

JEALOUSY IN THE CROSS-SEX FRIENDSHIP

SHIRLAN A. WILLIAMS

Department of Communication, University of South Florida,
Tampa, Florida, USA

This article concerns jealousy in a monogamous heterosexual relationship. Traditional interpersonal research often uses interviews and surveys to understand and interpret how jealousy affects the connections between individuals. I use narrative to help explicate the process of jealousy, responses to jealousy, and how a relationship survives it. Rather than establish delimiting clear-cut terms and definitions, my story shows the adversarial and conflicting interactions between a couple when one is jealous and the other is accused of having a romantic relationship with his opposite-sex friend.

Designed to shelter a relationship from intruders, jealousy “turns homes that might be sanctuaries of love into hells of discord and hate” (Buss, 2000, p. 28). I speculate that the threat of losing a loved one to another party is traumatic. Because jealousy flourishes when love is a factor, the at-risk partner becomes jealous and reacts in uncharacteristic ways. Being attached and devoted to someone, viewing that person as more than a sexual desire, and recognizing that person as one’s kin are sufficient to make one intolerant of rivalry or unfaithfulness or even a perception of the two. Rivalry and unfaithfulness are threats to one’s identity and result in mental or emotional trauma.

The belief that one is at risk of losing one’s partner is traumatizing, but the knowledge that jealousy is an ugly sin adds to that trauma—especially for one who subscribes to and internalizes the social and religious ideals that view jealousy as a negative emotion that one should be ashamed of exhibiting at any point.

Received 1 August 2004; accepted 4 April 2005.

Special thanks to Arthur P. Bochner, Robin Boylorn, Julie Childers, and Shane Moreman for their many revisions and useful feedback.

Address correspondence to Shirlan A. Williams, Department of Communication, 4202 East Fowler Avenue, CIS 1040, Tampa, FL 33620-7800, USA. E-mail: sawilli7@mail.usf.edu

In the following narrative, I show that not even a strong and solid relationship is immune from jealousy. Many relationships wither under the pressure and conflicts jealousy provokes, while others survive. I bare testimony to the effects of jealousy on a romantic heterosexual relationship—in particular, the effects of jealousy incited and complicated by a cross-sex friendship.

Falling in Love—All Is Well

Every girl remembers falling in love. She remembers the first sighting, the flutter in her heart, the warmth on her cheeks, and a vision of her waltzing down the aisle to a happily ever after if her love is reciprocated.

When I fell in love, I was one of those girls. I remember the first time I saw Marlon standing with his friends—one of whom who happened to be my friend, Ryan. I remember picking Marlon out in the crowd. It was easy because he was the handsomest of the group. He was about 6 feet tall, with a lean athletic body, brown skinned with almond eyes, a low haircut, and a round innocent face that said “Take me home with you.” Our eyes melted briefly before I reluctantly pulled away. I went over to say hi to Ryan after he caught me trying to escape and called me over. That’s how Marlon and I were introduced. And almost 12 years later today, I still remember what he was wearing—blue jeans and a white T-shirt which irreverently read “Same shit. Different Island. Grenada, W.I.”

Marlon pursued me relentlessly after that day. Although I pretended to resist, I reveled in the attention. His charm and wit quickly won me over. Consequently, the rest of the world melted away. Only the two of us existed in each other. Our friends dwindled because we had no room for them in our budding romance. We did everything together. You couldn’t say Marlon’s name without mentioning mine, and vice versa. Over time, we became each other’s best friends.

The time eventually came, however, when life took the two of us along different paths—twice actually. The first time, he went away to college in Texas. I stayed at home in Grenada. At his request, I followed him to Texas a year later and we became each other’s only friend again. Three years later, I went away to graduate school more than 300 miles away from him. Each of those

times we were apart, we met new people and forged new friendships outside our relationship. None of these friendships caused conflict in our relationship until *she* came along.

