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Martyn Bedford

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Alex, 14, goes to bed in December, and wakes in June, in a strange house to a strange family. In the mirror, he sees Flip. Unless Alex finds out what's happened and how to get back to his own life, he may be trapped forever inside a body that belongs to someone else. What is identity, the will to survive, and what will we sacrifice to survive?

Flip Details

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Author : Martyn Bedford

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From Reader Review Flip for online ebook

Beverly says

For adults, Flip is predictable and cliche. (The only character who knows Flip has been replaced is the dog.) For YA readers, it will be a tense creepy read that will generate some very good discussions on death and after life beliefs. Alex wakes one morning to discover to his dismay and befuddlement that his mind is in another teen's body. Flip is everything Alex is not: popular, athletic, wealthy, narcissistic. Alex struggles to hold on to his authentic self in Flip's world while he tries to figure out what happened and how to get his own life back. The characters are interesting, but the pace pretty slow - until Flip's parents and the police decide Flip is mentally ill and a danger to others. Flip would be a great choice for readers who think they do not enjoy fantasy/science fiction. A movie is probably already in the works.

Jane Stewart says

2 1/2 stars. Same story, done before, switching bodies. Not enough showing of other characters' thoughts and actions.

STORY BRIEF:

Alex and Flip (Phillip) live in different towns in England. They are both 14. The story begins when Alex's mind wakes up in Flip's body in Flip's home. Flip's mom tells him to eat and get to school. Alex is forced to attend Flip's school, trying to figure out which classes to attend, where to sit, etc. Flip has two girlfriends who keep after him. Alex doesn't know Flip's passwords for his computer, email, and bank account. He wants to know what happened to Alex's body and Flip's mind. He fears Alex may be dead.

REVIEWER'S OPINION:

This is generic young adult fiction. It's a repeat of the same things I've seen in movies about body switching. I was hoping that in a book, there would be more in depth character development. I expected to be in the heads and emotions more. But it wasn't done. Although switching bodies will always be a fun idea, there was nothing new or special about what was in this book. Most of the conversations and interactions were what you'd expect from high school kids talking to each other and to their parents.

I had a problem with the police involvement. This is fiction so I am willing to accept whatever laws the author wants to create. But in this book the anti-stalking laws felt unreasonable and contrived for the sole purpose of intensifying conflict. Mrs. Gray's son Alex is in a coma. Flip calls her at work. He asks to speak to her. A coworker hangs up on him saying not to bother Mrs. Gray. Flip didn't get a chance to say what he was calling about. Flip goes to Mrs. Gray's home to talk about Alex. She tells him to leave. Then he emails David, Alex's best friend, just saying hello. David refuses to reply. Flip walks up to David on the street asking to talk to him. David calls the police who hunt down Flip to arrest him. Flip's attempts to talk to these two people did not sound like dangerous stalking to me. The police involvement felt artificial. Except for one phone call and one email, this "alleged stalking" happened on one day. It wasn't repeated stalking over a period of time.

I was annoyed and felt the author was playing me during the final climactic scene. Flip had only a few minutes to do something before someone would stop him. Yet the author had Flip taking several moments to look at someone and think about things instead of taking quick action. The delay was artificial suspense.

Technically the ending was happy, but it felt empty. The book is told in third person but it's entirely from Alex's point of view. At the end, I wanted to know what was happening in Flip's life, what he was thinking and doing. I wanted to know Flip's thoughts and memories about the past. I wanted to see Cherry interact with Flip and see how and why her thoughts changed concerning Flip and Alex. The book felt unfinished, unexplained, and empty. But there was one good thing. I got goose bumps with the final paragraph which I liked.

There was one idea I really liked, page 151. It demonstrates a type of lacking intelligence. "Now that Alex knew Donna better, he saw that she wasn't unintelligent so much as lacking in curiosity. She learnt what was required of her at school but wasn't all that interested in any of the subjects beyond their usefulness to her as a set of grades somewhere down the line. Same with people. When she'd asked Rob about the camper van, it was the first time Alex had seen her show an especial interest in someone else's life, and even then, Donna had related it to herself. 'I'd get claustrophobic.'"

DATA:

Story length: 258 pages. Swearing language: moderate, including religious swear words. Sexual content: none. Setting: current day England. Copyright: 2010. Genre: young adult paranormal fiction.

Ben Babcock says

For Valentine's Day, my school library had a "Blind Date with a Book" event. They had wrapped books in wrapping paper festooned with hearts and put them on display. You could select any book at random and borrow it, keeping its identity under wraps until you get home. (We have this week off for a half-term break, so the students would have an entire week to read it.) The idea is to try a book that one might not have picked off the library shelves. It's an interesting concept (although someone might have to explain to kids these days what a "date" is, let alone a "blind" one).

