

# CLAIRE COOK

*New York Times* bestselling author of *Must Love Dogs*

## Seven Year Switch

a novel



*"Bestseller Cook charms again." —People*

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*Claire Cook*

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## Seven Year Switch Claire Cook

“A beach chair worthy read.”—The New York Times

“A hot summer beach book.”—USA Today

“Bestseller Cook charms again in this lively, warm-hearted look at changing courses mid-life.”—People

Just when Jill Murray has finally figured out how to make it on her own, her husband Seth is back, proving he can't even run away reliably. Now Jill has to face the fact that there's simply no way she can be a good mom without letting her ex back into her daughter Anastasia's life. They say that every seven years you become a completely new person, and it takes a Costa Rican getaway to help Jill make her choice - between the woman she is and the woman she wants to be.

“A beach tote couldn't ask for more.”—Kirkus Reviews

“Seven years ago, Claire Cook told us we ‘Must Love Dogs.’ But must we also love ex-husbands?...Cook takes a closer look at a complex situation.”—New York Post

“Roll out your beach blanket for this sweet summer read about making mistakes and moving on.”—Publishers Weekly

“A lot of fun to read? Definitely!”—Redbook

“With wit and tenderness, Claire Cook sweeps us into the life of Jill Murray, a feisty single mom trying to stitch together a future after being abandoned by her husband. This is a delightful story of love, loss, and the surprising events that healed her heart. I cheered for Jill the entire way.”—Beth Hoffman

“A perfect beach read. Claire Cook once again demonstrates that she's a master in creating funny, warm, relatable characters you root for from the very first page.”—Allison Winn Scotch

“Smart, truly hilarious, and entirely sympathetic. Like a hot bubble bath or a holiday at the beach, you won't want it to end.”—Cecily Von Ziegesar

## Seven Year Switch Details

Date : Published April 27th 2015 by Marshbury Beach Books (first published January 1st 2010)

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Author : Claire Cook

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## **From Reader Review Seven Year Switch for online ebook**

### **Louise says**

Once again Claire hasn't disappointed me. "The Seven Year Switch" was FANTASTIC!!!!

Jill Murray had, or so she thought, a wonderful husband a wonderful marriage but Seth unfortunately did not. He picked up one day seven years ago and just disappeared leaving Jill with their two-year-old daughter, Anastasia.

Jill finally figured out how to live on her own, with a job and caring for her young daughter Anastasia and being both a Mom and Dad to her. One day out of the blue, Seth suddenly returns and expects to be taken back in to the family and resume the life they had. This idea proves difficult for Jill, but Anastasia is over the moon about having her Dad back and now wants to be called "Asia", thanks to Seth and this doesn't sit well with Jill.

Seth buys Asia a cell phone and hamster without consulting Jill and this upsets Jill as well until she sits Asia and Seth down and tells them both that no other decisions shall be made without consulting with her first.

Prior to all this, Jill has been working with her elderly friend Joni in a business called 'Great Girlfriend Getaways' where they arrange trips for girlfriends. Just as Seth makes his return, Jill meets a handsome "bicyclist" who she meets at Starbucks and is consulting him on the ways of the Japanese for an upcoming trip that he wants her to go on with him.

They say you change every 7 years but Jill isn't sure what she should do with Seth, or the new guy until she goes on a great Costa Rican get-a-way. What will she decide to do? Well my friends, that's up to YOU to find out!

You HAVE to purchase this novel!!

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### **Tattered Cover Book Store says**

Jackie says:

One of the surest signs that winter is over is a review copy of Claire Cook's new novel on my desk, because I've truly come to think that summer would just not be summer without a new release from her. This one is coming out in June.

