



## Untangling the Knot: Queer Voices on Marriage, Relationships & Identity (OpenBook)

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*Untangling the Knot: Marriage, Relationships & Identity*, an anthology of essays and creative nonfiction, delves past the mainstream focus on marriage equality?beyond the knot? to examine the broad scope of issues facing members of the LGBTQ community. The collection sheds light on what marriage equality actually means for queer communities. By confronting the concept of tradition through personal discourse, this volume seeks to create conversation amongst the diverse members of the LGBTQ community and their straight allies to prompt a larger, grander, and more realistic vision of what marriage equality really means for those living in the United States. *Untangling the Knot: Marriage, Relationships & Identity* includes the voices of many individuals who are underrepresented in the modern discourse surrounding LGBTQ rights, and these unique perspectives may change the direction of that conversation for good.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

*Untangling the Knot: Queer Voices on Marriage, Relationships and Identity* assembles pieces from diverse contributors, college professors and blue-collar workers, some established writers and some never before published. Edited by Carter Sickels (*The Evening Hour*), these extremely sharp essays offer a startling array of perspectives on the fight for same-sex marriage in the United States, rendering a deceptively simple concept--that the needs of the LGBTQ community range far beyond marriage--fully and feelingly. Published as the Supreme Court agrees to hear arguments about same-sex marriage on a nationwide level, Untangling the Knot is profoundly eye opening, even for readers well informed on the subject. Essays cover the reasons why marriage is important to some members of LGBTQ communities, addressing questions of medical decision-making, finances and insurance, child rearing, equality. Others protest what Ben Anderson-Nathe calls a "rhetoric of sameness": the argument for marriage rights based on the idea that queer families are just like straight ones. Jeanne Cordova illustrates why choosing a single issue is damning for a movement. Joseph Nicholas DeFilippis writes that the continuing assumption that marriage is the highest form of family does a disservice bigger than the queer community, affecting straight people as well. Several contributors argue against legal rights, benefits and protections being tied to marriage at all. Some suggest better uses for organizational resources: homelessness, health care, anti-discrimination, and aid to trans people, the poor and queer people of color. With Sickels's synthesizing introduction, these sympathetic, well-informed essays show that the fight for same-sex marriage is deeply complex and only one issue in the fight for inclusiveness and equality.

(Julia Jenkins *Shelf Awareness*)

#### Review

"There is no denying the debate surrounding marriage equality and what it means for LGBTQ families is complex and layered with varying interpretations. *Untangling the Knot* shares with readers diverse voices and views of how marriage both helps and hinders the LGBTQ civil rights movement." – Ryan K. Sallans, author of *Second Son: Transitioning Toward My Destiny, Life and Love*

(Ryan K. Sallans)

"This book's mix of viewpoints demonstrates the complexity of the defining struggle of gay rights in our time, showing that gay marriage is not the monolith that political expedience often makes it seem. These writers speak with passion about love, law, loss, generational differences, and identity. This is an urgent and timely book." ?Andrew Solomon, author of *Far from the Tree: Parents, Children and the Search for Identity* and *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression*

(Andrew Solomon)

"Moving and heartfelt, *Untangling the Knot* is a validating reality check for every queer activist who has been pushed to the margins for challenging the tidy and normalized sound bites about marriage. Talented storytellers with remarkably diverse identities and perspectives are reclaiming the pressing issues that have been masked by mainstream marriage fever." ?Abigail Garner, author of *Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is*

(Abigail Garner)

"*Untangling the Knot* is a valuable contribution not only to discussions of same-sex marriage but also to debates about priorities for the LGBTQ movement and indeed for all movements for social change. The collection is a joy to read and fruitful to contemplate." - Amy Hoffman, author of *Lies About My Family* and editor in chief of *Women's Review of Books*

(Amy Hoffman)

## About the Author

Carter Sickels is the author of the novel *The Evening Hour*, a finalist for the 2013 Oregon Book Award, the Lambda Literary Debut Fiction Award, and the Publishing Triangle Debut Fiction Award. He is the recipient of the 2013 Lambda Literary Emerging Writer Award, a project grant from RACC, and an NEA Fellowship to the Hambidge Center for the Arts. His short stories and literary essays have appeared in a broad range of periodicals and anthologies, from *Appalachian Heritage* to *The Collection: Short Fiction from the Transgender Vanguard*. He's been awarded fellowships or scholarships to Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, the Sewanee Writers' Conference, the MacDowell Colony, and VCCA. He teaches in low-residency MFA programs at West Virginia Wesleyan University and Eastern Oregon University. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

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