Flip was my blind date, and it worked out quite well. Alex Gray wakes up in the body of Philip "Flip" Garamond, halfway across England, six months after his last memory as Alex. Philip is the same age as Alex—born, in fact, on the same day—but the two boys are otherwise quite different. Alex is studious, musically-inclined, but somewhat introverted. Philip is gregarious, popular, athletic, and dating two girls at once. So it's a struggle for Alex to adjust to this new life and to pretend to be Philip while he panics and tries to understand how they switched bodies, how he can switch back, and what actually happened to his own body.

As a Canadian teacher working in the UK and now somewhat familiar with the school system over here, I enjoyed Martyn Bedford's portrayal of life in Year Nine. Some aspects of the system that I've seen at work in my own school appear familiar and universal, at least from Alex's familiarity with them in both bodies. Though the basic premise could work anywhere, *Flip* benefits from its British setting because of the diversity in lifestyles in Britain, where accents, jobs, and geographic location all contribute heavily to people's perceptions of each other. Alex's new life as Philip is a microcosm of this, as Bedford explores what it is like for Alex to have to put up a good show of being good at cricket or interested in both of Philip's girlfriends.

Alex's struggle is twofold and fascinating. On the one hand, he has no idea how or why he is in Philip's body. Philip himself is nowhere to be seen. As far as Alex knows, this switch is permanent, so he just has to get used to it. Yet he isn't sure how to do that: should he assimilate completely into life as Philip, or should he adapt Philip's life to suit his own interests? How far is too far, and what will happen if he and Philip

switch back? On the other hand, Alex is desperate to reconnect with his old life, even if he has to do it while still in Philip's body. This culminates quickly with a visit back to his family's home in London and a desperate attempt to see if his mother can recognize him in someone else's shape.

Bedford does not overplay the emotional distress that Alex must be feeling, and to good effect. Though his actions speak of desperation and depression, they occur in a logical, almost predictable sequence: I could see myself doing what Alex does, probably in the order he does these things, if I were in his situation. Waking up in someone else's body is bad enough. Not having anyone believe you ... not being able to get back and see your own family ... that would be awful. But Bedford avoids any melodrama, which helps later in the book as the real drama develops naturally from Alex's discoveries and decisions.

The message that *Flip* contains, if indeed it has one, is also subtle but well-received. Though I identify with Alex, as the somewhat more withdrawn and bookish of the two boys, Bedford makes it clear that neither boy's life is perfect and neither's is more desirable, natural, or right than the other's. Sure, Philip seems like a bit of an irresponsible and discourteous player, but he's also a skilled athlete; he's *involved* in his school in more ways than Alex seems to be. And Alex learns from this experience. Hopefully, from the changes that he wrought to Philip's life, Philip will learn too.

Philip kind of gets the short end of the stick despite the book's happy ending. I like that Bedford doesn't gloss over the difficulty of Alex's recuperation following his return to his own body and his emergence from the vegetative state. This is an experience that is going to affect him for the rest of his life, physically as well as psychologically. Poor Philip though ... he's going to be lucky if he isn't in counselling for the rest of his life, and it's not his fault at all!

I've never been on a blind date, so I don't know how these things work. Do I fill out a comment card? "Would date again?" Well, I wouldn't necessarily *read Flip* again. But I'd recommend it to other people. I guess that means it's a nice enough book, and we liked each other even if we didn't hit it off? Hmm. Not exactly a whirlwind romance, but by no means a literary or romantic disaster. As far as young adult fiction goes, this is a solid entry.

Alexandra says

The plot of this book is pretty simple, but this author found a way to make this story line more than just simple. Alex Gray wakes up one day in another bed, in another room, in another house, and in another boy's body. He eventually figures out what has happened with his body, and with his soul, and sets out to fix the problem. And along the way, Alex was lucky enough to find someone like him, someone who could understand him and someone who could help him.

I chose to read this book because when I read the summary on the back of the book I was drawn to the story right away. When I saw the words "trapped forever in a body that belongs to someone else" I knew I would enjoy this book.

I finished this book because it was one of those books where if you didn't finish it, you would feel guilty. The book was just too exciting to put down. As I read, my whole body was trembling with anticipation wanting to know what was coming up next.

I would recommend this book to Amruta because based on what she is reading right now, (The Rule of Three) I think she would really enjoy this adventure book. The novel "The Rule of Three" is similar to the book "Flip" because they are both said to be in the science fiction category.

