

Crank

Ellen Hopkins

Simon & Schuster, 2004

Reviews

- [Publishers Weekly](#): “Ellen sent me the first 50 pages, and her writing blew me away. Her poetry was so raw and painful and beautiful. I had planned on waiting for a finished manuscript before bringing it to my editorial team for review. But her pages were so good, I couldn’t resist sharing them. I made Ellen an offer immediately” (Richardson, 2014)
- [School Library Journal](#): “Hopkins writes in free-verse poems that paint painfully sharp images of Kristina/Bree and those around her, detailing how powerful the “monster” can be. The poems are masterpieces of word, shape, and pacing, compelling readers on to the next chapter in Kristina’s spiraling world. This is a topical page-turner and a stunning portrayal of a teen’s loss of direction and realistically uncertain future.” (Korbeck, 2004)
- [Booklist](#): “Hopkins uses the spare, fragmented style to powerful effect, heightening the emotional impact of dialogues, inner monologues, and devastating scenes, including a brutal date rape. Readers won’t soon forget smart, sardonic Kristina; her chilling descent into addiction; or the author’s note, which references her own daughter’s struggle with “the monster.” (Engberg, 2004)
- [Kliatt](#): “That is what happens to the narrator, a teenager whose life deteriorates after she gets involved with friends who use drugs--she cannot resist crank even though she understands it is destroying her. She will do anything for more crank. . . . The last poem is called “Happy Endings,” and the narrator says she would like to give us one--but the drugs are calling her away from her baby, out the door. We know there will probably be no happy ending, ever. And we aren’t used to YA novels that end in such despair, but we have to face the truth that many addicts do not recover.” (Rosser, 2004)
- [Kirkus Reviews](#): “Here, a treatment expert and a judge with experience sentencing meth addicts provide frank, disquieting chapters about the brain damage that makes meth such a “monster.” Several authors, conversely, contribute slapdash social analysis and weak literary criticism plagued by unfounded conclusions, straw men and an odd ignorance of young-adult literature”. (Kirkus Reviews, 2009)
- [Publishers Weekly](#): “Soon, Adam introduces her to “the monster” (there, she also unleashes a new personality, id-driven Bree). Her addiction grows, as does Bree’s control. Readers get a vivid sense of the highs and lows involved with using crank” (Publishers Weekly, 2004)
- [UWIRE](#): “Readers often feel sorrow for their beloved author’s life, sympathizing with the devastation that they believe she must feel. But Hopkins doesn’t desire the sympathy, nor does she need it. She’s the type of motherly person that, once you meet her, you’d expect her to say, “It is what it is,” and pick up the shattered pieces. Each of the memories that Hopkins chronicles forces the audience to feel just a bit more than the previous one. (UWIRE, 2016)

Awards

- [Green Mountain Book Award](#) (Vermont Department, 2009)
- [Soaring Eagle Book Award](#), 2009 (Berentson, 2018)
- [Gateway Readers Award](#) (Missouri Association, 2007)
- [Lincoln Award](#) (Association of Illinois, 2009)
- [Charlotte Award](#), 2005 (Novels for Students, 2018)

Lists

- [Banned Books Take Over DC](#) (Kirby, 2022)
- [Top Ten Most Frequently Challenged Books of 2010](#) (American Library Association [ALA], 2011)
- [Top 100 Most Banned and Challenged Books](#), 2010-2019 (ALA, 2020)
- [Young Adults' Choices for 2006](#) (International Reading Association, 2006)
- [Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers](#), 2005 (ALA, 2007)

