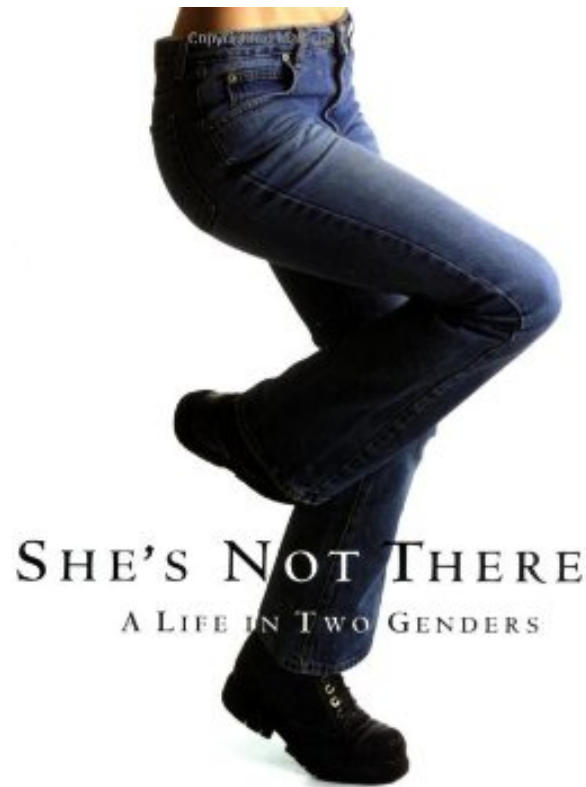


(Download pdf) She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders

She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders

Jennifer Finney Boylan

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JENNIFER FINNEY BOYLAN

With an Afterword by Richard Russo

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Jennifer Finney Boylan : She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. be so inclined as to read this book.By eridanisi just finished this book, purchased in spite of all the reviews that mentioned how poor 'Grace' was underrepresented. actually, i bought it in part because of those.i enjoyed the book, and i might have learned a few things. i enjoyed the writing, and the description of what it is like to be this particular 'other'. the author and her bestie discuss what identity is in terms of

choosing who to present as. but my experience has been more like discovering what i am - not who. self is known; the details are murky. i appreciate fine writing that shows the struggle, the confusion, the weirdness of it all in a society that is very very sure that identity is static, and of course is very very wrong.as for the attitude / altitude in the book, i have that optimism as well. it stays there, enhancing my emotional baseline, always. i'm not trans, but i am a lesbian, and my husband left me for a straight woman, and i had stayed, for years. i would have stayed forever [even now, 9 years later]. so i understand jenny's staying part, and maybe a small part of a possible not staying part, and perhaps some of 'grace's staying part, and a lot of the 'buoyancy' part.it seems very clear that 'grace' and jenny have a really good marriage, a close, positive marriage, and so it's not surprising that she acted as she did. she suffered, she lived, she managed; what most of us do in our dramas, large and small. she was inclined that way. i do believe that women tend to stay, while men leave, for very complex reasons. while i appreciated her words, i'm sad that 'grace' felt she should write her response because of all the shouting and 'not fair's ostensibly on her behalf.trans and the rest of the queer rainbow have never, ever been all that weird to me. i am just lucky, that way, i guess. i never struggled with that part of my identity, but it is obvious that some people do. but the weirdest thing to me is that strangers struggle - and argue with - someone else's identity. and i don't mean when someone is in the closet. i mean a stated, struggled for identity, and here are friends, family, colleagues, etc., proclaiming that it's not so because they don't believe it or haven't felt it, or whatever denial mechanism they feel they need. i don't believe in jesus, but it's abundantly clear that many people do, why argue? but i guess that's what makes this a book, and not a moment.it's a well-written book. i like how it dances thru time, i like the buoyancy. i like the afterword by jenny's friend. i love how it all comes together.³ of 3 people found the following review helpful. great humor (including the ability to laugh at oneself) which ...By suzy hallock-banniganI read this book when I was employed full time as a counselor; now, over a decade later, I still give this book to friends who want to learn more about transpeople. I know of no other Memoir which is so compelling that you would read it in a single sitting if you could---except maybe Frank McCourt's "Angela's Ashes." In fact, there are similarities between the two styles: great humor (including the ability to laugh at oneself) which does not preclude the writers' abilities to document great sorrows, timeliness---the sense of emerging in a culture not primed to understand some of the issues, and just good writing. The book sings. Especially poignant is the chapter about a faculty exchange with University College Cork when all the pub songs about emigration resonated: leaving a place you know, leaving your sweetheart, headed for a destination one hopes will somehow be better, anticipation, soft terror. This book was a landmark for the trans community and it ought to be heralded for the human community as we are all in this business of loving and living together. And Richard Russo's Afterward is a bonus.⁰ of 0 people found the following review helpful. Autobiography of Professor Jennifer Finney Boylan, and an exploration of what it means to be transgender in AmericaBy ctsurv553If you are considering purchase of this book, or reading this review in the first place, there is a high probability that you are transgender, a friend or family member of someone who is transgender, or an LGBTQ ally. I can sum up the importance of this book in one short sentence: "It is our story". In the details, of course it's Jenny's story, but there are so many themes in this book that reflect experiences that are common to all of us in the transgender community, that anyone who is trans or related to a trans person will see themselves reflected in these pages as in a mirror. Jenny Boylan is a professor of English at Colby College in Maine, and has published both fiction and non-fiction works. Her writing style is enjoyable, easy to read, and inclusive. You will be drawn into her story as if she were telling it at a campfire and you are being invited to pull up a camp chair and share it with her. If you are indeed trans, I suggest you have a box of tissues handy as you read. Parts of this story are so emotional that you will be crying unless you have a heart made of ice. At other points, you will be laughing, as Jenny relates stories involving some of the crazy things she has done, or witnessed while visiting her often times zany grandmother, Gammie. This book will put you on an emotional roller-coaster, so make sure your seatbelt is properly fastened, and your tray table is in the fully upright and locked position, because you are in for a sometimes sad, other times happy, but always wonderful ride. The ending of this autobiography happens in 2002, and leaves quite a few unanswered questions as to what might have happened to various people in the years between then and now. Jenny has written two sequels to "She's Not There": one that covers her childhood in greater detail, "I'm Looking Through You", and "Stuck in the Middle With You", which picks up her story after the events in "She's Not There".

