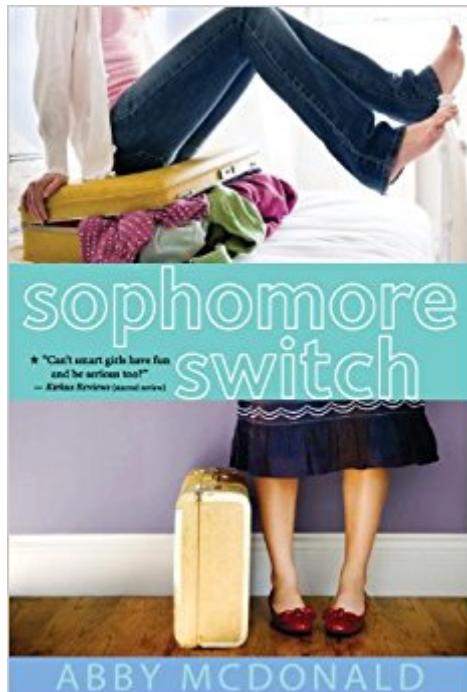


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# Sophomore Switch



## Synopsis

Now in paperback! An uptight Brit and a hard-partying American swap lives in the smartest comedy of the season. Take an administrative snafu, a bad breakup, and "The Hot-Tub Incident," and you've got two thoroughly unprepared sophomores on a semester abroad. For American party girl Tasha, an escape to Oxford may be a chance to ditch her fame as a tabloid temptress, but wading Uggs-deep in feminist theory is not her idea of a break. Meanwhile, the British half of the exchange, studious Emily, nurses an aching heart amid the bikinis and beer pong of U.C. Santa Barbara. With an anthropologist's eye for detail and a true ear for teen-speak, Abby McDonald crafts a funny, fast-paced, poignant look at survival, sisterhood, and the surprising ways we discover our true selves.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up-What happens when a UC Santa Barbara college student agrees to a last-minute study abroad switch with a straight-laced political science student from Oxford? In alternating chapters of the novel (Candlewick, 2009) by Abby McDonald, American party girl Tasha and studious British girl Emily share their experiences of being thrust into a new culture. Both girls are running from their situations for different reasons and find their new environments challenging and isolating in ways that they didn't foresee. Katherine Kellgren does a fabulous job with both the accents and the personalities of the two girls, making their journeys of self-discovery come alive. The story does contain a fair number of adult situations-drinking, partying, and wild college action-but these

situations are realistic and don't come across as gratuitous. Tasha is running away from an incident where a video of her making out with a celebrity has gone viral on the Internet, and her resolution of what has become a common and often devastating situation is handled with sensitivity and smarts. The girls get to know each other and become a support system through instant messaging and phone calls, not meeting until the very end in a satisfying conclusion. A fabulous listen with a smart and sassy voice and complex characters that will engage teenagers.-Genevieve Gallagher, Charlottesville High School, Charlottesville, VA (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Tubgate: the popular term used to describe California party-girl Tashaâ™s videotaped hot-tubbing with a famous actor. Itâ™s all over the Internet and has made her life a living hellâ"and so she accepts a last-second foreign-exchange swap with straitlaced Oxford sophomore Emily. The plot splits into alternating story lines, with each girl suffering vastly disparate academic requirements, hesitant first friendships, and romantic customs. Finally, the two use e-mail to send each other a âœswitch survival guide,â• but putting on acts (Emily as slutty wild child infiltrating Santa Barbaraâ™s âœjunior Stepford experienceâ• and Tasha as sober scholar stressed over âœminimal academic criteriaâ•) is more difficult than they guessed. Though the title portends bubbly identity mishapsâ"and itâ™s true that this would make a slam-dunk teen movieâ"McDonaldâ™sÂ debut is more sober than it sounds, and you can almost feel her copious talents bursting at the seams of the restrictive plot. With its intelligent writing and interesting takes on feminism, this will be plenty popular with the intended set, but itâ™s what McDonald does next that should be really interesting. Grades 9-12. --Daniel Kraus --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

read it for school

Can a Sophomore Switch make all the difference? California girl Tasha's Sophomore year was supposed to be great. She had cool film classes, fun roommates, and a steady line of possible guys to date. Though, when the "Hot-Tub Incident" occurs, she only wants to do one thing, pack her bags, quickly. Meanwhile, across the country, Emily's life isn't going that peachy either. Her boyfriend of five months has just broken up with her because she wouldn't go "all the way." Also, it seems like she can't fit in at stuffy Oxford anymore. So, when they are offered to switch places-