Finding Out

I'd been away for almost 4 months before I visited Marlon in Texas. When I got to the apartment we had shared for 3 years, I kissed and hugged him, dropped my bag, and immediately raced into the bedroom. Nothing had changed. My favorite ivory satin sheets and light blue cotton bedspread graced the queen-sized bed. Jammed in one corner of the bedroom was Marlon's desk; on his desk sat his computer. Out of habit, I sat at the computer to check my e-mail. I went to www.hotmail.com and typed "s" into the login area. Auto complete showed me two usernames with "s" as the first letter, mine and someone else's I had never seen before. I stared at the name, trying to think if I knew of anyone whose username started with an "s."

Without turning away from the screen, I asked Marlon about the username with a curious voice, not threatening, not accusatory. Sitting on the bed beside the computer desk, Marlon responded very matter-of-factly, not threatened, not accused. "This girl. She wanted to check her e-mail."

I turned to look at him. "Why did she want to check it in here? Couldn't she check her e-mail somewhere else? Like not in this room?" I asked, irritated. I turned back to the screen and moved the cursor from my name to hers. My name was very direct, no hidden meanings, no warped nuances. Her name was silly, I thought—warped with triviality. My heart was racing, I felt uneasy. This was not good.

"Don't bring any woman in our bedroom ever again," I demanded.

Marlon shifted. He anxiously replied that he had done nothing wrong. I couldn't tell if he was innocent or if he was playing dumb. "Why are you acting so jealous?" Marlon asked. His voice, rather than lowering and being soothing, began to rise and sounded tense. "We've always had people in our bedroom checking their e-mails."

Marlon was right. Of course we had people in our bedroom checking their e-mails. The computer was located in the bedroom

and often was the center of conversation with our friends. We were two of the few people in our circle of friends who owned a computer. Therefore, it became normal for our computer-less friends to come to our apartment to check their e-mails. Sometimes they would want to show us a funny Web site or pictures they had put on a personal Web page. Until then, its location in the bedroom had never been a problem.

"I know this. But usually they are people with whom we are both acquainted. They are people that know that you and I are a couple. I don't know that girl," I remarked, "and what is this 'person's' real name anyway?" I said her login name with a frown.

"Joanne."

I scanned my mind for the name Joanne. Have I met a Joanne? I turned to the computer screen and felt the tension rise. I continued to interrogate. "How did you two meet?"

He began an explanation that sounded too easy, almost scripted. "The first time we met she was with another girl. I gave them a ride home. We really started talking a few weeks later. I came from a meeting with my graduate committee. They had asked for yet another revision of my thesis. I was so stressed out that I just needed a hug or someone to talk with. She happened to be the first person I saw. Out of this, we became friends."

Not completely satisfied with Marlon's explanation, I chose my name, and not hers, in the login area. I skimmed through my e-mails, trying to forget the conversation. While I was reading the e-mails, the phone rang. I answered. It was her. In a small voice, she pleasantly greeted and asked, "Hello, may I speak to Marlon? This is Joanne."

"It's Joanne," I repeated out loud. Marlon, who was lying on the couch, mouthed the words "Tell her I am not here."

"Tell her yourself," I mouthed back. I handed him the phone and walked to the other room. A few minutes later, he came to find me. "So she is calling you too, huh? You gave her your number. What does she want from you?"

"She got my number from the directory. Why are you asking all these questions? Am I not allowed to have friends?" My shoulders tensed. He was trying to downplay this situation by acting as if I was being controlling. To me, whether he could have friends or not was not the issue.

“I never said that you couldn’t have friends. It’s just that I don’t know this girl. I trust you but I don’t trust her.”

“She thinks I am a nice person to talk with.” His response came honestly, but I was still angry and hurt that the situation with Joanne had occurred at all.

“I guess she does. What do you have to talk about with her?”

“She thinks I am funny. She laughs at my jokes. Plus, we both like listening to each other’s stories. You know how I like stories.”

He was right. Marlon is the type of guy who always needs an audience. Lately, I have lost interest in his jokes and stories because I have heard them numerous times.

