

Crank by Ellen Hopkins

Subjects: Drug abuse—Fiction



Kristina Georgia Snow—the perfect daughter, gifted high school junior, quiet, never any trouble. She lives with her mother, sister and stepfather in a nice house in a nice neighborhood. She is cared for and loved. Her life is fine, until she takes a trip to visit her father. It will only be for three weeks over the summer. She hasn't seen him in forever and she wants to know him, so she goes. Now she's out of state, out from under her mother's watchful eye and Kristina finds that she is a new person, a different person. She is no longer shy, no longer perfect, no longer Kristina—but Bree. Now, Kristina does not have a split personality, she has no imaginary playmate or alter ego. She's just tired of being Kristina, so she becomes Bree.

This change, from Kristina to Bree, began soon after she arrived at her father's apartment. She was quickly disappointed with her dad. It became clear that he would not be nominated for father of the year any time soon. He sleeps in late, works in a bowling alley at night, lives in a small apartment building in a rough part of town, has no steady girlfriend, and does not believe in rules or in setting boundaries. Pretty much anything goes. And it does. He leaves her alone on her first day for hours with no food in the refrigerator, no way to contact him. She gets bored and goes outside.

Pretty soon she meets Buddy. Buddy lives in the same apartment building as her father. He is definitely not Kristina's type: he's a cigarette smoking, baby faced, barefooted boy with a hot bod. No, he's not Kristina's type, but Bree finds him very appealing and intriguing. He introduces himself and one thing leads to another . . .

they quickly become friends and Buddy introduces her to many things. Things that change her life, things that change who she is.

After three weeks, she returns to her mother, to her perfect home, but she is no longer perfect. She will never be perfect again.

She tells her story here in this book in free verse poetry. This is how her story begins: (*Read from the book, page 1*)

Life was good before I met the monster. After, life was great. At least for a little while.

To introduce herself she writes: (*Read from the book, pages 2–3*)

So you want to know all about me. Who I am. What chance meeting of brush and canvas painted the face you see? What made me despise the girl in the mirror enough to transform her, turn her into a stranger, only not. So you want to hear the whole story. Why I swerved off the high road, hard left to nowhere, recklessly indifferent to those coughing my dust, no limits, no top end, just a high velocity rush to madness.

Her story is real, it happened. I've told you how it begins, but you are going to have to read it for yourself to see how it ends. (*Hold up book*) Read *Crank* by Ellen Hopkins.