

The Switch

by Beth O'Leary

Martin County Library System Book Club Kit:

The Switch by Beth O'Leary

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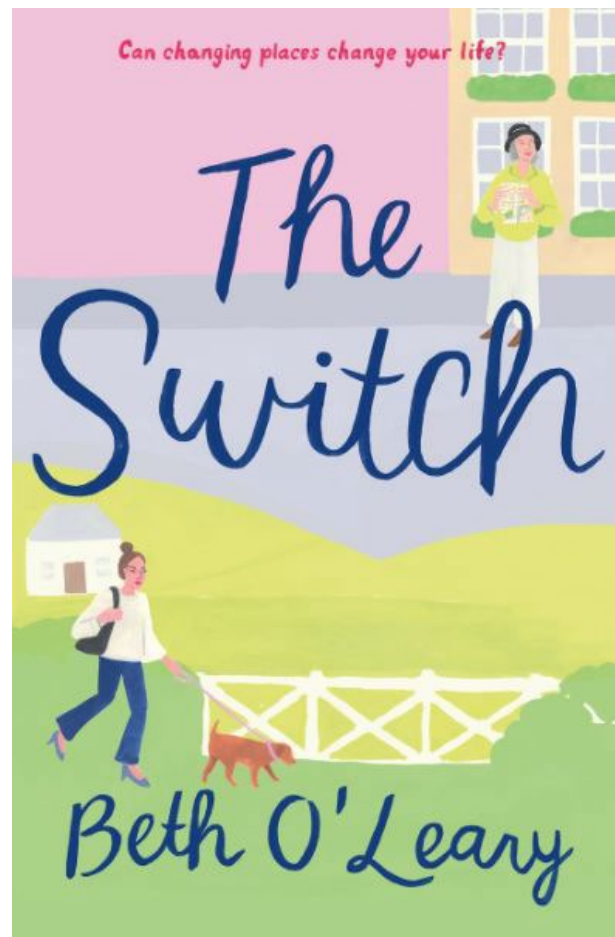
Book summary

A grandmother and granddaughter swap lives in *The Switch*, a charming, romantic novel by Beth O'Leary, who has been hailed as "the new Jojo Moyes" (*Cosmopolitan UK*)...

When overachiever Leena Cotton is ordered to take a two-month sabbatical after blowing a big presentation at work, she escapes to her grandmother Eileen's house for some long-overdue rest.

Eileen is newly single and about to turn eighty. She'd like a second chance at love, but her tiny Yorkshire village doesn't offer many eligible gentlemen.

So, they decide to try a two-month swap.



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Eileen will live in London and look for love. She'll take Leena's flat, and learn all about casual dating, swiping right, and city neighbors. Meanwhile Leena will look after everything in rural Yorkshire: Eileen's sweet cottage and garden, her idyllic, quiet village, and her little neighborhood projects.

But stepping into one another's shoes proves more difficult than either of them expected. Will swapping lives help Eileen and Leena find themselves...and maybe even find true love? In Beth O'Leary's *The Switch*, it's never too late to change everything.... or to find yourself.

Source: Macmillan. (us.macmillan.com/books/9781250769862/theswitch)





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Meet the Author

Beth O'Leary is a *Sunday Times* bestselling author whose novels have been translated into more than thirty languages. Her debut, *The Flatshare*, sold over half a million copies and changed her life completely. Her second novel, *The Switch*, has been optioned for film by Amblin Partners, Steven Spielberg's production company. Beth writes her books in the English countryside with a very badly behaved golden retriever for company. If she's not at her desk, you'll usually find her curled up somewhere with a book, a cup of tea, and several woolly jumpers (whatever the weather).



Source: Penguin Random House.

(penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/2204811/beth-oleary)



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Discussion Questions

1. What is the significance of the title? Would you have given the book a different title? What would it be?
2. What scene resonated most with you personally in either a positive or negative way? Why?
3. The Switch is a story of relationships. Does Leena change more than Eileen or vice versa? What relationship (new or old) spoke to you the most?
4. "Family can be so complicated, but if you just pick your own way of doing it you can end up with something pretty perfect all the same." What examples of family did you find in this story? Which "family" did you relate to most?
5. The Switch is also a story of finding oneself. How does the way the characters see themselves differ from how others see them? From how you see them?
6. Leena has to give up her devices for the switch. How do you think she handled this? Would you have done better?
7. A central theme to this book is how people discuss death and grieving. Did any quotations or interactions stand out to you?
8. Who do you relate most to concerning worries? Jackson, who is able to brush it off; Leena, who is constantly thinking about her worries; Marian, who uses yoga and medicine to help her? Or did you relate to another character?
9. Beth O'Leary is being called "the next Jojo Moyes". If you've read any of Moyes' books did The Switch remind you of them? Did it remind you of another book by a different author?