The part of me that knew Marlon well was the part of me that wanted to believe him. He was different from other guys I knew. Women admired him for his ability to be faithful, and men taunted him for being romantically involved with one woman for so many years. “Wouldn’t you like to experience something different or rather someone different? Nothing is wrong with having more than one woman. Every man cheats at least once in his life,” they had said. I heard what they told him, and I wondered if he had begun to hear them too.

Discord

I started to become suspicious of Marlon. All of the elements Bringle (1991) described of suspicious jealousy played out in my relationship with Marlon. I was angry most of the time, scared of losing him, anxious, and doubtful of his every move. Every time he talked to Joanne or I suspected that he did, I made a big deal about it and stressed that my suspicions were confirmed.

I was threatened by Marlon’s new relationship. I became a different person in reaction to his new friend. I found myself wanting to and then doing things I thought I would never do. For example, I started cracking his passwords to his e-mail address. I checked his mail to see if Joanne wrote him. One night, as Marlon made dinner, I opened his instant messenger and she was online. I pretended that I was Marlon and chatted with her. I threw out flirty lines to see what she would say. She gave away nothing. Her conversation was chitchat between good friends. I showed her how to get the heart, flower, and lips emoticons. I baited her to see what she would tell me, to see if she

would send me the heart as love, the flowers as flirting, and the lips as kisses. She didn't say she loved me, she didn't send me flowers, and she didn't send kisses. I chatted and chatted but nothing. In response to the emoticons, she told me she was grateful I had shown her how to find them. By that point, I became so intent on nailing Marlon for cheating, and so focused on the computer screen, that I didn't see or hear him come into the bedroom. "What are you doing?" he asked, startling me. I wanted to vanish. My shoulders slumped, my head dropped, my stomach bulged from slouching. I didn't want Marlon to know that I was still insecure about his new friendship; nor did I want him to see that I didn't trust him.

When I told him that I was chatting with Joanne, he went ballistic and then lectured me about privacy and trust issues—something that was lost on me. I was too intent on confirming my suspicions.

When I couldn't bait Joanne through IM, I resorted to checking Marlon's cell phone records. She called him—many times.

I questioned him. "Why is she calling your cell phone? She calls you from 7 a.m. to 3 a.m.?"

"Shirlan, why should the time she calls me be so important?" he asked nonchalantly. He was resisting being baited for a fight. He sat on the couch, looking at a television that was not on.

In my mind, friends do not call each other before 8 a.m. and after 11 p.m. unless it is an emergency. She wasn't ill. She didn't need a ride. I looked at the blank television screen as well. I shared my concern with Marlon, who promised that he would ask Joanne not to call him during the hours in question. He looked drained—all the fight gone out of him. He looked around for the remote control, found it, and turned on the television. I walked out of the room.

After Marlon's promise, I pushed Joanne to the back of my mind and vowed to work on returning our relationship to the way it used to be—just the two of us. In spite of my effort, Joanne resurfaced. Marlon and I were standing outside our apartment when a woman passed and waved at him, failing to acknowledge me. My suspicious mind started to make connections. I had never seen this woman before. Could this be Joanne? As soon as she was out of earshot, I asked Marlon, "Who is that girl?"

"That's Joanne."

I took a deep breath, concentrated on not yelling, and said smoothly and calmly, "Oh, so that's the Joanne." I took another breath and said, "This is not the way friends act. If the two of you are 'just friends,' she would have come and introduced herself to me. I am sure she knows that I am your fiancée." That was the last piece of evidence I needed. I was convinced that Marlon and Joanne were not "just friends." In my mind, a heterosexual male-female friendship cannot stay platonic. He was cheating on us—on our relationship.

"I don't know why she didn't come over, Shirlan, but the girl and I are just friends."

"I am confused. Just help me understand what the hell is going on between you and this girl," I demanded. "You know what, Marlon? Get that girl out of our lives if you want me in yours."

"Shirlan, what do you want from me? You asked me to stop talking to the girl after 11 p.m. I stopped."

"Did you tell her I wanted the late night phone conversations to stop?"

"No, Shirlan. I don't answer the phone when she calls," he replied cautiously.

