

# **My Husband Betty**

*By Helen Boyd*

*Thunder's Mouth Press, New York*

For those looking for an insight into male-to-female crossdressing, this is an excellent choice. While it is written from the basis of a wife's point of view, it encompasses far more information than a single person's viewpoint.

Helen Boyd is founder of CDOD, an on-line meeting and discussion place for couples. In her position as moderator, she has thoroughly researched crossdressers, crossdressing, and their effect on marriages and families. While she is in a committed, monogamous, legally married relationship with her CD husband, Betty, she is also very aware of the stresses crossdressing can bring to a relationship.

Helen's in-depth study of wives and girlfriends reactions to their CD partners is both interesting and surprising. Interesting, in that they vary so greatly. Surprising, in the degree of acceptance – and yes, pleasure – many find in their relationships.

Helen stresses that keeping crossdressing a secret from ones own partner violates the trust required for a successful relationship. Where honest disclosure occurs early in the relationship, trust is strengthened. The potential partner can then enter the relationship with her eyes and heart open and the knowledge that her partner trusts her enough to disclose this “secret.”

Helen's book does not simply paint a pretty picture. Many wives, especially where their partner's crossdressing has been kept secret for years, lose their trust in him. What else has he been hiding? Does he really want to transition fully and become a woman? Some try to restrict or eliminate their husband's crossdressing, with the result that the relationship is severely damaged anyway. Some struggle with keeping this situation a secret from their friends and families, damaging those relationships as well. Many wonder if being attracted to a crossdresser makes them lesbian – still unacceptable in our generally homophobic society.

The book includes sections on why men crossdress, why they can't stop, who their girlfriends and wives are, and how they cope. There are segments on how to make these relationships work which, like most relationships, require some accommodation from both parties and a lot of honest communication. One segment deals with the crossdresser's wife's greatest fear – that her husband may realize he is transsexual and needs to transition to a woman. Sexuality in crossdressing relationships earns its own chapter, as does a discussion of gender politics.

Public awareness of the transsexual community is gaining ground as more and more TS come out and demand their civil rights. Acceptance is growing. Meanwhile, the crossdressers largely remain in the closet. The absence of “out” crossdressing leadership and political organization makes CD's acceptance unlikely. Crossdressers must be “Out, Loud, and Proud” to change hearts and minds.

I found this book fascinating. As father to a male-to-female transsexual and an activist in the GLBT community, I have learned a great deal about transsexuals – but very little about crossdressers. “My Husband Betty” gave me a much broader base for understanding and supporting this segment of the transgender community.

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*Reviewed by Dave Parker*