Eric says

Hmm there isn't much to say about this book that anyone taking a peek here wouldn't already know. It's a nice body snatchers theme and for some reason I kept thinking "Freaky Friday" in my head - even though it lasts for quite a bit longer than both movies in reality (and the pain and torture of the LL remake...)

That said I like this book, I really did, although because the premise required you to suspend so much that when it came round to the end I felt like it just didn't fit. I'm not saying it was predictable, I'm not saying it made me want to give up or anything, it just felt not right after everything Alex had been through. Good times honestly, there were definitely memorable moments in the book that brought a genuine smile to my face. Oddly there were these "guy" moments I just went with it. Also I really wasn't a fan of getting to know some of the characters and then not hearing from them ever again - don't introduce me to someone, start to like them, then leave them by the wayside forgotten. It's ridiculous. We all know a couple chapters ago everyone was doing an activity together, where did everyone go after that?

Overall though I'd recommend it to anyone who is looking for some Sci-Fi in their readings, it does fit the bill. Also I appreciate how he doesn't joke about the premise. It's real to the characters so it's real to you as the reader.

Walt says

FLIP is an interesting word. It means many things, of course. It can be a transitive verb — to throw or toss, to spin, or to flick; an intransitive verb — to turn over, to somersault, or to move quickly and lightly; or a noun — the act of flipping, as in a flip of the wrist, a reversal, or a mixed drink made of alcoholic beverages often with beaten eggs. It has transformed into other words, too: flip-flop, flipbook, flippant.

When I was fourteen or so, the age of the protagonist, Alex Grey, in this YA novel, the kids in my neighborhood used the word "flip" when they were frustrated. If, for example, you tried to make a layup when you were playing basketball and missed, you'd say, "Flip! I should've made that!"

Martyn Bedford chose to call his main character by the moniker, Flip. It was also chosen as the title of his book. It was a careful and calculated selection, bringing lots of inherent connotation with it. Its selection is indicative of the care with which Bedford has constructed an adventure in the lives of Alex Grey and Philip "Flip" Garamond for any willing reader to consider. Flip denotes action: being turned over or around, the dizziness of spinning, the frustration of — not a missed basket — but a missed life.

As a redhead kid — or, as the British say, ginger-headed — with a freckled face, I identified with this story. Often, as a lad, I daydreamed about being popular, being athletic, having dark hair and skin that tanned, and being good-looking. Wished for it. "If only," I thought. Well, that's the basic premise in this book. Alex Grey plays the clarinet and likes chess. Boring. He sunburns and does relatively well in school; he doesn't get in trouble. He is not popular, there's nothing much about him to attract much attention. But all of that is, of course, backstory that unfolds after his life has flipped over and he has become Philip Garamond, a.k.a. FLIP the beautiful. If you were a coin and got flipped high into the air, turning over and over and over again before you alighted, you would be dizzy and disoriented.

So, with a new identity, also come new challenges and responsibilities for Alex, who now is Flip. For as Flip, you have to live the life of someone athletic, of someone attractive, of someone prone to trouble; you have to put up with all of the intrusions of popularity and a whole new set of people to deal with. And it makes you think. It makes you wonder. It makes you analyze.

As I finished the book, I said to myself, Flip! It's over! It wasn't a missed layup, although I'm still trying to figure out all of its meaning. Very nice job.

I wrote TIME FOR ALL ETERNITY.

Rizal says

I actually really enjoyed reading this book. I love the premise. It reminds me a lil bit of Every Day by David Levithan and Freaky Friday-ish. I gave this one 3 stars for now because I know I will be reading this again in the future. Although, I enjoyed reading this but at certain parts it didn't pulled me in and I felt conflicted.

Liz at Midnight Bloom Reads says

Flip is a unique and fresh YA novel that I had so much fun reading! Drawn to its original storyline, I was immediately hooked to a story that promised to be different... something that would leave me burning with questions as I read and hoping for the best possible outcome for the main character Alex. You don't know how much of a temptation it was for me to not flip to the end of the novel and read the ending just so I could see if the events worked out okay. It was a struggle I tell you!

Imagine waking up to suddenly find yourself in an unfamiliar home and surrounded by strangers... and then shortly coming to a worse realization that you're not even in own body anymore. For Alex, that's exactly what happens. One night he's fourteen year-old Alex Gray and then the next time he awakens, he's suddenly Philip "Flip" Garamond, a boy the same age living in another part of England. He doesn't understand how six months have passed by nor does he understand why the face in the mirror is no longer his. The only thing he does know is that needs answers to questions that might not be so easily solved... and soon.