"Why didn't you tell her what I said? Are you afraid that you'll hurt her?" I said. Secretly I was grateful that Marlon didn't reveal to Joanne that I didn't want her calling him. My mind spun out of control as I thought of my own humiliation when others would find out. I didn't want to be seen as the jealous fiancée. I didn't want to be stigmatized. This was my private battle.

Although I was grateful to Marlon for not conveying my request to Joanne, I hated Marlon at that moment. Why did he have to bring Joanne into our relationship? Why was he unwilling to end their friendship? I hated the way I was reacting to their friendship. I hated myself for behaving like a jealous fiancée. I fumed as I considered his words. Was I jealous because I was not his only friend? I knew that the situation was much more complicated than he was admitting. Our fight was more than about just another friend. It was about control, boundaries, and commitment. What's more, Joanne's gender complexified the jealousy—and Marlon's refusal to admit to the gender complexity exasperated me.

I was not prepared for the turmoil Joanne's advent caused. No one told me that relationships are not like what I have read in romance novels. No one told me about the trials a relationship

may undergo from the interaction of outside and internal forces that will pull at its threads until its elasticity wears out. No one told me that although healing is possible, it will always continue to hurt—that the pain never really goes away but rather lies dormant in the shadows of the relationship, waiting to erupt.

Retribution

In an empirical study designed to examine a variety of responses to jealousy, reactive retribution was found to be a major coping strategy (Bryson, 1991). The jealous person in the “eternal triangle” (Buss, 2000) seeks revenge, retribution, and getting involved with others. The core components of this strategy articulated by the participants were “flirt or go out with other people,” “do something to get even,” “do more than my partner has done and tell him/her about it,” and “do something to make my partner jealous” (Bryson, 1991; Buss, 2000).

During that turbulent period in my relationship, I sought heterosexual cross-sex friendships of my own as revenge—every one of them proved that heterosexual cross-sex friendships were challenging. I wanted Marlon to feel what I was feeling—the anxiety from jealousy that settled in the pit of my stomach and threatened to erode my sanity and my relationship. I wanted revenge. I thought that the only way to get it was to make myself independent and possibly begin to notice other men (Baumgart, 1990).

I desired to show Marlon that I was sufficiently high in mate value, that I was capable of attracting desirable, alternate men (Buss, 2000). I stopped wearing my engagement ring—a move that suggested that I was on the market. For a while, I ditched my thick-lens glasses. I bought gray contact lenses that the 16-year-old daughter of a JC Penney’s sales associate convinced me would match my dark skin tone. I believed her because my grandmother had gray eyes and we were about the same skin tone—she was gorgeous. To my surprise, when the lenses arrived in the mail and I tried them, they gave my pupils a turquoise hue. My eyes looked ghostly beautiful—scary and mesmerizing, mysteriously sexy—a look that sent many men my way.

It was during that time I learned the art of shopping for the right makeup and, yes, applying it. I even made the extra effort to put my hair in styles other than my typical, old ponytail.

I no longer restricted my wardrobe to blue jeans and T-shirts. I bought and wore new curve-flattering clothing which Marlon looked at disapprovingly. Low-cut blouses and push-up bras were en vogue. I flaunted and flirted. I quickly learned that my cleavage attracted and enthralled some men and even a few women.

“Are those your real breasts?” one guy asked.

“Yes,” I replied, glad for the attention. He expressed his desire to touch them—to be “certain”! He said he was a “breast connoisseur.” Sexual harassment? No. He looked innocent and sweet. His eyes revealed curiosity. Intrigue. I liked him. No, he didn’t get to touch. We talked. He was surprised that I was a Grenadian. “I didn’t look like one,” he said.

“What does a Grenadian look like?” I asked. He didn’t articulate. “I just know that you don’t look like one. I am Barbadian,” he shared. Wonderful. I loved island men. I liked him.

