



Junk

By Melvin Burgess

Talking Points

1 In the foreword, the author tells us that the book is 'all true, every word'. Why is this important to the story? Would it make a difference to the reader if it weren't?

2 Apart from the first, each chapter of the book is seen through the eyes of different characters. How does this shape the story? How does it affect the reader?

3 What do you think of the relationships Gemma and Tar have with their parents? How do they differ? Do you think it was a good idea for them to run away?

4 When she first starts using drugs, Gemma says, "It wasn't difficult coming off. I could do it any time." Is that true? How do drugs change Gemma and Tar? Do they realise what's happening to them?

5 "It was a love story. Me, Gemma and junk." What is Tar's state of mind at the end of the story? Will he ever be able to kick his habit? Is he still in love with Gemma, or still in love with the junk?

6 Did you find some of the events and images described in Junk shocking? Did the book change the way you feel about drug users and the problems they might experience as a result of their addiction?

Activity: **The Other Ending**

Not happy with the way your favourite Carnegie-winning title ended? Then it's over to you to write your own...

Choose your favourite title from the Carnegie Top 10 list.
How does the book end?

Now imagine you were the author of the book, and you could decide what the ending might be. Choose a different ending and write a brief description of how you would change the ending.

How does it differ from the ending the book already has?

Do you think yours is better, worse, or just different?