Seven Year Switch is another winner. Jill Murray had been living a man-free existence since her husband walked out on them when their daughter Anastasia was just a toddler. She cobbles together a living by doing telephone work for Great Girlfriend Getaways (who specialize in all women trips to exciting places) and teaching an "Around The World" cooking class while fitting in a bit of cultural coaching on the side (helping business people to learn cultural mores for business trips, etc). On the plus side, she's just met a great guy--the first to even make her consider dating again. On the minus side, her daughter is developing "pre-teen

attitude" early. But the real problems start when Jill's husband turns back up in town.

As always, Claire populates her books with quirky characters and funny situations while delivering an important message. This is a fantastic summer, or any time, read!!!

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### **Allie says**

I listened this book because it is by the author of *Must Love Dogs* which was turned into a movie, which I thought was a different movie than it is.

So I was very confused to find out *Must Love Dogs* is an entirely different movie and book than I was thinking of. And I was very confused when this book just wasn't very good.

I got through most of it while doing dishes or making dinner, and it is a fairly short read. The narrator was great.

It is about Jill, the mother of ten-year-old Anastasia, and the challenges of being a single mother. Jill's ex and Anastasia's father, Seth, left them seven years ago without a word since. He shows up again and everything changes. Jill wants to kill him at first, then she thinks maybe they can make it work, then she remembers who he is and decides to let him go and truly move on with her life. In the form of dating another man, of course.

It is chick-lit, I knew this going in, but was still incredibly disappointed. So predictable, so mundane, so ridiculous. There hardly was a plotline. *What* was this book even *about*?

I don't know. Don't read it. Unless you want to. Then do.

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### **L.E. Fidler says**

this was not as bad as i feared it would be. so there's that.

jill's husband left her and her daughter seven years ago. then, he comes back just as she starts dating. hijinks ensue.

honestly, the premise bugged me the most - if my hubby left me high and dry for seven years (or, you know, 7 weeks), i would not be so keen to expose him to our daughter once he decided to remove his head from his sphincter and get his act together. i also wouldn't just leave him alone in the house with our daughter to go on a voyage of self discovery to costa rica. just sayin'.

none of the other characters felt particularly fleshed out - the worst being cynthia, jill's neighbor, who is a cross between barbie and mrs. malaprop.

that said, it was quick and breezy. not bad for a summer book, not good for a thinking woman.

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## **Sherry D'ambrosio says**

### Seven Year Switch: Revision In Life

I'd never heard of Claire Cook before I read a blurb about her novel, Seven Year Switch. The blurb stated "every seven years you become a completely new person," and went on to say Seven Year Switch was a novel about "accepting who you are and growing into who you want to be" ( ). That grabbed my attention. While I don't know that I can agree with the seven year time frame, I do recognize that there are definitely moments when you stop to evaluate who and what you are and give thought to revision.

When I taught composition, it was important to make my students understand the difference between editing and revision. I'd write the word "revision" on the blackboard and ask them to tell me what it meant. Then I'd write "re -- about" and "vision -- sight" and explain that revision is the act of going back through what we've written and trying to see it again as if it was new. In revising, I told them, we would be asking ourselves if we had communicated what we intended and how we might improve upon what we had done.

It seems to me the same thing happens in life. You reach a time and place, perhaps triggered by a specific event, perhaps without any identifiable trigger, and you stop and ask yourself if you've become the person you wanted to be. You think about how you see yourself and wonder how others see you. You ask yourself whether you are living the life you planned, the life you want. You evaluate what you find, decide whether or not you are satisfied with what is. If you aren't happy with what you find, then you begin to ask what you're going to do about that.

Cook's main character, Jill Murray, once had a promising career teaching business executives how to communicate with other cultures, a loving husband, and an adorable three-year-old daughter. Then one day her dream life fell apart when her husband, bored with the safe domestic routine, abandoned her and their daughter to go in search of adventure. With no support of any kind from her husband, Seth, Jill had to forge ahead and create a new life for her and her daughter. The daughter, Anastasia, becomes the hub around which Jill's world revolves. Every decision Jill makes is based on her desire to do the best for her daughter.