We met again 2 weeks later at a house party. When I first walked in, he was standing in a corner sipping what looked like a rum and coke. My eyes took all of him in with one glance. He was casually dressed in dark jeans and a tan shirt. Perfect. Marlon was away for the weekend, and I was looking hot with my knee-high boots, short skirt, and tight-fitting, cleavage-revealing, midrib top. We made brief eye contact before I walked purposefully to the bar to drink and socialize with my drinking buddies. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw him walking toward me. He sought me out. I was delighted. A silly grin raised its head for a brief moment before I regained my composure and stifled it. “How are you?” he asked.

“I am OK. How are you?”

“I am well. I am trying to enjoy myself,” he said. “Who are you here with? Where is your boyfriend?”

“I am here by my lonesome self. My fiancé is out of town.” His face lit up.

“My girlfriend is out of town too.” He was perfect and safe because he had a girlfriend, I thought. Our conversation halted when a young man whom I guessed was one of his friends came over to talk with him. I excused myself and left for the dance floor. I felt his eyes burning into my back. A warm fuzzy feeling surfaced in my stomach.

With the alcohol already taking its toll on me, I started to dance to the music. My girlfriends and I formed a circle and we

took turns experimenting with the art of erotic gyrating. Almost everyone at the party was looking at us. He was looking at me.

When the circle broke up, he came over and asked, "May I have the pleasure of this dance?"

"Yes," I said. We danced. Our bodies moved in sync to the Caribbean rhythms that filled the room.

"By the way, what is your name?" he asked. It dawned on me that we did not know each other's names.

"Shirlan. What's yours?"

"Andrew." I didn't care much for his name but what the heck, I was only dancing with the guy.

We danced all night, only taking drink breaks. The next day, we were the talk of the block. There was much speculation about our "relationship." Apparently, our sweaty clothing stained the wall we were jammed against while dancing in the overcrowded room. I was too intoxicated to remember. I was only having fun.

Andrew and I ran into each other several times after that night. We shared phone numbers, e-mails, and IM screen names. We communicated frequently, especially via IM and e-mails. He had reservations about calling me because he didn't want to create "tension" in my home. "Marlon will not have a problem with a guy calling me," I assured him. "He has a woman friend who calls him all the time."

"And you are not upset about that?" he asked.

"What can I do? He won't stop her from calling even though I want him to," I responded.

In spite of my reassurance that Marlon was okay with a guy calling me, Andrew never called my apartment. When he didn't see me online for a while, he called my girlfriend to ask her how I was doing. He expressed his concern for me because the rumor that we were sleeping with each other had taken root and was sprouting.

Andrew and I were not lovers, but the potential was there. It was a daunting task to keep my relationship with him from becoming intimate. He was a desirable man, and we were physically attracted to each other. It took my moral upbringing and my determination to be that way to resist getting romantically involved with him. The fact that Andrew also had a girlfriend made it easier for me to resist him. The resistance was not reciprocal, though. Andrew tried his best to get me into his bed. He made some

convincing cases, but I didn't take the bait because I still considered Marlon's feelings. It was my desire to only make him jealous, not to cheat on him.

I used the rumors to my advantage at first. It was the perfect opening to reveal to Marlon that another man found me desirable. "Baby," I said one day, "I don't want you to hear it on the streets—or be the last to know. Remember I told you that I danced with a guy at the party I went to a while back?"

"Yes," Marlon replied.

"Well, people are saying that I am cheating on you with him," I stated, waiting for him to explode.

"So why would people think that? You must have given them a reason to say something like that," he retorted.

"Baby, I just danced with the guy," I shouted. "Why are you angry?"

"Because people shouldn't have a reason to talk about you if there is no truth to it," he shouted back.

"This is exactly how I feel about you and Joanne. Didn't you say that the two of you are just friends? Andrew and I are just friends too." My victory felt sweet. I succeeded in getting a jealous response from Marlon. I hoped at last he knew what it felt like for me.

