



# The Switch

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Tome Society Book Award

## Discussion Guide



### Pre-reading questions

1. What do you think might happen if technology, like electricity and communication systems, suddenly stopped working? How would it impact your daily life?A
2. Imagine you're in a remote location without modern conveniences. What skills do you think would be essential for survival? Do you have any of these skills?
3. At the beginning of the novel, one theory for the disappearance of technology is an electromagnetic pulse, also known as an EMP. Do some quick research to learn what an EMP is and how they work.

### Post-reading questions

1. Compare and contrast the reactions of the Wonderland Compound inhabitants and those who were living in downtown Portland after the switch. What do you think were the main causes for how each group responded to the world drastically changing in a blink of an eye? How is Henry's view point changed when he leaves the compound for the first time with Gino and Chester? What does he learn about their circumstances within the compound?
2. Think about each of the characters in the novel, what strengths and skills do they bring to the Wonderland Compound?
3. Why do you think the Ludds allow certain people onto the farm and not others? Who would you let join your group if you were in their position? If you were interviewing someone to join your group after the switch, what questions would you ask them and why?
4. Reread Albert and Edgar's interaction on page 62 of *The Switch*. One of the questions Albert asks Edgar is *who* is in charge and if they *wanted* to be in charge. Why does he ask this question and why does Edgar's answers make Albert agree to join the farm?
5. Why do you think the author decided to include Caroline throughout the story? How does her voice inside Henry's head impact the story?
6. Henry records what happens each day in his journal and then types out a more detailed version at the treehouse. Why do you think he does this? What importance or purpose could these writings have in the future?
7. How does Henry react to the sudden blackout? Do you think his reaction is realistic? Discuss this quote by Henry's mom, "We do not panic. We respond. We deal with it. We adjust." How has this mindset allowed their group to prosper while others struggled?
8. What is the purpose of Derek and the other uncles spreading rumors about the Ludds being bad people and Wonderland Compound being a dangerous place?
9. Compare and contrast the Wonderland Compound and the Rabbit Hole. What drives people to join these groups? How do each of these groups hold onto their power?
10. Why would people be willing to fight for control of the Wonderland Compound? Compare and contrast Henry's mom, Marie, and Robin, the leader of the Wild Bunch with this quote in mind, "We're both trying to protect our people the best way we can." (pg. 281)

## Post-reading activities

1. Emergency Preparedness Kit Design - Have students research and compile a comprehensive list of items that are crucial for surviving a prolonged blackout or EMP similar to what Henry and the Ludds experience in *The Switch*. They should categorize the items into sections such as food, water, shelter, medical supplies, communication tools, and safety equipment. Students can present their lists in the form of a brochure, poster, or digital presentation. Additionally, they should provide a brief explanation for why each item is important and how it could help in such a situation. Encourage students to consider modern alternatives as well as traditional tools that don't rely on electricity or technology.
2. Inspired by Henry's daily journal entries and recording of events after the switch, digitally create a page from the imaginary scrapbook of a character from *The Switch* detailing who they are and the experiences they had throughout the novel. Be sure to check out the competition guidelines and instructions on the Tome website and ask your advisor to submit your completed project to the Character Digital Scrapbook Page Competition.

## More About This Book

Author's Website: [www.rolandsmith.com](http://www.rolandsmith.com)