

Queerology: A Podcast on Belief and Being

Episode 37 – Tina Alexis Allen

Transcript

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Hey, friends. This is Matthias Roberts, and you're listening to Queerology, a podcast on belief and being. This is Episode 37.

Tina: And I think what the gift for me is I don't compartmentalize my father. He wasn't a holy man over here and snorting poppers with me over here at the club. He's one guy. He's consolidated to me, and that's a great gift.

Matthias: Tina Alexis Allen is an actress, a playwright, and an author. Her new memoir, *Hiding Out, A Memoir Of Drugs, Deception, and Double Lives*, releases today, as in right now it's out. It is a book ... I got this book a few months ago and spent all of New Years Eve actually just flying through it, because I couldn't put it down. I will say, it is, for everyone who's rushing to go pick it up, it is an incredibly explicit book, so just be aware of that, but the story is wild. It is a story of a young girl growing up in an authoritarian family, realizing that she's gay, and then through a process, and Tina gets into this a little bit, because we find all this out in the first couple chapters ... We find out that her dad, who is an extremely religious, authoritarian, Catholic man, is gay also. It launches them into this wild adventure. Tina gets into it, so I won't spoil it all, but it's wild.

Tina, she is a breakout star in WGN's hit series, *Outsiders*. She has written and performed multiple plays, one of which, *The Breakup Notebook*, she was nominated for a GLAAD Award, alongside Jane Lynch. She starred in and produced the *Slamdance Jury Prize* film, *Phantom Pain*, and then played opposite Theresa Russell in the 2014 feature film, *Moving Mountains*. Tina grew up the youngest of 13 kids in a Catholic family. She was a tomboy at heart, went to school on a basketball scholarship, worked in the fashion industry after that, and then decided to give all that up and become an actress.

This conversation with her is just lovely. We talk about, of course, her new book and then the impact that growing up in this world of secrets, and deception, and then the double life that her and her father started kind of living together, the impact that all of that has had on her faith and kind of where she is now. I'm so excited about this. Let's go ahead and dive in. Tina, good morning.

Tina: Good morning, Matthias. How are you?

Matthias: I am well. How are you doing today?

Tina: I am doing great. I am doing great. I just finished a meditation, so I'm all grounded, and centered, and excited to talk with you.

Matthias: That sounds lovely. I wish I had done that right before this. To start, a question that I start every episode with. How do you identify, and then how would you say that your faith has helped form that identity?

Tina: Great question. I would say I am fluid. I am in a long term relationship with a woman, but I've loved men and women. I don't really like labels. Fluid is even, it is what it is, but it's a word that means something. But I think growing up in such a devout and sometimes frankly hypocritical environment, at least that's the way I would assess it now, I didn't know it at the time, there was a lot of wonderful things about having faith in the house, but also there was a lot of hypocrisy. I think that that sort is probably what framed my desire to sort of shy away from labels, because obviously my dad, you know, was complicated and living a life that was complicated. I couldn't even tell you how he'd identify, to be honest, even though I feel I knew him probably better than anyone certainly in my family.

I think as a result, I felt like, "Well, I'm a human being, and I love human beings, and I fall in love with human beings." That's just what works for me. I support all choices and other people's choices to identify as whatever. I just feel that for me I have the ability to fall in love with a person without too much label on them or me.

Matthias: Yeah. I think that labels can feel so constricting. I think especially when you grow up in kind of that, like you mentioned, the hypocrisy of faith, that can be so blatant sometimes. To shy away, that makes so much sense.

Tina: Yeah. I think that's probably framed a bit of my philosophy on marriage too, because I have 12 older brothers and sisters. I learned a lot from them. I learned a lot of things that worked, and I learned some things that didn't. A lot of them got married young, of course, probably to just get the hell out of the house. I don't blame them, to stop taking care of me and my other younger ones in the family, among other reasons they got married, but clearly I'm sure they were like, "There's a better life out there, and it's not as chaotic." But their choices of course reflected their age, and so I watched a lot of marriages fall apart, and people grow, and you know, grow into new marriages, which is beautiful. But all of that childhood stuff I feel like plays a part. I try not to be a result of it, but it couldn't help affecting the framing of my identity and I think things like marriage and other sacraments, if you will.