The boundaries between friends and lovers will always be difficult to define. Because of my experience with this type of friendship, it was difficult to give the Marlon I knew—faithful and loyal—the benefit of the doubt. I wanted to believe that Marlon and Joanne were "just friends," but I succumbed to the view that it was almost impossible for a man and a woman to have a platonic relationship. For heterosexuals, cross-sex friendships without intimacy are not as common as same-sex friendships (Hinde, 1997) because they do not meet normative expectations. Among the possible reasons for their rarity is probably the hostile social pressure that heterosexual cross-sex friendships encounter. Not only are they seen as threatening by existing partners, but also they are constrained by conventions and norms in which these cross-sex relationships are seen as inevitably or potentially sexual (Hinde, 1997).

O'Meara (1989) defines heterosexual cross-sex friendship as a "nonromantic, nonfamilial personal relationship between a man and a woman. The relationship is nonromantic in the sense that the actors involved purposefully dissociate its function from

courtship rites. Nonromantic doesn't mean, however, that sexuality and passion are necessarily absent from the relationship" (p. 526). In some people's eyes, heterosexual cross-sex relationships inevitably develop into romantic relationships (Werking, 1997).

Heterosexual cross-sex relationships can only fall into two categories: friendship, where exclusivity and sexual contact are replaced by a more purist attraction of spirit (Werking, 1997), and the potentially romantic relationship, where feelings of sexual attraction may smolder and expectations of eventual exclusivity may be fostered (Rawlins, 1982). In one study, females reported that the primary benefit was the opportunity to engage in a more masculine interaction style. Men saw the benefit as a precursor to romance—an opportunity for intimacy, nurturing, and emotional support (Rawlins, 1994).

Heterosexuals involved in cross-sex friendships should encourage a positive relationship between spouses and friends, manage public scrutiny of the cross-sex friendship by setting its parameters, and talk about the friendship with their spouses. Overall, the situation demands trust and understanding to prevent jealousy (Werking, 1997), which results from the perception of a threat to one's romantic relationship (White & Mullen, 1989; Aune & Comstock, 1997) and most commonly stems from the perception of a romantic involvement between's one partner and a real or imaginary rival. The underlying theme is a perceived loss of control over another person's feelings (Duck, 1986; Aune & Comstock, 1997). Added to that is a perceived loss of control and predictability in the relationship. The inability to predict events in the relationship impedes one's feelings of well-being and hope (Seligman, 1975, cited in Harvey, 2000). In my case, I was losing control.

Reflections

According to Bochner (2002), "Human life is storied life. . . . Sometimes we find ourselves in stories we would rather not be living. . . . Stories are the narrative frames within which we make our experiences meaningful" (p. 73). This account is my story as I perceived my life happening during that period. It is a retrospective and introspective analysis of what happened, how I read it, and what made me read it that way. My narrative is not a way to achieve

closure. Rather, it is my attempt to add to the literature on jealousy, loss, and trauma—to show that intense jealousy is a response to trauma caused by perceived or real loss of a loved one and that the reactions to jealousy can be traumatic in themselves when one realizes that one is acting in uncharacteristic ways. How could one achieve closure from such a traumatic experience? In fact, like the happily ever after ideology that girls learn, closure is an illusion. It never happens. One can forgive, one can explore new aspects of a relationship, one may even become better at managing one's relationship, but closure is unattainable. It is a concept that people fall in love with because they feel it is the "good" thing to do. In contrast to jealousy, it is positive.

A common theme in the literature is the vilification of jealousy as a negative emotion that one must protect oneself from at all cost. Beecher and Beecher (1971) define jealousy as a kind of overall condition involving individuals fundamentally in their relationship with those around them. Jealousy, these authors state, distorts a person's perception of the world in which he or she is functioning. In short, the jealous individual is more or less "out of his [or her] mind." Jealousy is a comprehensive alteration of the way one sees and acts. For example, when one sees a jealous person, he or she must not think of it as a mere discomfort of that person's feelings. One must see the jealous person as being "caught in a bind that restricts and redirects—distorts and blackens—all that he or she is doing. A jealous individual or any disturbed individual is destroyed from only inside himself" (Beecher & Beecher, 1971, p. 2). "The mature, self-reliant, self-sufficient, responsible person has little or no need to make jealous comparisons—to destroy, to sabotage, blackmail, exploit, lie, cheat, or otherwise torment and tear down those around him" or her (p. 3). The virus of jealous competition destroys a person's inner self. Its murderous ambivalence vacillating between love and hate, which is directed only toward one's nearest and dearest, is perplexing and tormenting, and the person who feels it is unable to let it go (Baumgart, 1990). There is a need to talk about it, the need to repeatedly bring up one's own sufferings and the torture the other is allegedly inflicting—to receive confirmation that jealousy is justified and to be listened to in one's torment. Jealousy becomes the main preoccupation. It greedily ingests what it needs for its continued existence and devours everything else that once was worthwhile

