



# Kiss Date Love Hate

Books Reviewed:

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Editor's Choice:

off

BfK Rating:

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It's like this. Nerdy George lives next door to Lex (that's Alexa, but only Mr Trench calls her that) and George's dad tests computer software. And he sometimes passes games to George for a consumer's opinion. With this particular game, George and Lex find they can feed in their friends' names and personality traits and, well, make slight adjustments?. And you know what? The changes actually happen in real life ? so that they can, like, *adjust* their friends. So that one day squeaky-clean Matt might be mad about Gemma (who stole him from Lex), the next he's so moody he's sent home by Mr Trench from the half-term filming course in the forest. And the Flirt Twins, Liana and Teagan, are one day crazy about Hayden and Cam but when George boosts his own sexiness via the game, they're all over him like a rash. And Gemma is too. The odd one out is rebellious, slightly older and super-gorgeous Drew, whose name never got into the game because he's not really in the group (they've known each other since Reception) and he's only just arrived in town to escape a Troubled Life in Scotland.

So that's the basis of the plot: a whirling change-your-partners dance played out by avatars whose personalities alter daily. George finds that the changeover time is dead on midnight and the pressure's on because the game itself runs out on the Friday of half-term, just when the film course ends. Cinderella had it easy compared to this lot.

The book comes packaged in pink, and with a title like this it's clear we're in teen chicklit land. (Readers may already know the author's **Swapped by a Kiss**, **Extreme Kissing** and **Split by a Kiss**.) Luisa Plaja's narrator Lex has just that witty, ditzy idiom, especially in the dialogue, to drive things along, happily without a whiff of I-was-like, or so-he-goes-and-I-went?. It's all told in that wide-eyed present tense where anything, just anything, could happen next. Good clean fun, you might say, since actual sex would complicate things too much. There's a hint of seriousness provided by Drew's slightly more mature perspective (though would he *really* fall for Lex? Don't ask). The delayed revelation of the effects of Lex's long ago illness also adds some depth.

Light entertainment for a reader happy to track who's with who (definitely not *whom* here), who's dumped who, and who said what and when to whoever. Since Lex's main purpose is to land the right boy, this is probably not one for a feminist's Recommended Reads; and the minds of males remain another country where things are done differently.

**Links:**

[1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/kiss-date-love-hate>

[2] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/193>

[3] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/geoff-fox>