Matthias: Right. Right. Absolutely. Your new book, Hiding Out, releases today. Congratulations.

Tina: Yes. Yes. I know. It's crazy.

Matthias: It's so exciting.

Tina: It's good crazy. Yeah. It's been a long road.

Matthias: Oh. I bet.

Tina: Of course. Yeah.

Matthias: I bet. Could you maybe start by kind of walking us back into this book? I mean, it starts ... We find out all this stuff in the first chapter, in the first couple chapters, about you, about your dad, and then this huge twist happens. Yeah.

Tina: So, growing up the youngest of 13 kids in a highly devout Catholic family is the world in Chevy Chase, Maryland. My dad had a Catholic travel agency, and so he was, you know, 360 degrees in the world of Catholicism. He was very devoted to the church. I think, in fact, there was a time he really entertained being a priest. I would describe my father as a laymen who acted like a priest. My house was chaotic. He drank a lot. There was other issues. Yeah. I was living basically a secret, many secrets myself, which I won't give them all way, but a lot went on in my childhood, a lot of crazy, wild, some traumatic situations, relationships, if you will.

That affected who I was, but I was with a woman very young, too young, but then I was with another man, and then I was with a woman sort of in my early adult years. My father suspected that. Now, I guess here comes the spoiler. Turn it off if you don't want to hear, for a second, and then come back.

Matthias: It's on the dust jacket, so ...

Tina: Yes. It is. You're right. It is. That's right. The whole back is the scene.

Matthias: Yeah.

Tina: I forgot. I forgot. This is what happens when you're a debut author. You don't know shit. Okay. Basically, my dad took my girlfriend and myself out to dinner at the time, she was much older than I was, and proceeded to I guess kind of out me, like he knew. I don't know how he knew, but he picked up on it. Then he proceeded to say that he had buried his lover in the war, which would have meant before he met my mother, in Jerusalem actually, and he buried his lover in Jerusalem. I believe it was a Palestinian soldier in World War II, and he had fallen in love. Obviously, I was blown out of the water. A, I didn't really like my father very much, to be candid. At that point, he wasn't always a very nice man, despite his faith. He didn't always act very Christian and certainly not to my mother, which I dive into deeply in the book.

It's complicated. Here I became his confidant, and he became mine in this very Catholic family, and we kept each other's secrets. I also bonded with him in a new way, which was lovely, but of course, any adult realizes what I'm saying is also very complicated for an 18 year old to be managing that, so it was intense. I didn't know it. I was moving

1,000 miles a minute, because I was still kind of acting out of my childhood traumas. None of that had been sorted out. Now there was a new layer put on me, and our life got pretty crazy together. You know, we ended up at the clubs, and traveled the world, and sort of were drinking buddies and confidants, and I learned a lot more as time went on. As the book goes on, I start learning other things, Vatican things, Vatican related things, and other secrets.

Matthias: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. I mean, that kind of like ... All of that happens at the beginning of the book, and I feel like even that was like ... When I started reading that, I'm like, "Holy shit. This in itself is a book," and that's the beginning. It just launches you, and your father, and other people into this just kind of ... I think one of the words you used in the book is cinematic. It feels like this almost cinematic journey of just like wow.

Tina: Yeah. It is a wow. I have read some people who, like yourself, got advanced reader copies, so I've already read a few early ... and I've noticed a number of people, more than a number, most people say they have to stop and pause in the book and remind themselves it's not fiction. You know, I guess when it's your life, it's just your life, you know what you know, but as I've gotten older, and I've obviously written this book, and I've worked with this material, you know, for a good 20 years in other platforms, and creative outlets, and psychological outlets, and lots of healing, it's starting to land that it is a lot.

