**The Swap**

**AUTHOR:** Megan Shull  
**PUBLISHER:** Katherine Tegen Books - an Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers  
**COPYRIGHT:** 2014  
**GENRE:** Fantasy  
**SETTING:** The setting is the Boston, Massachusetts area in the current day.

**SUMMARY:**  
Ellie and Jack learn to appreciate their own lives after mysteriously switching bodies and literally “walking” in each other’s shoes.

**BOOK TALK:**  
Ever wonder what it’d be like to be someone else? Middle-schoolers Ellie and Jack are each dealing with their own life issues: mean girls, fitting in, meeting parental and coaches’ demanding expectations, and family loss. Everyone else’s life MUST be simpler, right? A chance encounter in the nurse’s office and an innocent offer to trade places, and suddenly Ellie and Jack are living each other’s lives. Told in alternating points of view, *The Swap* is a serious yet funny look at growing up, learning to like yourself, and finding out that “the grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence.”

**AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:**  
**AUTHOR’S NAME:** Megan Shull  
**Author’s Website:** [http://heymegan.com](http://heymegan.com)  
Note - Check the “Press” page for newspaper articles and audio interviews with the author.

**Other books written by the author:**  
*Yours Truly*  
*Skye O’Shea (2003)*  
*Skye’s the Limit (2003)*  
*Amazing Grace (2005)*

Megan Shull was born and raised in Ithaca, New York, where she attended her hometown college, Cornell University, earning a Bachelor’s degree in communications and a PhD in educational psychology. Her doctoral work investigating ways to “help young people retain their confidence and spirit” during their adolescent years led her to discover how helpful the sharing of life experiences was to middle school students. This, in turn, led her to a career as an author of books for children and young adults.

Megan played on the Cornell University women’s hockey team for two years before an injury sidelined her playing career. As a graduate student she founded the Cub Club, a mentoring program that pairs hockey players from the Cornell women’s team with young girls from the local Ithaca hockey program. The influence of hockey in her life is apparent, as the sport is prominently featured in her latest book, *The Swap*. 
Reviewer's Name: Michelle Van Horn
Reviewer's Position: Teacher Librarian, Crawfordsville Middle School

*The Swap* (2014) is told in the alternating viewpoints of a boy and girl who mysteriously switch bodies on the first day of middle school and end up learning a lot about themselves as they try to survive being each other. MarVista Entertainment and Original Pictures has optioned the film and television rights to the book.

**SIMILAR BOOKS/BOOKS WITH A SIMILAR THEME:**
*Every Day* by David Levithan
*Freaky Friday* by Mary Rodgers
*Goodbye Stranger* by Rebecca Stead
*Planet Middle School* by Nikki Grimes
*If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period* by Gennifer Choldenko
*11 Birthdays* by Wendy Mass
*Brett McCarthy: Work in Progress* by Maria Padian
*Solving Zoe* by Barbara Dee
*Out of Reach* by V.M. Jones
*Eight Keys* by Suzanne LeFleur
*Twerp* by Mark Goldblatt
*Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life* by Wendy Mass

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**
1. Have you ever wished you were someone else? Who? Why? (ch. 13-15)

2. What do you think “get my flow chopped” means? (p.97) What context clues helped you determine the meaning?

3. Why doesn’t Jack sleep well? (Think back to what Ellie finds out in ch. 25.) Why does he cry? (ch. 28)

4. Would you be able to pull off living as a member of the opposite sex? What things might you have to do differently? (ch. 31)

5. It is often said that people who bully others are jealous of that person. Do you agree/disagree with that statement? Why/why not? (ch. 31)

6. How do you think Sassy and Aspen would react to Ellie’s new look and name? Upon what did you base your answer? (ch. 34: slumber party and p. 231: reaction)

7. What are different ways in which people deal with their problems/family issues/loss? (Hold it in/be tough, lash out, talk it out, other?) Is one way better than another? Why/why not?
**ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:**

**Language Arts**

- **Twisted Fairy Tale** – Students will create a “twisted” version of a traditional fairy tale by changing the point of view, as well as other elements of the story.

