

Discussion Questions Suggested by *Flirtin' with the Monster*

1. Have you ever been close to someone who changed because of alcohol, drugs, or any other addiction? Do you recognize any of Ellen Hopkins', John's, Kelly's, or Orion's feelings or experiences?
2. Did reading *Crank* or *Glass* change the way you think about drugs or the people who use them? Why? How?
3. Hopkins says in her introduction that she started writing *Crank* because she wanted to understand her daughter's choices. Why do you think that was so important to her?
4. Why do you think parents or other "gatekeepers" (as described in Niki Burnham's essay "Role Models") sometimes have problems with books on controversial subjects?
5. Burnham talks about *The Runaway Bunny* as an example of a children's book that stars a character with less-than-model behavior. Can you think of other children's books with similar protagonists?
6. What do you think the purpose of books is? To teach? To entertain? Something else?
7. Megan Kelly Hall argues that, for Kristina, love and drugs are intertwined, and that Kristina is addicted to both. Do you think it's fair to describe love as an addiction?
8. Have you ever been in love? Have you ever made decisions because of the way you felt about someone that you might not otherwise have made?
9. Did you read anything in Mary Bran's essay on addiction that surprised you?
10. Do you think addiction is more physical or psychological?
11. When you read *Crank* and *Glass*, what did you think about the choice Kristina's family made to cut her out of their lives? Did you think they should have tried harder? Put up with less? Did reading Gail Giles' essay change your mind at all?
12. Terri Clark's essay suggests that secrets are usually a bad thing. Do you think there are good reasons to keep a secret? What are they?
13. Kristina often talks about Bree as if she's a different person; Micol Ostow doesn't buy it. Ostow also says that if Kristina had been able to find some middle ground between herself and Bree, she might have avoided falling prey to the monster. What do you think?

14. If you were told something was a true story, and then later found out it wasn't, how would you feel? Is it different if it's a friend that told you the story, versus the writer of a book?
15. Cinda Williams Chima gives different definitions of the word "true." Do you think something can be "true" even if the facts are wrong?
16. How do you feel after reading John's story? Kelly's? Kristina's? Orion's?
17. Does it change the way you felt when you read the ending of *Crank* and/or *Glass* to know that Kristina's real-life counterpart is still struggling with addiction so many years later? How?