In fact, when I was writing the book, there was things my editor just said, "We have to take out. There's only so much the reader can hold." I know it's a lot, which is one of the reasons I wanted to write it in the voice that I wrote it in, you know, my older voice, and now couch it or over explain it, or try to make you understand why I behaved the way I did. I just wanted to give it the context and let the reader take the journey, because it's so big. You know what I mean? It's just so big, so many layers.

Matthias: Mm-hmm (affirmative). You mention I think at the end of the book how your kind of life in your family felt like kind of a microcosm of the Catholic Church in general with secrets, and authoritarianism, and all this kind of circling stuff that goes into all of that. I think as I hear you talk about this, it feels like you've done so much work to arrive at a place of where you can even work with it. I feel like so many people who listen to this podcast are not exactly the same by any means, because we all have our own stories, but having to do that work to deal with what we thought was normal at the time-

Tina: Absolutely. Yeah. I think, you know, I'd say the main reason I wrote the book was that I did want to be of service. I did feel and do feel an obligation, because I do feel that I'm, as I like to say, cleaned out. You know, I feel like I've been through a bunch of rinse cycles, and it's taken a really long time, but I feel I'm on the other side of it. I do feel that in writing the book I was able to have quite a bit of objectivity, because it's not like I was just sitting down writing this for the first time discovering. You know? It's been a long ... Of course, then it's much easier when you can hold your life in your hand like a piece of putty and be able to pull it around, and shape it, and pull it apart, and not be overwhelmed by it.

Listen. I was really overwhelmed for a long time by it. It's not like I just woke up and I'm here. It was a lot of years of healing and various therapies, but I do feel an obligation now, because what would be the point? You know, they say if you've been given a gift and you don't give it away, it's not a gift. I feel I've been given a gift, you know, through a higher power, through something bigger than myself, yes, with hard work, but also spirit moving through me to heal a lot of stuff. I couldn't have done it alone. There has to be a part of me that's something outside me, something bigger than me. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here today talking with you. I'm grateful, and I want to pay it forward, if I can. So, that's a big reason for me to write the book.

Of course, these opportunities to talk with you are wonderful, because what I would like to say is that as particularly as people who are queer or anyone really who's been through things like coming out, particularly in families that have a different way of thinking or a religion that they're attached to, and that religion doesn't support our lifestyle, those are really challenging things, and you need ... Most people don't want to just write off their family. When trauma happens inside the family ... and trauma can be, "Hey. I came out, and my parent doesn't accept me or treats me different now than they used to," that's traumatic. How do we continue to be loving, open ... How do we continue to unconditionally love them when they seemingly have now maybe put a condition on us?

Those are the conversation and the strength that I think we need, those of us who are living an alternative lifestyle, when it comes to faith and our families, because people are going to be who they are, but it's like who are you going to be in the face of them being who they're being about your lifestyle, because you can't change them. We know that. You can just say, "Well, who am I going to be?" This all has happened to me, and then I asked myself, "Well, who am I going to be from now on? I can't go back and change it, so what am I going to do with it? What am I going to do with this crazy story?" You know? You wouldn't believe it if it weren't true. I get it. I really do understand why people say that. It's like, "Wait. That happened, and then that, and then that happened? There's no way. She's making this shit up." No. I'm not. I'm really not.

Matthias: I'm so curious, as you kind of talk about this, this process of trying to find yourself in the pieces and then that process of getting grounded and, I mean, processing. You mentioned trauma. That was a very real thing, and it's a very real thing for so many people. Could you talk a little bit more about what that process of getting grounded, and finding yourself, and being able to work through and come to a place of more health?

Tina: Well, that's a really good question, and it's a big question. What comes to mind right away is space, taking space initially. I think for me that was a necessity. I, as I've said, am from the East Coast. I became an actor later in life. I had a career in fashion, a business career. I was quite successful, and I walked away from it. I think I walked away from it, I thought, to be an actor, but in hindsight, I think I had to leave that job at nearly 30 because I had worked on the outside. In other words, I had gone to school and graduate school. I was an athlete. I went to college on a basketball scholarship, you know, the physical.