Under the circumstances, I think Alex did considerably well as he tried to overcome the shock and horror of finding himself in somebody else's body. He doesn't just stay in bed and wallow in despair for eternity... no, he immediately seeks out ways to try fix things back to normal. Flip's family may be kind and nice, and Flip may be popular at school with his handsome looks and all, but he would do anything to just have his old,

more simple life back. It's completely understandable that he's going to have a difficult time even attempting to accept his new life as Flip when all he wants to be is his true self... Alex.

While Alex is the main star of the novel, I thought that the author did a wonderful job creating a great cast of characters overall. Through Flip's friends and girlfriends, we really got more of a sense at just who this boy is that Alex has taken over and how they're so very different... which definitely makes it easy to see why Flip's friends, teachers and family are finding themselves confused in Flip's seemingly odd recent behaviour. I really loved Flip's sister Teri so I kind of wished there were more scenes with her in them since I laughed at almost all of her lines. She loves to tease Flip in a "I'm your big sister so it's my job to make fun of you" sort of way.

Martyn Bedford's debut YA novel *Flip* is a great read for those looking for something in the way of a thought-provoking psychological thriller! It will surely appeal to both boys and girls in need of a novel that will have your curiosity piqued the entire time you're reading as you wish Alex will hopefully return to his body once again and that it's not already too late! But most of all, Flip will have you treasuring your own family more as you come to realize that well... there's no place like home.

Hannah says

I saw the symmetry within the writing.

The book started off somewhat slow, leading the reader along with the promise of some kind of epic mystic science fiction ending. Instead the text brought me to an ultimate theme; death was hovering throughout the story-line. Just waiting till the end to pounce kind of like Alex armed with a crazy idea and a pillow, with death brings life in some sort of way or another.

I didn't particularly enjoy this book, I like one with more of a plot. All the same, the end did catch me by surprise.

Alice Baxter says

Personally, I disagree with what most people say when they review this.

I have had 6 people come to me and be like; "Oh, you're reading *Flip*! Ah! I read that book! I didn't like it, waaaay to much description! Nothing actually happened!"...and I'm like; Hold up!

Just take a minute. A minute to imagine what you would feel like if you woke in someone else's body.

Tough. You know no one. Tough. Where the hell are you? God knows. Nothing's happening because you are too fecking PETRIFIED! Seriously!

Ugh. Immature people these days.

I still think it was a good book, because I could clearly see everything Alex was going through. My criticism is that, if I were in Alex's position, (and I know it might be because I'm a girl... sexist and all that...) I would have been 10 times more frantic than him!

So don't criticize the book, Martyn did his best. Thanks for reading this and please don't put hate on any comments! ^_^

Loren says

Who's the guy's editor? The subject material is good, but the delivery is quite trite. Very few accomplished writers go out of their way to explain things in the overly verbose voice of the narrator rather than show these moments in action. This is a regular annoying occurrence, as to say to the reader that he was just too lazy to do anything other than pontificate. A good editor would question his choices of storyline and various anecdotal explanations of what I considered more interesting episodes in the story. The story is also void of intrigue simply because the bloody chapter breaks are in the wrong places thusly leaving no motivation to read on.

If I were a "grown-up" reading this book, I suppose I would be ignorant enough to believe that a child would find the characters richly described and the storyline believable (because of my firm belief in the inferior psychological development of my own children). If you think this is a good book you are insulting the brain power of our younger generations. How two-dimensionally boring!

Nicola says

3.5 stars

I really liked it for the most part but I couldn't really get emotionally invested in it at all.

Ellen says

I stayed up until 2 AM reading this book. Not that I don't frequently WANT to do this, but I usually have better sense. This is not your typical Freaky Friday body switch book. It raises questions of true identity; how much of who we are is based on our experiences and memories. Although there are many thought-provoking questions, I think the suspenseful plot will appeal to teens. After all, they can skim some of the parts with less action, which I was tempted to do at times because I wanted to see what happened. However, I didn't do this and I will continue to think about the issues raised in this book for some time.

Justin says

I feel pretty bad giving this book such a low rating, so once I've had more time to think about it I will probably bump it up, at most, a star.

I read the *Skinjacker* trilogy earlier this year, so the big "reveal" as to why Alex's psyche was in Flip's body seemed derived. It's like every time something was built up, I already knew what was going to happen. I don't want to give myself too much credit here, so I'll give some of that predictability credit to the author, Martyn Bedford, for writing a book so linear that I could see the ending from a couple chapters in.