Source: City of Zeeland.
(cityofzeeland.com/DocumentCenter/View/6759/Discussion-Questions--The-Switch)



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Recipes

Blueberry Scones

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 large egg
- 10 tbsp unsalted butter (frozen) shredded
- 1½ cup blueberries fresh or frozen
- 2 tbsp heavy cream brush scones before baking
- 2 tbsp raw or coarse sugar sprinkle topping – optional



Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Add the flour, sugar, salt, and baking powder to a large mixing bowl and whisk until well blended. Use a box grater to shred the frozen butter. Add the grated butter to the dry mixture and combine with two forks. The finished mixture should be pea-sized crumbs. You can use your hands to mix the butter in, but your hands will warm up the butter, so you need to wear plastic gloves and be quick if using your hands. Place in the refrigerator until needed.

Add the heavy cream, egg, and vanilla extract to a small mixing bowl. Mix until well blended.

Add the wet ingredients and blueberries to the dry ingredients.

Mix until the dough forms. Don't overmix.



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Turn the scone dough out on a lightly floured surface. Coat your hands with flour and form the dough into an 8-inch disc. If the dough feels too sticky, add a little more flour to the dough. If the dough feels too dry, add a little more cream to the dough.

Using a sharp knife, cut the disc into 8 wedges. Place the wedges on a parchment-lined baking sheet leaving a few inches between the scones. Brush the scones with heavy cream and sprinkle raw or coarse sugar on top of the scones.

Refrigerate the scones for 30 – 60 minutes before baking. Place the baking sheet on the middle rack of the preheated oven and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden brown. Place the scones on a wire rack to cool.

Source: Ask Chef Dennis. (askchefdennis.com/blueberry-scones-recipe)

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English Tea

How to make British tea, the “proper” way. Pull together the perfect cup of English tea using loose leaves or tea bags with a kettle or the stove, in a mug or a teapot!

When learning how to make English tea, you just need 3 ingredients (plus water).

- Black tea: there are plenty of types of black tea to choose from. However, here in the UK, there are a few standout popular options of robust black teas, including English breakfast tea and Earl Grey. Use tea bags or loose tea (either loose or in sachets). The latter tends to be of higher quality. There are several popular brands of tea, including PG Tips, Twinings, Yorkshire tea, and Tetley tea. In terms of what is the “best” one, it comes down to personal taste.
- Milk: use your desired fat level of milk (whole, semi-skimmed, skimmed). You can also use certain dairy-free milks, but be careful as some will separate in hot liquids.
- Water: to make up the base of the British tea.
- Sweetener (optional): typically, granulated white sugar is used. However, you can use brown sugar, honey, or even a sugar-free sweetener like stevia or erythritol.



THE TEA TO WATER RATIO

Use either one tea bag or 1/2 tablespoon of loose tea per cup of water (around 2g loose tea per 8oz of water). If you’re making a teapot of tea, most brits usually add in an extra tea bag/spoonful, too.



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STEP 1: HEAT THE WATER

Unlike what many believe, it's actually not best to boil the water when making tea. In fact, most types of tea come with an ideal temperature on their packaging based on the type of tea inside. Black tea is one of the only types that can handle the highest temperatures of around 203°F, up to boiling point 212°F.

STEP 2: STEEP THE TEA

You can prepare proper English tea either with a tea bag or loose leaves in an infuser/strainer. Place these in your cup/s before adding the water. Pour the hot water over the tea (don't fill it to the top and you need space for the milk) and then leave it to steep for between 3-5 minutes based on how strong you want the tea to be.

STEP 3: THE FINISHING TOUCHES

Next, add the sugar/sweetener (optional) to the cup/s and stir well until it's dissolved. Finally, add the milk, starting with just a splash and increasing to taste. The amount of milk to add is once again down to personal taste. Start with a small splash (about 1 teaspoon) and increase to taste. Soon you'll know by color when you've reached your personal milk tea "sweet spot" – no one ever measures.

Source: [alphafoodie \(alphafoodie.com/how-to-make-british-tea\)](http://alphafoodie.com/how-to-make-british-tea)

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