The mental had had a lot of attention, and it was a lot of survival years, but by the time I got close to 30, which I don't think is an uncommon time for adults to start saying, "Oh. What's on the inside?", if they haven't. That's what happened for me. I think I kind of broke. I hit a breaking point of I'm basically hiding, if you will. I've got a mask on. I might have 10 right now. I was functioning. I was doing all that, but something broke. I think my decision to become an actor unconsciously was probably part of the process of the journey I took is that I'm a method actor, so it's a lot to do with what's going on. What's going on in the past, in terms of feeling, and truth, and using your emotional memory, and using things that have happened to you, like using you basically. That was a perfect thing for me, that method, because it's what I needed to do.

That kind of started a healing. My brilliant acting coach, Susan Batson, who happens to be Oprah's coach, so I feel in good hands. Also, Nicole Kidman just thanked her for *Big Little Lies*. Susan is an amazing woman, and she's all about truth. I think, god bless her, she was my first coach, and she was basically encouraging me to open up. I remember going into a workshop once, and I remember at the end of the workshop the teacher, this is around the same time, another teacher Susan had sent me to, who did a lot of healing work as an acting teacher, and I remember she said to the class, at the end of the workshop, "Everybody turn around and look at Tina. Do you notice how her face has changed?"

This was a woman, her name is Sandra Seacat, who does a lot of dream work and internal work, in terms of the acting, again, using yourself. I had a mask on so thick that she clearly noticed when I walked in on day one that my face wasn't even moving. By six weeks, after doing a lot of this work with her, I ... That's where I was. I think that was the beginning. That's who I was. I was a gal who was highly accomplished, but walking around with basically a stone face, because I had been holding all this shit in, which you will hopefully read, your audience, in my book, of why I shut down, why the face had to become a mask in order to survive.

Slowly it has evolved, you know, I'd say a good 15 to 20 years of all kinds of therapies, in addition to a creative career, which was now encouraging me, in fact celebrating me, if you will, for opening up, so that was a good choice. That was necessary, but I didn't know any of that at the time. I'm just speaking looking back now. Does that make sense?

Matthias: Yeah. It does. I think those journeys are so powerful and so ... It sounds like you had to give your very self to that work.

Tina: It's funny. I feel like ... I might even say this in either the prologue or the epilogue, but I certainly feel like I had to take myself on as a sort of project. I think anyone, once you read the book, you'll see why, because it kind of in a way had to be a full time job for a while, even though I didn't look at it like that. You know, I do a lot of yoga, and I meditate. I'm not opposed to popping in pretty much any church in New York City if I just want to go be quiet. I'm not picky. It doesn't have to be Catholic or any other. If the doors are open, I will step in. I'm still active in pursuing sort of my ... deepening my faith, if you will, but yeah.

I think along the way there were so many levels of deepening and anger, which I don't want to leave out of this conversation, because you asked me about process. I said stepping away. You know, I left New York City after I found acting pretty quickly, and I went out to LA. Again, I thought I was going out there to be a star or something. That's what I thought, but I was going out there to heal. I can say that today. I didn't know, but I went out there to, yes, to become an actor or continue being an actor and explore that out there, but I think I went 3,000 miles away without leaving the continent, sort of as far away from my upbringing, my hometown as I could get without falling into the ocean. You know what I mean?

I think space is important. I think having your authentic feelings are important, and I think one of the things I was able to do, I think, is that space prevented me from having to do too much attacking. You know? It's like let me go over here, away from you, so I can do this. I'm going to take a time out. Time outs are good, you know, if you've been damaged, and you have to heal, and you don't want to blow up your family, or a person, or completely bury a relationship. Maybe you just take a time out and go, "Let me see if I can come back to this after I go put some time into me," because it's going to be up to us, once we hit adulthood. We can blame others, but it's your future, so what are you going to do?

