Audience crams to see transgendered author

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Jennifer Finney Boylan came to speak about her experiences and There." Boylan is no stranger to when trans gender d author trans gendered author Boylan uses humor, book to talk to crowd Audience cram to see transgendered author

By Diana McElwain Assistant News Editor

It was standing room only at Memorial Union's Bangor Room when transgendered author Jennifer Finney Boylan came to speak about her experiences and to read from her book: "She's Not There." Boylan is no stranger to the University of Maine. She spoke in the same room last year, and has visited Human Sexuality classes. "I guess it's my annual invasion of this wonderful campus," she said.

Boylan opened her reading with humor, telling the story of how a past reading of hers was at the same time as Hillary Clinton's. "The only people who would come to my reading were transsexuals and Republicans," she said. "Which leads to the question, what is a transsexual Republican?"

She tried to help the audience have a better understanding of what it means to be transgendered. "Transgendered is an umbrella term. It's a whole group of people who are gender variant," she said. "Some think it is a hobby that goes out of control. That's not the case ... it could happen to anyone. It could happen to you."

She also cleared up the difference between being transgendered and cross dressing. "Cross dressers are straight men who really like to dress up. God bless them," she said.

Boylan said that it was easy to misunderstand the many terms, but she hoped that someday they will all seem familiar. "They deserve to be spoken of without shame," she said.

Boylan read from her book, describing with humor and emotion a person in her support group who eventually took her own life. She said that it was the first time she read the passage to an audience. "I never read that chapter. It takes me to a very vulnerable place. It focuses on the tremendous pain and suffering that transsexual people go through," she said.

Boylan said that she did not want anyone to think that all stories about transsexuals ended tragically. "It's possible to survive this condition ... most of us go on to live lives that are full and joyful," she said.

She said that not only did she survive her experience, she was grateful for having it. "I feel lucky to be born transsexual. It sounds nutty, but I've been able to view the worlds of men and women up close," she said.

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Boylan talked about the experience of undergoing a sex-change operation, and becoming a female after growing up a male. "There's some things I'm never going to learn how to do," she said. "Like a French braid."

She said that the process was a slow one, and she had to deal with many details such as a name change. "It's difficult to change your name halfway through life. I'd sit there with one of those name your baby books," she said. "I kept going back to Jenny." Boylan said that while they may seem unusual, her obstacles were similar to the problems that all people must deal with. "You will have a moment that you will have to make a decision that is difficult," she said. "I found that with the gift of family, friends and love I could do it."

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Boylan所述的下一段是关于这本书的内容。她说，她没有读过那章，因为那带给她一种非常脆弱的感觉。她提到这本书聚焦于那些经历了巨大痛苦和痛苦的变性人，但她说，她不仅活了下来，还对此表示感激。

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Boylan谈到她所经历的性转变手术和成为女性后长大的经历。她说，"我感到幸运的是，我是一个变性人。这听起来很奇怪，但我能够从男性的视角来审视这个世界。"

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