



Same Difference

By Siobhan Vivian

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Sometimes a girl just needs a change . . .

The last thing Emily wants is another summer of tanning and pool hopping in Cherry Grove. Now that her best friend has a boyfriend, everything feels different in a way she doesn't quite understand. So when offered a spot at a prestigious art program in Philadelphia, Emily jumps at the chance to leave her hometown for a few hours a day.

But it takes more than a change of scenery and a new group of friends to discover yourself. As Emily bounces between a suburb where everyone tries to fit in and a city where everyone wants to be unique, she struggles to find her own identity. And while the rules may change, the pressures remain the same. Friendships can be hard to navigate. Boys can be both mysterious and predictable. And the line between right and wrong can be a little blurry. . . .

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Emily's life reeks of the ordinary: she lives in suburban New Jersey in a posh gated community and hangs out at Starbucks with her friends in a town where most of the buildings are old, and if they're not, they're eventually made to look that way. When Emily heads to Philadelphia for a summer art institute—complete with an eclectic cast of funky classmates and one dreamy teaching assistant—she faces the classic teen dilemma of whether to choose the familiar over the new and exciting, while figuring out who she really is: Emily from Cherry Grove or Emily the aspiring artist? (I look like two halves of two different people mashed together, she reflects during a trip to the beach. Is it possible to be a poseur in both worlds?) Vivian (*A Little Friendly Advice*) serves up the story with vivid description and dialogue; the author's talent for scene-setting and evocative imagery is especially effective for a story about a girl just discovering her eye as an artist and herself as a person. Ages 12-up. (Mar.)

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From School Library Journal

Grade 6–9—Emily has it all: a perfect house, a BFF who lives across the street, and a neighborhood Starbucks that serves the girls twin frozen mochas before they order. When Emily enrolls in a summer art program in Philadelphia, what could go wrong? The fact that very little does happen is part of the problem here. The teen and her life are just a tad too sunny to be real. She navigates her way through the big city, the artsy crowd, an edgy new friend, creative demands, and a forbidden first love. All this is a refreshing change from her scripted suburban life. She dumps her best friend for the excitement of it all. Some of Emily's choices, the people she trusts, and the circles in which she travels are just plain dumb—even for a naive and sheltered kid. She works as hard to reshape herself as she does to create her art. And all to great success. There are no major crises here, just affluent coming-of-age stuff. The edgy artist, Fiona, whom Emily befriends, is the most interesting character and she fades out of the story. The premise of Emily's potential, her creative talents, and her spirit of growth and risk-taking are all well and good. It's the small conflicts that never seem satisfactorily resolved that makes Emily's near misses and great luck feel contrived and sugarcoated.—Alison Follos, *North Country School, Lake Placid, NY*

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From [Booklist](#)

On her first day of summer art school in the big city, Emily makes a shocking discovery: "I don't see anyone here who looks like me, and that feels strange." Though she never felt entirely herself at home, she is clearly an outsider here. Emily leaves her bland strip-mall and Starbucks existence behind, boards the commuter train every day, and dives into the artist's life. Fiona, a bold and inventive student who draws shadows, takes Emily on as a pet project and new best friend. As the semester unfolds and Emily's skills improve, she begins to see that the glamorous and gritty art life has its own share of petty cliques and drama—just like home. She navigates a sweet but forbidden relationship with Yates, her TA, and slowly comes to redefine herself in a way that is genuine and fulfilling. As in Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak* (1999), the art is a crucial element and vividly described, helping develop the characters and plot. Emily's artistic and personal journeys will resonate with teens longing to break free from predefined roles. Grades 8–11. --Heather Booth

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gary Ackley:

Book is to be different for each and every grade. Book for children until finally adult are different content. We all know that that book is very important for all of us. The book Same Difference has been making you to know about other know-how and of course you can take more information. It is rather advantages for you. The e-book Same Difference is not only giving you a lot more new information but also for being your friend when you experience bored. You can spend your spend time to read your reserve. Try to make relationship together with the book Same Difference. You never feel lose out for everything in case you read some books.

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