Matthias: Yeah. I see some of the language on the dust jacket and kind of over-arching through the story is this kind of theme of like the power of truth to set us free. Of course, I mean, that makes me think of spiritual language and scripture. I'm curious. As you've walked through this whole journey, and growing up in a deeply Catholic family, and the hypocrisy that you had mentioned, and everything awful that has happened within that, and now you've mentioned you're kind of deepening your faith, I'm curious about what your faith journey has looked like through that whole process and maybe where would you say that you are now?

Tina: I think as a kid I didn't like going to church. I would rather go skip out and go to the solidarity room or whatever they called it, sodality room I mean, you know, where they had a bake sale. You know what I mean? Again, I think the hypocrisy that was happening at home, there was a block there because of it, because it was hard to sit down after dinner, kneel, and say the Rosary, and then an hour later or before dinner dad was home acting crazy. It was very scary. I think those were so hard to consolidate that I didn't really give or maybe have a chance to grab onto it in a clean way, where I could kind of make a clean choice.

But what I found, as I got older, is doctrine ... There's a way things should be general is not something that I tend to hold onto. In other words, I sort of think that I have a better chance of connecting with my source, you know, with God when I don't put a demand that there's a way things should be. I think that's kind of become a theme as I've grown in my spirituality, and I think it is where I am now. I try to live my life from there is not a way things should be, meaning let people be who they are. Don't demand that other people see things the way I do. Don't demand that their faith, or their religion, or their politics even are mine, and they don't have to be wrong or bad in order for me to hold onto mine, and I think they used to be.

I think in the process of healing, they were wrong, and I was right. You know, my people and my family, who maybe didn't have as much openness around homosexuality or even more recently about me being forthright and public about my father and his full self. When you're attacked, or you feel you're being attacked, or you feel you're being judged, your character's being judged, it's hard not to slap back, but I think where my faith is now is their truth does not affect my truth. I'm not right, and I'm not wrong. I'm just living through my heart, which I think is the center of my faith.

The other piece of it, to answer the question in one last way, is that where I am now is feeling that life at this point should be about service. I think the healing has allowed me to get here. I couldn't do too much service, because like they say, what do you have to give, if you aren't grounded in yourself? They say put the oxygen mask on yourself first. Until you do that and you feel safe and solid, as you said, standing in your ground, and your faith, and your truth, it's hard to reach out and be of help to others. Now I feel, because I'm there, that that is my mission, what I want to do.

Matthias: It sounds like a vastly more spacious way of doing faith, doing life. It sounds like you've stepped into that space that you're talking about. That's a beautiful, beautiful things.

Tina: Yeah. There's space for something greater than myself, you know, my God to bring me and guide me. I was praying this morning in my meditation, because I'd be lying if I didn't say I am a bit of a workaholic. I'm very hard on myself. I demand a lot of myself. You know, I've got residue from all that happened to me. It's not all clean and rosy every day, but like all of us, we're flawed. We wake up into survival, and then hopefully we take some time to get into prayer or whatever centers us, so that we can move out of that and into something bigger.

Today I was very aware in my prayer and meditation that I breathe in a little too fast, a little too anxious, trying to micromanage wanting the book to be this, wanting the book to be that, wanting to reach people. At some point, you know, it's like use me. Use me, God. That's why I did it. When I slip into that other space, which I do because I'm a human being, you know, on a good day I do what I do, turn to my prayer and meditation, and ask for help, because there's something else there that has big plans that are bigger than I could conceive. It might not look like what I'm planning, but generally they're bigger, and they certainly have something more to do with other than me. I think there's a lot of freedom and space, as you said, in making it about you and not me.

Matthias: Yeah. Yeah. Shifting things a little bit, but you mentioned your acting. If I'm gathering this correctly, this book kind of was birthed out of the play that you put together, right, or the performance?

Tina: Yeah.

Matthias: Could you talk about that a little bit?

