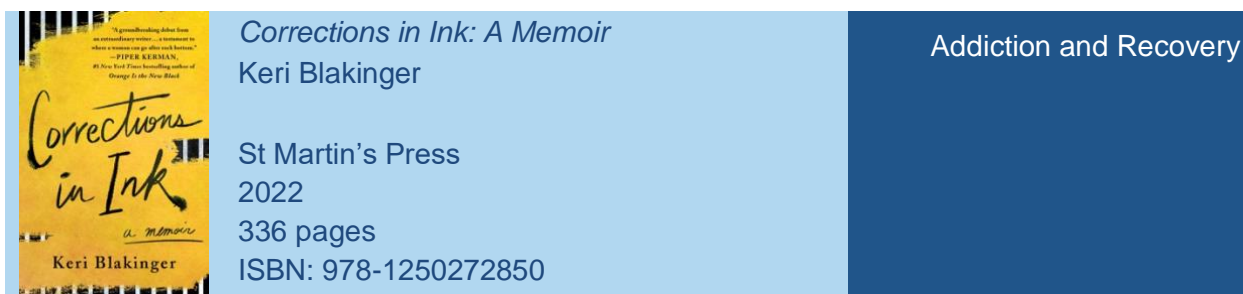


Discussion Guide



Summary

Keri Blakinger always lived life at full throttle. Growing up, that meant throwing herself into competitive figure skating with an all-consuming passion that led her to nationals. But when her skating career suddenly fell apart, that meant diving into self-destruction with the intensity she once saved for the ice. For the next nine years, Keri ricocheted from one dark place to the next: living on the streets, selling drugs and sex, and shooting up between classes all while trying to hold herself together enough to finish her degree at Cornell. Then, on a cold day during her senior year, the police caught her walking down the street with a Tupperware full of heroin. Her arrest made the front page of the local news and landed her behind bars for nearly two years. There, in the Twilight Zone of New York's jails and prisons, Keri grappled with the wreckage of her missteps and mistakes as she sobered up and searched for a better path. After she walked out of her cell for the last time, Keri became a reporter dedicated to exposing our flawed prisons as only an insider could. Not just a story about getting out and getting off drugs, this galvanizing memoir is about the power of second chances; about who our society throws away and who we allow to reach for redemption—and how they reach for it.

Questions

1. What are your thoughts about how the book opens and how we meet the author? What were your first impressions?
2. Why do you think the author chose to write this as a memoir? Why do you think the author chose to be honest and open in their writing of this book?
3. What new perspectives did the book provide you with about addiction and recovery?
4. What passage or excerpt was most difficult to read?
5. What are the most important things you learned from this book?
6. Would you recommend this book to friends and family? Why or why not?
7. If you could ask the author a question about this book, what would that be?
8. Why do you think the author chose to write this book?
9. Did you find the way the author told this story to be relatable?
10. Which part of the memoir can you relate to the most?