Jill is a very believable character one can identify with. She's a strong woman who refuses to let misfortune get her down, even if only because she knows Anastasia has no one but her to depend upon. She takes a job answering telephones for a travel agency called Great Girlfriends Getaways, a little ironic because she hasn't got time for girlfriends. The only "girlfriend" time she allows herself is that spent with the owner of the travel agency, Joni, and her next-door neighbor, Cynthia. Jill fills her time taking care of Anastasia and making ends meet. She is admirably innovative turning her interest in other cultures into a series of Lunch Around The World cooking classes she teaches at the community center, and some business consulting services. This is a woman who learned how to survive but she's just surviving, not living. There is no money to buy herself any of the cute outfits her neighbor wears, and no time to hang out with girlfriends or to date. Still, seven years after her husband's departure, Jill looks around at the modest home she managed to purchase and her darling daughter and makes peace with what is. Her life isn't what she planned but she can feel good that she has found her own way.

Then one day, at the community center, Jill looks up and finds Seth standing there and all the conflicting feelings towards him surface. Seth offers a pathetic excuse for his disappearance and announces he wants to come back into their lives; he wants to see their daughter. Jill is torn between wanting to tell him to disappear again for good and giving her daughter a chance to know her father. Finally, she does what she's been doing these past seven years, she puts Anastasia's needs first. Once Seth is reunited with his daughter, Jill knows he

will be a part of their lives from then on in one way or another.

The question for Jill then becomes can she revert to being the woman she was before Seth left? Can she continue being who she became afterwards? or does she need to once again revise her life. Through her business consulting, Jill had just met an intriguing man named Billy Sanders who crafts designer bicycles and wants to develop a Japanese market for them. For the first time in seven years, she is tempted by the promise of more than a fleeting relationship. Billy, like Seth, isn't what you would call "main stream," but unlike Seth, he isn't self-centered. Billy is warm, level-headed, caring. Jill is amazed as he discusses the relationship he has with his ex-wife, her new husband, and her sons. And she is touched that he understands she needs to take things slowly.

Cook's depiction of Jill's struggle to move on and work towards the life she really wants is believable and touching. Revision is never an easy chore but can be a valuable experience. I enjoyed the way Cook worked in a metaphor about surfing and life as Jill and Billy look towards their future. Surfing, she says, like life is "fun, but harder than it looks. . . . The trick is to use the calm between the waves to position yourself for the next one" ( ) And to that end, Cook concludes her novel with a page entitled "PASSPORT To Your Next Chapter" where she shares seven tips for your own revision. You might not find any of these new or surprising but it's good to be reminded of each.

Cook crafts a fine novel filled with sympathetic, believeable characters, and has a wonderful comedic touch as well. There is an episode near the end of the novel where Jill borrows one of Cynthia's Spanx products that is not to be missed. I laughed until I cried.

Thank you, Claire Cook, for a fun read, for an insight into one (fictional but so real) woman's revision, and for reminding us of the value of friendship.

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### **Karen says**

Claire Cook never fails to come through. Since my first book review, which was for Claire's book SUMMER BLOWOUT, she has never let me down when I pick up a new book of hers to read. She has a way of making even the toughest things in life bearable and her talented writing draws readers in through her marvelous stories, clever dialogue, and her captivating characters. In SEVEN YEAR SWITCH, readers meet Jill Murray who is one of those characters I just mentioned who captured my interest right off and had me rooting for her all the way. I found Jill to be a witty, bright, compelling and caring mother and an independent woman who didn't deserve the agony she felt when suddenly her ex-husband pops back into her and her daughter Anastasia's lives. Although Anastasia is delighted to have her father there, Jill is dubious of his motives and commitment.

