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

About the Book
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.

Discussion Guide
1. Do you feel that Boylan had a choice in becoming a woman to the world?

2. What responsibility does Jenny have for Grace and their children? What responsibility do they have to her?

3. Have you ever known someone who made a gender transition? How did the change affect people who knew the person before?

4. How central a role do you believe gender plays in our identity? How much different and in what ways do you believe you'd be if you were a member of the opposite sex? Do you think that some traits are inherent in one gender?

5. Discuss Boylan's experiences buying a car and buying a pair of jeans. Have you witnessed or experienced similar situations? Do you notice the differences in expectations and attitudes in the ways people of other sexes are portrayed?

6. What role does humor play in Boylan's life and in this book?

7. The title of the book, "She's Not There," is the title of a song that Boylan sings. What do you think the title means in
this case? Who is not there, and when?

8. What is revealed about Boylan in her friendship with Richard Russo?

9. As a teenager, Boylan believes that love will cure him from his feelings. In what ways is Boylan saved by love? In what ways do people usually expect to be saved by love? How often is it successful?

10. Discuss the concept of "normal" as it relates to Boylan's narrative, and to your expectations.

11. On her web site, Boylan remarks, "As I look back at the story of my own life, I occasionally feel that being born transgendered was the best thing that could have happened to me. While dealing with this condition made life difficult for me, as well as for my family, it's also true that I have been given a rare gift in life, the gift of being able to see into the worlds of both men and women with clear eyes." Do you feel that you know more about these worlds as a result of reading Boylan's book?

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Author Bio

Jennifer Finney Boylan is Professor of English at Colby College and the author of the bestseller SHE'S NOT THERE, as well as the acclaimed novels THE PLANETS and GETTING IN. A three-time guest of "The Oprah Winfrey Show," she has also appeared on "Larry King Live," "Today" and "48 Hours," and has played herself on ABC’s "All My Children." She lives in Belgrade Lakes, Maine.

Critical Praise

"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."