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# The Bedtrick: Tales of Sex and Masquerade (Worlds of Desire: The Chicago Series on Sexuality, Gender, and Culture)

*Wendy Doniger*

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"Somehow I woke up one day and found myself in bed with a stranger." Meant literally or figuratively, this statement describes one of the best-known plots in world mythology and popular storytelling. In a tour that runs from Shakespeare to Hollywood and from Abraham Lincoln to Casanova, the erudite and irrepressible Wendy Doniger shows us the variety, danger, and allure of the "bedtrick," or what it means to wake up with a stranger.

*The Bedtrick* brings together hundreds of stories from all over the world, from the earliest recorded Hindu and Hebrew texts to the latest item in the *Weekly World News*, to show the hilariously convoluted sexual scrapes that people manage to get themselves into and out of. Here you will find wives who accidentally commit adultery with their own husbands. You will read Lincoln's truly terrible poem about a bedtrick. You will learn that in Hong Kong the film *The Crying Game* was retitled *Oh No! My Girlfriend Has a Penis*. And that President Clinton was not the first man to be identified by an idiosyncratic organ.

At the bottom of these wonderful stories, ancient myths, and historical anecdotes lie the dynamics of sex and gender, power and identity. Why can't people tell the difference in the dark? Can love always tell the difference between one lover and another? And what kind of truth does sex tell? Funny, sexy, and engaging, *The Bedtrick* is a masterful work of energetic storytelling and dazzling scholarship. Give it to your spouse *and* your lover.

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