The idea from the title that every seven years our body's skin rejuvenates thus making us into a "new" person, goes right along with the book's concept of personal change and growth being a positive thing in our lives. Cook surrounds Jill with intriguing characters that move the story along and fit into that principal premise of the book that was based on transformation and progression. With Jill's neighbor, Cynthia, being almost the opposite of Jill in most ways, she provided a strong character for Jill to play off of. She was entertaining and feisty, and quite a welcome addition in the story.

Of course, there was suddenly these men surrounding Jill, quite a change from the start of the story...a feast or famine situation. Besides her ex, Seth, there is the caring and amusing Billy who is a client of Jill's and

who is hard to resist. How Jill handles all of this is to take off on her own for a gal pal trip to Costa Rica and hope to find what she is looking for there...or at least some peace for her to be able to think and relax.

How Jill deals with everything and everyone is trademark Claire Cook as she takes a serious subject and deals with it gently, with warmth and fun, and creates an answer that educates, amuses, and involves the reader. The story of **SEVEN YEAR SWITCH** will entertain you while it also will endear itself to you as well. If like me, you start the book early enough, you will at least get a good night's sleep as I read it in one sitting and was happy I hadn't started it late in the day because I couldn't put it down. Another delightful gift, and perfect for the summer read, but wouldn't be bad by a cozy fire in winter as well, is **SEVEN YEAR SWITCH** from a favorite author, Claire Cook!

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### **Ines says**

When I picked up this book, I knew it wasn't a pulitzer-prize winning novel, but I didn't anticipate that I would get so little enjoyment out of listening to this book.

It is basically a book about a woman in the stages of moving on with her life after a divorce. If you want to read about that, I would recommend [Book: Eat, Pray, Love|19501] instead. For me that was a much more enjoyable reading experience.

Lots of people like this book, but I'm not a huge romance or chick-lit (at least this kind) of fan.

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### **Kari says**

OK more like 2.5 stars. This was a quick read. I'm not sure I totally liked the choices Jill makes. I think she took her ex-husband back into her life a little too easily. I was shocked it never occurred to her to ask what he was doing for a living and had been doing for the past 7 years. But then I guess that would have ruined the "twist". The only character I really liked was Billy. I thought the neighbor was annoying. I didn't see enough of the relationship between the 2 women to understand why they would be friends. I know others seemed to have loved this book, but I couldn't give it more than 2.5 stars.

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### **Karen says**

This plot had a whole lot more potential than the book actually delivered. The main character is an expert on different cultures. At first, reading them as they are woven into the storyline is amusing. After awhile, it just gets in the way of the story. The ending was a let down. I was sorry I wasted my time reading the book.

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### **Jennie Martinez says**

Very quick read -- actually I listed to this book on CD. It kept me interested, but I was a little disappointed in

the lack of depth (I know, I know, it wasn't SUPPOSED to be deep) and hardly any drama! The part I liked about it was how this lover of travel found ways to incorporate it into her local life. I think I would enjoy this more as a movie -- where I can really appreciate the scenery and good looks of her love interests.

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### **Julie says**

I have never read anything by Claire Cook, and I am not sure that I will again. It wasn't that it was bad - the book itself was an easy fast read and I read it in one day - it's just that the characters were very one dimensional and the story very predictable.

Jill, a single mother of a 10-year-old, finds that her life hasn't turned out how she hoped and she is firmly stuck in a rut. Just as a potential new boyfriend comes along, so does her estranged husband who abandoned her and her daughter seven years earlier. Jill needs to decide whether to let her husband back in to her life to become a family again or finally forgive him and move on with her own life. To do this, she does some soul searching on a girlfriend getaway to Costa Rica. Routine and predictable, you know from the beginning that you're pretty much guaranteed a happy ending in some form or another.

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### **Jackie says**

One of the surest signs that winter is over is a review copy of Claire Cook's new novel on my desk, because I've truly come to think that summer would just not be summer without a new release from her. This one is coming out in June.

