



She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders

By Jennifer Finney Boylan



She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders By Jennifer Finney Boylan

The provocative bestseller *She's Not There* is 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 hilarious 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.

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Editorial Review

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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Review

"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 provocative bestseller *She's Not There* is the winning, utterly surprising story of a person changing genders. By turns hilarious and deeply moving, Jennifer Finney Boylan explores the territory that lies between men and women, examines changing friendships, and rejoices in the redeeming power of family. Told in Boylan's fresh voice, *She's Not There* is about a person bearing and finally revealing a complex secret. Through her clear eyes, *She's Not There* provides a new window on the confounding process of accepting our true selves.

"Probably no book I've read in recent years has made me so question my basic assumptions about both the centrality and the permeability of gender, and made me recognize myself in a situation I've never known and have never faced . . . The universality of the astonishingly uncommon: that's the trick of *She's Not There*. And with laughs, too. What a good book." —Anna Quindlen, from the Introduction to the Book-of-the-Month-Club edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Michael Duckett:

Do you among people who can't read pleasant if the sentence chained from the straightway, hold on guys this particular aren't like that. This She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders book is readable by you who hate those perfect word style. You will find the facts here are arrange for enjoyable reading through experience without leaving actually decrease the knowledge that want to offer to you. The writer of She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders content conveys prospect easily to understand by lots of people. The printed and e-book are not different in the articles but it just different such as it. So , do you nonetheless thinking She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders is not loveable to be your top collection reading book?

Craig Harrison:

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Corey Barksdale:

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Maria McGhee:

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