Tina: Sure. Yeah. Speaking in walking in other's shoes, right? I decided, after my father passed ... As an actress, I've performed two solo shows. Coincidentally or not, after my mother passed, about 15 years ago, soon after that I decided to created a solo show in two acts, and one of the acts was her passing and sort of telling the family's story through her getting cancer and that process. Then the other piece of that was my father's birthday party, so it was a show that was 12 characters, many of my siblings, family friends, and my parents.

Then fast forward to the show that literally launched Hiding Out was called Secrets Of A Holy Father. I made a decision, soon after my dad had passed, maybe a year or so, to take a very big leap and play him, to write a show completely, to the best of my ability, from his point of view through his voice and only playing him. The entire show was my father. It was me I think fair to say transformed into him. It was an amazing, frightening, terrifying, and satisfying experience. It ruffled some feathers in my family. Obviously it's not as public as this book, but I started developing it I suppose about five years ago, five/six years ago, and then I performed it Off Broadway and took it off to LA, where a literary agent saw it and suggested that I write the book.

Of course, the book is my point of view, which is wonderful, because I had the chance to, quote, walk in his shoes. I started to understand things about him, and as I said earlier, feel like I knew him pretty well, sides of him that other people didn't know, certainly the homosexual side, but I learned other things. To play a character, for those non-actors out there, you're asked to not judge. The demand is really not to judge, because no matter if you're playing a serial killer or Mother Teresa, you can't judge, because you can't be three dimensional. You know what I mean? That was a gift, because to have to step into his shoes and write his words, or what I thought would be his words, to take on his physicality, his pain ... He had quite a bit of physical pain in his life, ulcers, stomach things, not surprising.

One of the most interesting things that I learned, that I hope your audience will really take to heart about their own parents, particularly those whose parents don't support who they're being in their lives or their lifestyle or life choice ... I remember in a rehearsal with Susan Batson doing a scene, and when I finished ... I think it was a private moment scene, so it was a scene where my dad was in private, so he was really exposed. I remember finishing the scene and finishing sort of the talking with her, talking it through, and sort of having this crazy epiphany. That was that my ... It was like he didn't want to be that way, like he didn't want to be that. In other words, he didn't want to be mean, angry, volatile. He suffered deeply as a result of that behavior, and I thought I was kind of ahead of the game with this relationship and how [inaudible 00:37:08] don't I know it all?

You know, I've done the work, but that level of understanding that your parents may be behaving a certain way or speaking certain words, that doesn't always give you the subtext. It doesn't always get, oftentimes, get to the struggle that they're having about their stuff. It has nothing to do with you. As a kid, I just saw my dad as this mean ... you know, when I was little, I was just like, he's mean, and he's scary. That was one dimension. That was one dimension.

I think our job as human beings, especially in the family and from a place particularly of faith, is to really come to accept our parents and all of our family as people and take that label off of it like, "That's my dad. That's my mom. They should ... If they're my mom, they should ... or they should have ..." It's like you get to an age and you're like, "Oh. I do that same thing." It's not always the way they want to be behaving, and that was really such a huge eye opener, doing the show. Those kind of discoveries were priceless.

Matthias: Wow. A topic that I feel like comes up so often on this podcast is this kind of idea of embodiment. I mean, that experience of like method acting, but having to actually put yourself into almost the body of another, it sounds like such an embodied way of healing.

Tina: Yeah. I have to say it was really profound. I've played a lot of characters, excuse me, but I don't think I ever had a feeling that I completely transformed. I feel like I have transformed, but in away that I was ... It's almost like in a weird way he did come through me, like completely, like I was not there. It was him. It was divine, frankly. One of the things, because particularly the podcast that you have, that might be worth saying is that the second ... I did the show, and I basically let him sort of tell his life story through scenes, so it wasn't talky-talk. It was like scenes. A lot of them were with me, my mother, what have you, but the second part of the show is that after he passes he's in the afterlife, and he's trying to work it out.