houses, schools, friends- for a semester, both jump at the chance. But will this make their lives better or just plain worse? Sophomore Switch was a fast paced novel filled with funny situations, well developed characters, and a question of what it means to be a feminist. I quickly devoured this novel in two short days, thanks to Abby McDonald's writing and her two lead characters: Emily and Tasha. I felt that both were realistic and quirky teenagers, making them extremely fun to read about. I loved how they each had traits that any type of girl could relate to. Emily was the up tight overachiever, while Tasha was the go with the flow party girl. My only problem with this novel was that the minor characters such as Morgan, Will, and Ryan were a tad under developed. Overall, Sophomore Switch was a well written book that I suggest to fans of Meg Cabot and Sarah Dessen. I look forward to reading more by Abby McDonald in the future. Grade: B+ \*Reviewed For Flamingnet.

I used to be one of those people who would, before even reading the blurb, read about the author instead. I don't know why, but maybe I was still in that omg-authors-are-totally-cool (which I still think is the case, but with less enthusiasm nowadays) phase. But those times quickly faded as I easily found myself entranced by the author's life and then disappointed when I actually finished the published novel and disliked it. So these past years, I just read the blurb, and figured that if I really liked a particular novel, then I'd just go ahead and read the biography. That was how I started this book. The beginning was practically perfect. No lie, either. The sophisticated writing style pulled me in quickly, and the characters were quite relatable and sounded just like any normal being that I might be friends with. I particularly liked the storyline - after all, I love the study abroad program and hope to participate once I'm in college - since the S.A.S.S series, which was about foreign exchange students and therefore practically the same, really sucked. I mean, there were a few mediocre books in the series, but I never found one that really interested me. Those characters were usually stereotypical, cliched, bland, or escaping from some movie-esque scenario. (Most of the time, I found myself just salivating over the mentions of exotic food, and that was the highlight of the novel already!) So I was really eager about this book, especially since the setting focused on Oxford. Oxford! Imagine that! So it seemed right that these characters would be smart and determined, exactly how I like my protagonists. Because of the great start to the novel, I was quickly fascinated by the author. So imagine my surprise to read that Abby McDonald was a graduate of Oxford University! And that she's only twenty-four years old! Clearly, this is good writing, and I was fortunate to find something amazing, finally. BUT, and yes, there's that dreaded but. BUT, the strong beginning quickly turned into an mediocre middle, and then a clump of disaster at the end. The dialogue became awkward, silly, and too fake. Half the time, I would pause just to think, "Seriously?"

Would I say something like that if I was in that situation?" And 99% of the time, the answer to my question was a solid NO. The ending seemed rushed and choppy. The characters lacked a steady road of development and the so-called "unexpected" twists were fairly expected. The only part I really liked at the end was that everything came crashing down on Tasha and it wasn't resolved. Because that's realistic; I mean, not everything in your life gets solved so easily. Most of the time, the problem's still there; it's just about how you choose to handle it, is all. So no, I didn't hate the book. But after realizing that this was the work of an Oxford graduate, I just expected more. Well, naturally, not everyone from Oxford is destined to be the next Fitzgerald and whatnot, but my expectations just weren't answered.

To be perfectly honest; in the end I am in love with this story. Sophomore Switch was very light hearted and an extremely easy read. Abby McDonald throws you into a world where one carefree college student is switched for one uptight strict college student. They are exchanged life for life; which means housing for housing, classes for classes, and world for world. Leaving two very different girls to sink or swim in one another's shoes. Which inevitably they do a little of both. Emily and Natasha awesome characters; that I immediately fell in love with and had to see through. As if that was not enough I was even more eager once Ryan and Will were added to the storyline. I was literally cheering when Emily and Ryan hook up. (Don't do this in public people will believe you are crazy) This was a perfect match from the start that I was anticipating long before it was introduced in the story. Unfortunately, the use of "Totes" did become a little excessive, but this is understandably the way the younger generation will use slang so it was easily overlooked. In the end, as far as "Happily Everafters" go I wished Tasha ending had been a little happier, but I understand the authors reasoning and that for the character it probably the best ending. McDonald started easy, and ended strong leaving me as an instant fan.

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