



**Ask Joe**  
By Joe Swinyer

Dear Joe,  
My boyfriend, with high long-term relationship potential, has the habit of being late for everything. This drives me bonkers! How can I deal with this? It is a significant issue for me.  
Signed, Clueless

Dear Clueless,  
I see one critical issue unstated here. Have you discussed this with the errant boyfriend? Discussion of the issue, and any others, is critical to a harmonious relationship. Best tie yourself to the boyfriend and get this out in the open. Do the same for other issues present and in the future. He may be totally unaware of your discontent!

That said, there are a number of possible causes for the tardiness and we will not delve into deep psychological issues here. Your boyfriend may simply be one of these people, and there are many, who have a very poor sense of time. If he is to be with you at 7:30, he may leave his home at 7:30 and consider this totally appropriate, not considering that the trip will take 30 minutes. The set hour is the trigger here. Best to discuss the need to plan ahead and set out in time to arrive at the set hour.

He may come from a family who has very free-flowing concepts of punctuality. So, 2 p.m. may mean anything from 1 to 4 and may not even assume arrival time at all! Yes, dear reader, such families do exist. This situation requires patience and careful discussion of plans: leave your home at 1:30, with gas and any other needed items, in order that we may arrive at the destination on time.

If you become partnered with this guy, you will really need patience and teaching ability as you will be taking on the entire family as students!

The bottom line: discuss this with your boyfriend and help him plan. ▼

Please send your questions to Joe Swinyer at mrtabbytabby@yahoo.com. Joe was in a partnership for 27 years and two decade-long relationships before that, and is now dating after being a widower. Joe lives in Cadyville, New York.

a e BOOKS

# Bi Men: Coming Out Every Which Way

A REVIEW BY LINDSAY COBB

Since the publication in 1991 of *Bi Any Other Name*, that grandmother of all bi anthologies has spawned numerous books chronicling the bisexual experience. It's an experience much like that of other queer folk, to be sure, with the additional heartache, at times, of ostracism from gay friends and allies as much as from straights. Accusations of being confused, trying to pass, denying their true homosexuality have hounded bi folk probably since Stonewall, and the resulting courage, self-affirmation, and joy in living as they see fit takes on a particular poignancy and hard-won dignity.

A new anthology, called *Bi Men: Coming Out Every Which Way*, may be unique in that, as the title suggests, the focus is on men. Editors Ron Jackson Suresha and Pete Chvany have assembled a wide range of voices from various walks of life and in different stages of coming out. Unlike the older book, *Bi Men* avoids socio-political exposition: presumably bisexuality need no longer be defined, theorized, or defended - or at least it's done so in the context of story. So the narratives in *Bi Men* drive the book, and they are by turns heart-breaking, soul-stirring, thought-provoking, and thoroughly queer-affirming.

We encounter Jason Large, a closeted married father taking the first steps to come out: "I'm just a normal, hard-working guy, knowing deep down that I want something very

different now." Another father, Marc Anders, explains to his twelve-year-old son over a game of miniature golf how he can be married to the boy's mom and still have a male lover, and realizes his son is more nonchalant about it than he could have imagined. A prison convict finds peace behind bars by being open about his sexuality, and a young man joins a Pennsylvania Dutch enclave in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to curb his desires. We hear from a Latino man, a man of Native American and Scottish descent, and a pair of Asian American teenage boys. Nobody has an easy story; even the men with the happiest lives achieve their happiness through complex decisions.

Older men relate stories of conflict and hard knocks, as when Woody Glenn, co-founder of the Boston Bisexual Resource Center, tells of getting "thrown out of the Gay Pride director's office for suggesting that there should be a bi contingent in the parade." Younger men have the same fears as any

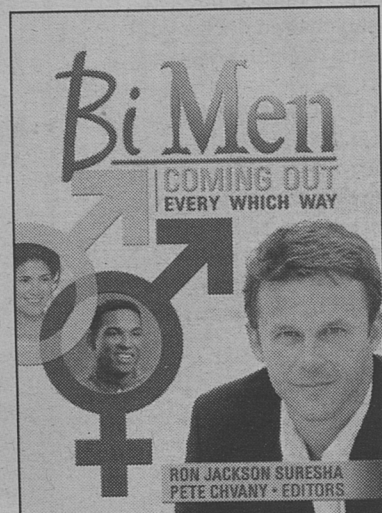
young people, in addition to questions about their sexuality; to quote one, "I'm scared about graduating ... I'm afraid I won't be accepted." Most seem to agree that, while much work has been done to make bisexuality understood and accepted, elements of resistance continue both in the queer community and in mainstream media and culture.

Two essays are written by women. One, by Julz, is a portrait of bi women who love bi men: "We touch on a profound sense of being understood by bi men in a way that most

monosexuals can't." The other, by Raven Davies, is an overview of "slash fan-fiction," a sexually-oriented science fiction subgenre, usually written by female fans, that puts otherwise hetero male characters in erotic situations ("Kirk / Spock are a favorite pairing"). Also included is an FTM transie, well-known author Patrick Califia, whose essay "Life Among the Monosexuals" details his life pushing the boundaries of sexual identity in the context of the genderqueer and kink communities. While he has a hellacious story to tell, having identified as a bi feminist dyke in the early days, he also sounds one of the most tender notes in the book: "I feel happier and more grounded as a bisexual because it brings me closer to having more compassion for all human beings and bodies. I can feel the frailty and bliss of all flesh. ... I can see people more clearly if I have not first lined them up in one gender category or the other."

I think of a friend who once described the queer teenagers she counseled in Maine. "Their sexual identity is like this," she said, as she stood with flexed knees, shifting her weight back and forth like a balancing surfer. Or like someone shifting back and forth on the Kinsey scale: fluid, not nailed down, comfortable with change. Indeed, *Bi Men: Coming Out Every Which Way* is dedicated to Alfred C. Kinsey, "who steadfastly dedicated himself to listening to and telling the story of the bisexual man."

Perhaps this book's greatest gift to the community is its illumination of the lives of men whose sexual identities are not pinned to points on a scale, not by social pressure, not by political expediency, not by fear. Like the spectrum of colors thrown on a bare wall by a crystal, a person's sexuality may shift and shimmer with time, and it's always the same person, and it's always gorgeous. ▼



**Bi Men: Coming Out Every Which Way.** Ron Jackson Suresha and Pete Chvany, PhD, Editors. Harrington Park Press 2005, Binghamton, NY. 329 Pages Soft Cover. \$19.95.

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