Seven Year Switch is another winner. Jill Murray had been living a man-free existence since her husband walked out on them when their daughter Anastasia was just a toddler. She cobbles together a living by doing telephone work for Great Girlfriend Getaways (who specialize in all women trips to exciting places) and teaching an "Around The World" cooking class while fitting in a bit of cultural coaching on the side (helping business people to learn cultural mores for business trips, etc). On the plus side, she's just met a great guy-- the first to even make her consider dating again. On the minus side, her daughter is developing "pre-teen attitude" early. But the real problems start when Jill's husband turns back up in town.

As always, Claire populates her books with quirky characters and funny situations while delivering an important message. This is a fantastic summer, or any time, read!!!

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### **Nicole Jacob says**

First thoughts on the book -

I really enjoyed it. SYS is a light, easy type of book that'll keep you engaged until the end. There was nothing super special about this book though. Single mother working to make ends meet and just as she starts to find love, her ex husband comes back into the picture. The plot was never anything fancy - a snapshot of the broken family and their day to day routines. How it effects the daughter and the mother were very believable and somewhat exciting. I'm also confused about the title and how that really played into the whole story (other than her husband disappeared for 7 years).

I felt like the character who was well written was the daughter, Anastasia. She seemed the most believable. I sometimes had a hard time with Jill, the main character/mother. She seemed a little too okay with some things - like her annoying neighbor - she lash out at, but yet still watch her children when the bus dropped them off. And when her ex-husband shows up again, she decides it's okay to leave her daughter with him after the entire novel of not trusting him at all. I was slightly confused about her profession. Her cooking class that she taught seemed interesting, but it was only once a week? And if she's capable of holding a teaching job, she probably wouldn't need to work as a vacation telemarketer/salesmen at night. I didn't know if I was supposed to feel sorry for her and celebrate her small victories or just assume it's the norm for her.

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### **Lisa B. says**

Delightful!

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### **LORI CASWELL says**

#### Dollycas's Thoughts

Jill Murray's life was finally going in the right direction then her ex-husband returns after being gone for 7 years wanting to see his daughter. Jill is not ready for him to be back in their life, how does she know he just won't disappear again? When she tells her daughter he has come back she demands to see him as soon as possible and Jill watches the life she has created for herself and her daughter the past seven years implode. While all this is happening Jill meets Billy. He hires her to help him plan for a trip to Japan to pitch a business idea. Almost immediately she feels drawn to him and not in a business way. Is she ready for another man in her life? Should she try to get back with her husband for her daughter? She has no idea what to do so she signs on to a Costa Rican Girls Getaway to get away from both of them and the pressure in hopes she can figure out what direction her life should take.

This author has been recommended to me by several friends and this book was sitting on my To-Be-Read shelves for too long. Wanting a literary escape to the beach this cover called out to me so I grabbed it to read last weekend. Within a few minutes I was engaged by the characters. Jill working for a travel company from home with a phone headset attached to head as she travels her home taking care of her daughter, making supper, doing laundry, helping with homework, normal mom things. Her daughter, Anastasia, understands her mom needs to work but doesn't appreciate the way it interrupts their time together. When her dad enters back into the picture she starts to turn to him for everything. He also makes the huge error of giving her things she wants without discussing it first with Jill. Billy adds the triangle-ish- ness to the story. The next door neighbor fits well into the picture too. All the characters are realistically written and the dialogues are excellent. The characters are the true strength to this story.

The plot starts out really well and because of the synopsis I knew a trip to Costa Rica is coming and as I got past halfway into the story I wondered how the author was going to tie up everything and thrown in a trip within the remaining pages. Well she does wrap things up but to me it was just too rushed, almost abrupt. All the depth and detail that I loved in the beginning was gone. I appreciated the message of self-worth, change and growth the author was trying to get across. The idea that every seven years you become a completely new person, as a theme was heartwarming but the decisions made at the end just happened too fast for me.

I really enjoyed the first 3/4 of this story so I still want to read more of Claire Cook's novels. I am hoping this speedy end was just a fluke.

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