The exuberant memoir of a man named James who became a woman named Jenny. *Shes Not There* is the story of a person changing genders, the story of a person bearing and finally revealing a complex secret; above all, it is a love story. By turns funny and deeply moving, Jennifer Finney Boylan explores the remarkable territory that lies between men and women, examines changing friendships, and rejoices in the redeeming power of family. *Shes Not There* is a portrait of a loving marriage the love of James for his wife, Grace, and, against all odds, the enduring love of Grace for the woman who becomes her sister, Jenny. To this extraordinary true story, Boylan brings the humorous, fresh voice that won her accolades as one of the best comic novelists of her generation. With her distinctive and winning perspective, *Shes Not There* explores the dramatic outward changes and unexpected results of life as a woman: Jenny fights the urge to eat salad, while James consumed plates of ribs; gone is the stability of one damn mood, all the damn time. While Boylan's own secret was unusual, to say the least, she captures the universal sense of feeling

uncomfortable, out of sorts with the world, and misunderstood by her peers. Jenny is supported on her journey by her best friend, novelist Richard Russo, who goes from begging his friend to Be a man (in every sense of the word) to accepting her as an attractive, buoyant woman. The most unexpected thing, Russo writes in his Afterword to the book, is in how Jennys story we recognize our shared humanity. As James evolves into Jennifer in scenes that are by turns tender, startling, and witty, a marvelously human perspective emerges on issues of love, sex, and the fascinating relationship between our physical and our intuitive selves. Through the clear eyes of a truly remarkable woman, *She's Not There* provides a new window on the often confounding process of accepting ourselves.

From Booklist
Boylan, English professor and author of the critically acclaimed novels *The Constellations* (1994), *The Planets* (1991), and *Getting In* (1998), began life as a male named James Boylan. In this autobiography, she details her lifelong struggle with her burgeoning femaleness and the path she followed to become a female, both physically and mentally. For 40 years, the author lived as a man, seemingly happy and even marrying a woman and fathering two children. At a certain point, though, she realized that she couldn't suppress her desire to live as a female and so eventually went through all the steps to become female, including sexual reassignment surgery. There is something troubling about Boylan's lighthearted tone, and while she hints at it, there is no really clear depiction of the havoc this transition must have wreaked on her married life (Boylan's wife was clearly devastated) and on her children (who at times refer to her as boygirl or maddy). But Boylan's well-written and informative book is a worthy contribution to the body of work on this subject. Kathleen Hughes
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"Beautifully crafted, fearless, painfully honest, inspiring and extremely witty. Jennifer Finney Boylan is an exquisite writer with a fascinating story and this combination has resulted in one of the most remarkable, moving and unforgettable memoirs in recent history." ---Augusten Burroughs, author of *Running With Scissors*
"In addition to being a complete delight, this book should make us all question what we mean when we use the words love, marriage, and friendship. Jennifer Finney Boylan is a great gift to womanhood." --Haven Kimmel, author of *A Girl Named Zippy*
From the Inside Flap
The exuberant memoir of a man named James who became a woman named Jenny. *She's Not There* is the story of a person changing genders, the story of a person bearing and finally revealing a complex secret; above all, it is a love story. By turns funny and deeply moving, Jennifer Finney Boylan explores the remarkable territory that lies between men and women, examines changing friendships, and rejoices in the redeeming power of family. *She's Not There* is a portrait of a loving marriage?the love of James for his wife, Grace, and, against all odds, the enduring love of Grace for the woman who becomes her ?sister,? Jenny. To this extraordinary true story, Boylan brings the humorous, fresh voice that won her accolades as one of the best comic novelists of her generation. With her distinctive and winning perspective, *She's Not There* explores the dramatic outward changes and unexpected results of life as a woman: Jenny fights the urge to eat salad, while James consumed plates of ribs; gone is the stability of ?one damn mood, all the damn time.? While Boylan's own secret was unusual, to say the least, she captures the universal sense of feeling uncomfortable, out of sorts with the world, and misunderstood by her peers. Jenny is supported on her journey by her best friend, novelist Richard Russo, who goes from begging his friend to ?Be a man? (in every sense of the word) to accepting her as an attractive, buoyant woman. ?The most unexpected thing,? Russo writes in his Afterword to the book, ?is in how Jenny's story we recognize our shared humanity.? As James evolves into Jennifer in scenes that are by turns tender, startling, and witty, a marvelously human perspective emerges on issues of love, sex, and the fascinating relationship between our physical and our intuitive selves. Through the clear eyes of a truly remarkable woman, *She's Not There* provides a new window on the often confounding process of accepting ourselves.