopkins' request are in the form of essays that cover different aspects of her works. The majority of the responses are from fellow writers and therefore are well-written, well-thought out and presented with clarity. Some of the writers and other professionals respond to the choices she made in writing her books and others focused more narrowly on the subject of drug addiction.

The responses from her nuclear family are quite naturally wrought with emotion. The family members were the people who actually were part of the tragedy that one of their own struggled with for years. These essays contain some anger, regret, second-guessing and lingering sadness over losing one of their own to the "monster" also known as crystal meth.

Hopkins asked for honest opinions from all her contributors. The results are a collection of thoughtful and insightful essays that explore various aspects of her writing in particular and of methamphetamine addiction in general.

Structure

"Flirtin with the Monster" is a series of essays about the works of writer Ellen Hopkins. The author asked some of her peers, other professionals and her own family members to provide their thoughts and feelings about her writing, especially her popular books, "Crank" and "Glass." Both of these books were fictionalized accounts of her daughter's struggle with meth addiction. The story tells of the damage that the "monster" drug did not only to "Kristina," a pseudonym for her daughter, but to her entire family and her friends as well.

The book is divided into two major parts. Part I contains essays written by writers and other professionals about Hopkins' books and about addiction to methamphetamine, also known as crystal meth. For example, a judge provides some of his experiences with defendants who were meth addicts. Once he spotted a meth addict, he sentenced them to a strict probationary period and intensive therapy after serving time. He lauded Hopkins for bringing attention to the horrors of the addiction. Writer Terri Clark praises Hopkins for baring her secrets and by so-doing demonstrating the importance of not keeping secrets which all addicts do at least in the initial stages of their disease. Gail Giles speaks of the importance of learning to let go and not becoming an enabler or an accomplice to the "monster." Giles wrote of her support for Hopkins and her husband who finally decided they had to let go of Kristina because they had another child to raise and be concerned about.

In Part II, Hopkins' family members provide their comments about the books Ellen Hopkins wrote. These family members include John, Ellen's husband who is the step-father of Kristina; Kelly, Kristina's sister; Kristina herself; and, Orion, the eleven-year-old



son of Kristina who was adopted by Ellen and John. The books impacted all of them deeply in ways that will stay with them the rest of their lives.



Quotes

"Many parents lose their children to addiction. On the flip side, many children lose their parents to substance abuse" (Introduction, p. 2).

"It was just past dawn, and the sky was salmon pink. I looked toward the Sierra, appreciating the beauty, and feeling the presence of the Creator. So I threw an offer in his/her direction. 'If you help me make sense of this, help me dig out of this place and maybe realize a little success, I swear I'll work my butt off for you.' I've been working my butt off ever since. Lesson learned: Never pray lightly. Someone just might be listening" (Introduction, p. 8).

"The perfect character will always make the right choice in any situation. Therefore, the story isn't believable" (Role Models, p. 16).

"Do I want to write 'for me' or must I write 'for them'?" How can I do both? If I write 'for them' will I be selling out" (More Than Just a Broken Line, p. 28).

"When one is in love, one always begins by deceiving oneself, and one always ends by deceiving others. That is what the world calls a romance" (Love Is an Addiction, p. 45).

"Kristina recognizes that meth is hard on her body but the high is so great that she believes it is worth it. She notices that she isn't interested in food, can't sleep, and knows she will crash, but still 'invites the demons in'" (Why Kristina Can't Just Quit, p. 65).

"When the person is going to die anyway. When he or she is bent on self destruction with you, there is no other course than to try taking yourself away to change he or her destiny" (Letting a Loved One Go, p. 88)

"We who have a voice must speak for the voiceless" (The Secret's Out, p. 95).

"Anyone can give up, it's the easiest thing in the world to do. But to hold it together when everyone else would understand if you fell apart, that's true strength" (The Secret's Out, p. 101).

"Every history is incomplete; every historian has a point of view; every historian relies on what is unreliable - documents written by people who are not under oath and cannot be cross-examined" (Reality-Based Memoir vs. Non-Fiction, p. 127).

"I truly feel the story at the heart of "Crank" and "Glass" doesn't belong to her [Kristina] alone. It belongs to thousands of people who have chosen the same path. But more, it



belongs to their families, especially the children whose parents had been taken away from them by one monster or another" (Part II, p. 139).

"Soon, all my childish days would end. I would force myself to fit in with the same crowd my sister did, and the days of playing with Barbies and My Little Ponies would be over" (Best Friend, Stolen, p. 154).



Topics for Discussion

Why did Ellen want to gather the opinions of her colleagues, other professionals, and her family about the books she wrote about "Kristina?"

What caused Kristina to start drinking and taking drugs? How did her biological father factor into her problems?

What did meth do to Kristina's mental state and to her physical health?

How had Kristina's addiction impacted her family? Why did Ellen and John elect to throw Kristina out?

What caused John and Ellen to seek legal custody of Hunter? What relationship has Kristina had over with Hunter over the years? Why didn't she mention him in her essay?

What approaches can be taken to help a meth addict get into recovery? Describe the CBT approach.

What experience did Judge Tatro have with meth addicts? Why was he severe in his sentencing of them?