That was amazing, because I never saw my dad with complete freedom, but the choice that I made to put him in the afterlife, of course physically he was like a hummingbird, you know? He was completely free. He could fly, and dance, and jump, and yet he was struggling to still work it out, so he could sort of move on. I didn't exactly call it purgatory. He wasn't burning or something, but it was an in between. It was an in between stop where he had to pause and go, "I think I got to clean this up a little bit more before I'm headed over there." That was super cool.

Matthias: Yeah. Wow. I mean, I am just ... The word gift came to mind. It feels like such a gift to be able to both hold your own story and his story in a place of almost tenderness or understanding maybe.

Tina: Yeah. I mean, that was kind of the shock of some of the ... a little bit, not everyone. I have a few family members who are very devout Catholics. Even the fact that my dad had so many encounters with many of the popes, actually all of the popes of his lifetime he met, and those kinds of things, which I know, you know, that sort of thing, even a photograph is sacred, but the things is to say someone lived a homosexual life, or in the closet, or however you want to label it, in the face of he's a holy man standing with the pope, that doesn't have to be separated. We don't have to say darkness/light, unless you're calling it that. That's wrong. This is right. We can't put those together.

First of all, it's not wrong. He lived in a time particularly where society wasn't going to embrace that lifestyle, 50's, 60's, 70's, even into the 80's. It was a different world. I think that part of compartmentalizing ... I think what the gift for me is I don't compartmentalize my father. He wasn't a holy man over here and snorting poppers with

me over here at the club. He's one guy. He's consolidated to me, and that's a great gift of having played him, walked in his life and been in his life, I think, a three dimensional way, which some of my siblings, in fact all my siblings, of course, did not have that experience with him, so I understand that that would be ... the details of that might be challenging, but nevertheless, it all comes back to not judging. Doesn't it?

Matthias: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, goodness. I'm just sitting here with a sense of kindness, and I think that word space keeps coming back to me. It feels like such a beautiful thing to be able to hold your story, even with all the pain in that space of you said not judging, like non-judgment.

Tina: It's so much lighter to walk around in that, because it's just a fallacy that we can control people, places, and things, our families, what people think of us. Again, it just comes back to who are we going to be in the face of ...? We have this family. We have this government. We have this town we live in that might be more conservative than we would prefer. We might prefer it a little different. It's like, okay, but that's what it is, so now what are you going to do about it? Who are you going to be? I think having that, as best we can, I think that's what Christ said. You know, essentially, at the heart of everything is he wasn't a judgmental guy. He just wasn't.

The fact that Christians, some Christians sometimes appear to be the most critical and judgmental, not all. Of course, I'm not saying that, but the faction that we're all aware of, the ones that say Father James Martin shouldn't be speaking at Catholic University, because he wrote a book called Building Bridges With The LGBT Community And The Church. He's encouraging conversation and coming together, and now there's a small group of people who will say, "No. I judge those people, and since you're trying to not judge those people, I'm going to judge you too." I was like what is ...? How does that have anything to do with what Jesus said?

Matthias: Yeah. Seriously though.

Tina: I mean, yeah. Like, come on. What book are you reading?

Matthias: Yeah. Oh, my gosh. Tina, thank you so very much.

Tina: Thank you.

Matthias: This has been a delight.

Tina: I was super excited when my publicist at Harper Collins had sent this over to me and said ... [inaudible 00:45:48] and I looked you up. I was like, "This is so good," because I love the idea of having these conversations, you know, about faith. It doesn't happen a lot on our world, where we can pause and get into this. I celebrate you, and your podcast, and what you're doing, and your audience that's looking to live a deeper and fuller existence. It's just a beautiful thing.

Matthias: Yeah. Well, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Be sure to pick up a copy of Tina's new book, *Hiding Out, A Memoir Of Drugs, Deception, And Double Lives*, wherever you get books. Tina's on Twitter and Instagram, @tinaalexisallen. You can find out more about her at her website, tinaalexisallen.com. Queerology is on Twitter and Instagram, @queerologypod, or you can tweet me directly, @matthiasroberts. Queerology is produced with support from Sean McDorman, Tim Schraeder, Natalie England, and 45 other Patreon supporters.

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