

# To Sequel or Not to Sequel

By Ellen Hopkins, August 2010

I started *Crank* in 2002. My daughter—my beautiful, perfect straight-A kid—had just gone to prison. Prison! We, her family and friends, had witnessed her descent into the hell that is crystal meth addiction for six years. Truthfully, I was happy she was going away because she was slowly killing herself, and I couldn't stop her. Without lockup, no one could have.

At the time, I blamed myself. Blamed her father. Blamed her friends. But even then, I wasn't exactly sure why she made the choices she did. And so, being a writer, I looked for answers through writing. If I could become her somehow, maybe I could see where she took the wrong turns, and what part I might have played in her chosen detours. I started *Crank* for me. Not for publication. Certainly not to make money. Simply to gain understanding.

I was only a few pages into it when I sat down with an editor at a writers' conference. I showed her a picture book I had written. She loved it, but told me she didn't do picture books and asked if I had anything else. I had ten pages of *Crank* with me. I showed her those, and really, the rest is history. Simon & Schuster published the book in October 2004. It has gone on to touch tens of thousands of lives.

That would have been it, except within a couple of years, my readers wanted more of Kristina's story. Was she clean? Was she alive? How was Hunter? I wrote *Glass* to answer those and many more questions, and to explore the deeper phase of her addiction, when Bree truly took control. By that time, I had become an anti-meth spokesperson, and I wanted readers to understand how low the drug can carry you, and how quickly that can happen. *Glass* published in August of 2007.

But, still, there were questions. Did Kristina really go to jail? Did she get out and have her second baby? Was that baby impacted by her drug use? Did she and Trey get back together? I really didn't want to write a third Kristina book. I didn't want to tell the same story over again, though there was a lot more to tell. In talking with a sociologist friend, I came to the idea of writing a book from Hunter's point of view. Addiction, after all, doesn't only affect the addict. It affects everyone in the addict's life, especially those who love him or her.

Many, many of my readers have written, telling me how they lost a parent or other loved one to addiction, and I thought it only fair to give them a voice too. Rather than write solely from Hunter's point of view, I decided to write from the points of view of the three children who in real life have, for the most part, never had their mother in their lives. Kristina's story is their story too.

And now I give it to you, in *Fallout*.

**We hear that life was good before she met the monster...**



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