in the life of the afflicted individual—even and especially her or his self-image (Baumgart, 1990).

Conclusion

In sum, jealousy is slow to gain legitimacy as a “normal” human reaction to a threatening or potentially threatening force. Heterosexual cross-sex friendship, the advent or inclusion of a third party, is often the cause of jealousy. Heterosexual cross-sex friendship spurs jealous episodes especially if the other partner does not sanction it. Such relationships are subject to interrogation because they break the cultural frames which define normal acceptable friendships, and according to Goffman (1974) “all frames involve expectation of a normative kind” (p. 345). More than 2 years have passed since Joanne came into Marlon’s life and subsequently into mine. I made a conscious effort to reframe Marlon’s relationship with her. Because Marlon would not adhere to my wishes to get Joanne out of our lives, I had to accept that she and Marlon may always be “friends” and am learning not to view her as a threat to our relationship. I try to convince myself that maybe a heterosexual man and a heterosexual woman can be platonic friends.

It is easy to say that partners should establish boundaries in their relationships, but at the same time relationships are dynamic, and part of our existence as humans requires that we frequently forge new ones. Therefore, boundaries may shift, and may be tested. My boundaries are still shifting and are still being tested. Therefore, this story has no end. It evolves with time. What if jealousy comes home again?

References

- Aune, K. S. & Comstock, J. (1997). Effect of relationship length on the experience, expression, and perceived appropriateness of jealousy. *Journal of Social Psychology, 137*, 23–31.
- Baumgart, H. (1990). *Jealousy: Experiences and solutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Beecher, M. & Beecher, W. (1971). *The mark of cain: The anatomy of jealousy*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Bochner, A. P. (2002). Perspectives on inquiry III: The moral of stories. In M. Knapp & J. Daly (Eds.), *Handbook of interpersonal communication* (3rd ed., pp. 73–100). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Bringle, R. G. (1991). Psychological aspects of jealousy: A transactional model. In Peter Salovey (Ed.), *The psychology of jealousy and envy*, (pp. 103–131). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Bryson, J. B. (1991). Modes of responses to jealousy-evoking situations. In P. Salovey (Ed.), *The psychology of jealousy and envy* (pp. 178–207). New York: Guilford Press.
- Buss, D. M. (2000). *The dangerous passion: Why jealousy is as necessary as love and sex*. New York: Free Press.
- Duck, S. (1986). *Human relationships: An introduction to social psychology*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Harvey, J. H. (2000). *Give sorrow words: Perspectives on loss and trauma*. Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel.
- Hinde, R. A. (1997). *Relationships: A dialectical perspective*. London: Psychology Press.
- O'Meara, J. D. (1989). Cross-sex friendships: Four basic challenges of an ignored relationship. *Sex Roles*, 21, 525–543.
- Rawlins, W. K. (1982). Cross-sex friendship and the communicative management of sex role expectations. *Communication Quarterly*, 30, 343–352.
- Rawlins, W. K. (1994). *Friendship matters: Communication, dialectics, and the life course*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Werking, K. (1997). *We're just good friends: Women and men in nonromantic relationships*. New York: Guilford Press.
- White, G. L. & Mullen, P. E. (1989). *Jealousy: Theory, research, and clinical strategies*. New York: Guilford Press.

Shirlan A. Williams is a doctoral candidate in communication at the University of South Florida. Her research interests include communication between romantic partners, friends, and family and the communication of the identity of mothers working in academe.