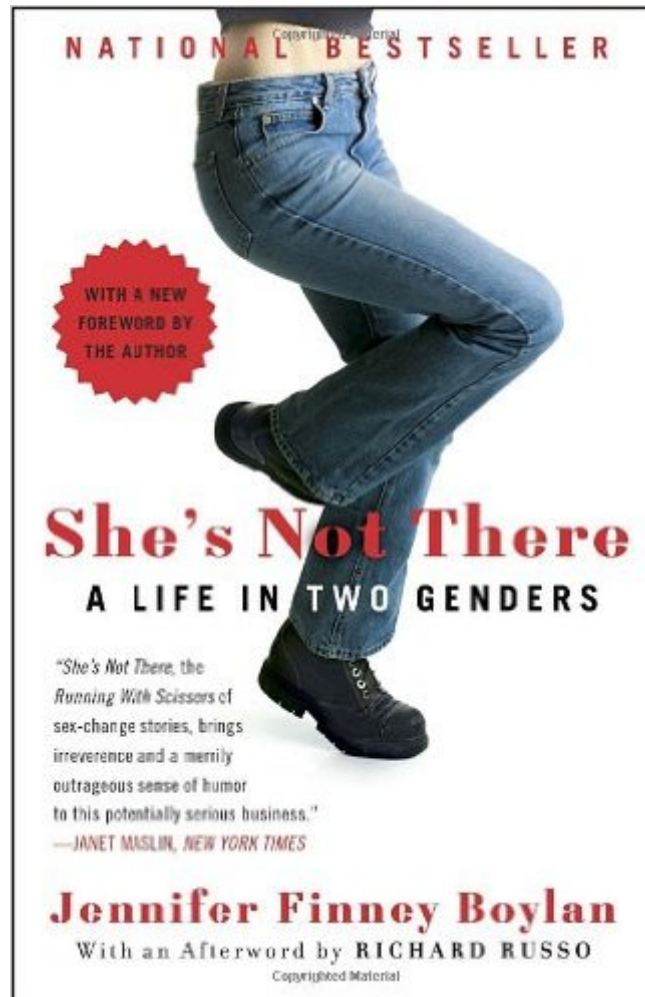


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# She's Not There: A Life In Two Genders



## Synopsis

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. 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 intuitive selves. Now with a new epilogue from the author and an afterword from Deirdre "Grace" Boylan, *She's Not There* shines a light on the often confounding process of accepting ourselves.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (255 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

I went into reading this book with more than a bit of skepticism, having seen other examples of transgender people telling their story fall short of what I have known and experienced (yep, I am a transgender M to F myself). Anyway I was pleasantly surprised by this book. Ms. Boylan writes with a grace and a style that made the book easily readable and one for me that I wanted to read, rather than had to read. Some people might criticize the relatively light tone she takes with some of the darker issues she had to face (like a disapproving sister) but after reading so many doom and gloom tales that over emphasize that side, this was a breath of fresh air. As someone like Ms. Boylan who is going through transition as a family (with some differences in terms of family dynamics) I can say that the emotions she writes about, her and of those around her, if lightened up, are real. Her

spouse deals with this differently than many spouses would, for sure, but the pain and the hurt expressed is true in my experience. Likewise, the uncertainty of people around a transitioning person is portrayed very well here, especially in the relationship with her friend Richard Russo. I am glad that Jenny made the point that not only is the person transitioning, so are the people around them. I also would like to comment on some of the other reviews, who imply that Jenny "glossed over" the pain of her family, or implied she was some sort of typical middle age man just "doing his own thing". I suspect if she glossed over the raw emotions it was to protect her family and their privacy, not about trivializing them. As far as this being some sort of middle age crisis and a 'choice', forget it.

Jennifer Finney Boylan spent her first 40 years as a woman in a man's body. *She's Not There : A Life in Two Genders* is Jennifer's story about growing up as James, knowing with "heartbroken conviction" that she was living in the wrong life, and hoping to be "cured by love." James Boylan met and married Grace and became a professor at Colby College in Maine. Together they raised two sons. Boylan's life included playing in various bands, writing and publishing successful books, and constant excruciating dissonance and concealment. At age forty-two, after years of therapy and exploring transgender issues, Boylan began the transition to a female body. This was achieved through hormone therapy and eventual gender reassignment surgery. We are led to understand that she didn't DECIDE to make this transition, but rather stopped resisting it. Boylan's writing is often wry and even funny, but she never tries to conceal the pain of her transgendered life and the redemptive integration of her reassignment. She moves back and forth in time, framing the story with an emotionally revealing opening and then varying the intensity throughout. The impact on Boylan's family and friends was "atomic." Boylan chose fictional names for the non-public people in this memoir, and her choice of the name Grace for her spouse cannot be by chance. After years of marriage, Grace mourned the loss of her husband while finding enough love and faith in her life partner to stay in the relationship. Unstinting in her own self-exposure, Boylan leaves a veil of privacy over the nature of her spouse's accommodation to this change.

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