Response to challenges

- [Final Challenge Committee Report for Crank by Ellen Hopkins](#): “Kids usually don’t discover drugs from a book they read. This book is important to keep students from going down this path. The problem is real in all our high schools, and this book highlights the warning signs.” (Rockwood School District, 2021)
- [Children’s Bookshelf Talks with Ellen Hopkins](#): “I couldn’t have known Crank was going to be published, let alone become a big hit. That book was very personal for me: I had to tell the story for myself. Now—and I know this sounds corny—I really believe I was put on sort of a path to write about subjects a lot of authors don’t want to look at. I feel it’s important to shed light on these issues because that’s the only way we’re going to develop empathy for people who are going through them. We need to make it real and to be brutally honest about it. That honesty is what my readers appreciate, because those characters don’t feel crafted. They feel like they’re real people, and to a large part they are.” (Pavao, 2007)
- [Ellen Hopkins: Author as Confessor](#): “For her, the pull has always been personal, beginning with Crank, published in October 2004. Hopkins, who loosely based that narrative on her older daughter’s struggle with crystal meth, “didn’t think about the market at all when I wrote it,” she says. “And my editor never said ‘Dial it back’ or ‘Amp it up.’” Crank changed the way Hopkins looked at writing. For one, she was celebrated for going deep into some dark, edgy subject matter, which wasn’t as common in YA as it is today”. (Robbins, 2016)
- [Manifesto!!!!!!](#): “Those scenes, while feeling very real, are most definitely written with a young adult audience in mind. They are not sensationalized nor particularly graphic. However, I can see a parent’s concern. So fine. Don’t let YOUR child read them. However, NO ONE PERSON should be able to tell other people what their children can or can’t read. I have received thousands of messages from readers (and yes, many are middle grade), thanking me for: turning them away from drugs; insight into their parents’/other family members’ addictions; allowing them to live vicariously through my characters, so they don’t actually have to experience those things; literally saving their lives.” (Hopkins, 2009)

References

- American Library Association. (2007, July 30). *2005 Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers*.
- American Library Association. (2011, April 11). *"And Tango Makes Three" waddles its way back to the number one slot as America's most frequently challenged book*.
- American Library Association. (2020, September 27). *Top 100 Most Banned and Challenged Books: 2010-2019*.
- Association of Illinois School Library Educators. (2007). *Lincoln Award: Illinois Teen Readers' Choice Award*.
- Berentson, J. (2018, April 25). *Soaring Eagle Book Award*. Wyoming Library Association.
- Ellen, H. (2009, September 17). Manifesto!!!!. *LiveJournal*. Retrieved July 6, 2022, from <https://ellenhopkins.livejournal.com/7107.html>
- Engberg, G. (2004, November 15). *Crank (Book)*. Booklist, 595.
- International Reading Association (2006). *Young Adults' Choices for 2006*. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 50(3), 223–230.
- Kirby, M. (2022, June 20). *Banned books take over DC*. Intellectual Freedom Blog, 2.
- Kirkus Reviews. (2009, April 1). *FLIRTIN' WITH THE MONSTER: Your Favorite Authors on Ellen Hopkins'*.
- Korbeck, S. (2004). *Crank*. School Library Journal.
- Missouri Association of School Librarians. (2009). *Gateway readers award*. Springfield-Greene County Library.
- Novels for Students. (2018) *Overview: Crank*. In K. A. Dorsch (Ed.), *Novels for Students* (58).
- Pavao, K. (2007, August 8). *Children's Bookshelf Talks with Ellen Hopkins*. Publishers Weekly (Online).
- Publishers Weekly. (2004, November 1). *Crank*, 63+.
- Richardson, J. (2014, November 18). *Crank*. *Publishers Weekly*, 8.
- Robbins, S. (2016, October 7). *Ellen Hopkins: Author as Confessor*. Publishers Weekly (Online).
- Rockwood School District Challenged Materials Committee. (2021, December 8). *Final Challenge Committee Report for Crank by Ellen Hopkins*, 5.
- Rosser, C. (2004, September). *Hopkins, Ellen. Crank*. Kliatt, 21.
- UWIRE Text. (2016, April 20). *'Crank and Cake' - The Mochila Review invites Ellen Hopkins to perform*.