Ok, that was more harsh than I intended this review to be. I did, honestly, enjoy the beginning of this book, probably until about halfway through. It kept me up all night reading, and I was excited to pick it back up once I could properly keep my eyes open the next day. I was expecting there to be more on Alex coming to terms on being Flip before finding a way to become Alex again; coping with his current life while also

working towards his old life. But there wasn't really much of that. Alex went to school as Flip a couple times, but most days he was just psychoFlip so we had to watch him sit on the Internet and interact pointedly with his family. Of course I feel bad judging him of that, because I mostly sit on the Internet and interact (albeit, much more amicably) with my family on a daily basis, but that's not something I want thrown into a book about identity.

It's almost as if this book had no set structure. Characters were going in and out in a series of pointless subplots. We met Flip's best friend and his two girlfriends, but were never given the opportunity to flesh them out. Alex-as-Flip was too unbothered by Flip's life for all but one chapter of the book, so we never got a sense of what Flip was like. And, to be honest, I was much more interested in Flip's life than Alex's. Flip had things going for him before he was inhabited by Alex, and all that shut down and everyone was apparently okay with it. Cricket coaches never raised an eyebrow, his parents ignored him acting differently, his sister accepted the changing dynamic of their relationship, his friends at school (we knew Flip was popular but never really met his friends) didn't even question him. This kid was popular, an athlete, a son, a brother, but none of these things Flip had in his life were even the slightest obstacle for Alex. Even when he was caught by police doing something unspeakably creepy, his parents simply suggested therapy and Alex said no. And that was the end of that conflict.

I know the story is supposed to be about Alex and him attempting to get back to his own body, but I feel wholly unfulfilled. If I were to suddenly wake up one day as someone else, sure I'd freak out at first, but there would come a time where I would have to embrace who I had become, stop panicking, and work on a solution while still keeping the person I was in alive. Alex, as I mentioned before and we're led to believe, didn't have much going for him. Here he is given the opportunity to exist as someone who actually has a life and more than one friend, but he's so hellbent on going back that he doesn't embrace the very opportunity, even before he learned the reason for his current situation and was given something to look forward to. It is for this very reason that I didn't feel like Alex learned anything at all. Most stories like these allow the main character to actually learn *something*, even if it is just to appreciate life and the people around you more. Alex, unfortunately, doesn't, and it becomes less a story about identity, and merely a story about being in someone else's body for a while and shutting yourself off from the world while you attempt to get back into your own body.

That's the problem with *Flip* against most of the other YA novels I have read. While other novels are unrealistic, the author writes them in a way that makes you believe that they could actually be real. Even when the same thing happened during the *Skinjacker* series, it felt like a plausible scenario within the scope of the story. With *Flip*, it never did. I'm in someone else's body and clearly acting differently in front of my parents and friends and teachers. I go online and search for answers, and it turns out someone with the exact explanation I'm looking for reaches out to me. Then it turns out that they are just a drive away and know what I look like and where I will be on the day they find me. Then after they find me, they mentor me, drive me to the beach with my friends, buy me beer, pizza, etc... I'm never questioned by my parents or friends (who think he is my cousin)..... yes, this actually happens in the book. There could have been more going on behind the scenes, like Alex posting pictures of Flip or his actual locations, I don't know, but the book just got so over-the-top unrealistic that I stopped believing.

And that brings us to the underwhelming ending. It ends in probably my least favorite way any book could end: an email from the main character's point-of-view even though the entire story was told in third person. It was completely out of place and didn't tie anything together. This whole book we are given half of the story, from Alex-as-Flip, and now at the end that's the same thing we are given. No answers as to what has happened otherwise or to anybody else. We don't know, for sure, what any of the unrealistic repercussions are, and trust me, there are quite a few of them that I can't mention because they would be major spoilers.

The last few chapters were so frustrating that I couldn't wait for them to finish, hoping that maybe, at the end, everything would come back around. It never did.

Looking back, I was completely dissatisfied with this book, even though I mostly enjoyed it. That aside, I honestly would not recommend it. It became too trivial to read after a while and never really got my interest once the plot really took off. Oh well.

Jeff Reed says

I think *Flip* was a great book. It can be really boring at times, but the payoff for reading it is unbelievable. Some parts make you want to stop reading the book it's so boring, others make you never want to stop. There were times I considered abandoning *Flip*, but I am so glad I didn't. I see myself buying a copy of it so I can reread it, since I am so sad I finished it. I hope there's a second book, and I think there is, because it ends on such a cliffhanger and I want the story to continue. I would definitely recommend *Flip* to any reader.