  Begin by reading some different versions of fairy tales such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Rapunzel, Cinderella, or The Three Little Pigs* with your class. The Fractured Fairy Tales Booklist (http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/activity_30148_booklist.pdf) has some suggested picture books that might be of use. Make sure you read at least two different versions of one of the stories—one of them being the familiar, traditional version, the other—a twist on the original story.

  Discuss fairy tale elements (generate examples) and point of view. Most traditional fairy tales are told by a narrator who sees and knows everything but who has a certain way of looking at things; for example, the wolf is always portrayed as “the bad guy.” Many new “twisted” versions tell the story from a different point of view; for example, the wolf himself is telling the story, and his version is that he was portrayed unfairly in the original version. Explore how changing the point of view changes the story.

  Review story elements: setting, protagonist/antagonist, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution.

  **Fairy Tale Book Pass**

  Have students look at and make a list of leads, repeated catch phrases (“Not by the hair on my chinny chin chin” for example), descriptions (five little yellow fuzzy duckies), and fairy tale elements: pattern of events – usually in threes (The wolf goes to three houses. Goldilocks tries three things. The evil stepmother tries to poison Snow White three times, etc.) Have them think about which fairy tale they might like to use, how they might twist it, and from whose point of view they will write.

  Compare and contrast an original fairy tale with the “twisted” version.

  - Character(s) portrayal/development
  - Setting
  - Moral/lesson
  - Ending
  - Protagonist/antagonist, rising action, conflict climax, falling action, resolution

  Discuss other possible twists to the story.

  Have students choose a fairy tale of their own to twist. (Use the prewriting documents and character table.)
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Peer Review the newly created twisted tales. (Use the peer review document.)

More information for Explore Point of View in Fairy Tales go to: 

Indiana Standards - Writing

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters.

Organize an event sequence (e.g., conflict, climax, resolution) that unfolds naturally and logically, using a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

Provide an ending that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Language Arts:

- **Context Clues** – Determine the meaning of a word or phrase from the “Challenging Words” list below or others that you come across as you read.

There are four types of context clues. The clues may appear in the same sentence as the word/phrase you don’t know or in a nearby sentence.

**Synonym**: A word or group of words that has the same meaning as the unknown word can be found in the sentence.

**Antonym**: A word or group of words that has the opposite meaning of the unknown word can be found in the sentence.

**Definition/Example**: The word is defined directly and clearly in the sentence in which it appears.

**Inference**: Word meanings are not directly described, but need to be inferred from the context.

Example:
What do you think is the definition of the word “flow”, from the phrase “get my flow chopped” (p. 97)? What context clues helped you determine the meaning? What type of context clue was used?
Indiana Standards - Reading: Vocabulary Building

6.RV.2.1/7.RV.2.1/8.RV.2.1: Use context to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases.

6.RV.2.5/7.RV.2.5/8.RV.2.5: Select appropriate general and specialized reference materials, both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, part of speech, or origin.

Language Arts:

- **Informational Essay** – Write an informational essay about hockey or soccer or another sport you’d like to know more about. Better yet, compare and contrast two sports.

  Topics you might include:
  - Team members – positions and jobs
  - Equipment/venue
  - Season – number of games & teams, divisions, playoff
  - Popularity – U.S./world
  - Object of the game/penalties
  - Athletic skills required/risks of injury

Indiana Standards – Writing


  Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition and classification.

  Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from various sources and texts.

  Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

  Include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

  Establish and maintain a style appropriate to purpose and audience.

  Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.

**RELATED INTERNET SITES:**
Reviewer’s Name: Michelle Van Horn
Reviewer’s Position: Teacher Librarian, Crawfordsville Middle School

CHALLENGING WORDS:
altercation (p. 67)
mitts (p. 95)
chirpin’ (p. 115)
fidget (p. 120)
predicament (p. 122)
barraging (p. 133)
pendant (p. 182)
tentative (p. 205)
silhouette (p. 245)
dangler (p. 300)
cross-check (p. 301)
retaliator (p. 301)
tenacious (p. 301)
fore-check (p. 301)
complacent (p. 313)
mamacitas (p. 319)
banister (p. 332)
mantra (p. 338)
initiate (p. 349)
contrition (p. 352)
synchronized (p. 359)

Ice Hockey Terms: