

Queerology: A Podcast on Belief and Being

Episode 62 - Alyson Stoner Embraced Mystery

Matthias: If you enjoy listening to Queerology then I need your help. Here's why. I create Queerology by myself on a shoestring budget, recording and editing every episode in my tiny closet. How's that for irony? That's where you come in. Will you help keep Queerology on the air by supporting it financially? By tipping as little as \$1 a month you can help me improve and keep making Queerology every week. All you have to do is jump over to MatthiasRoberts.com/support to make a pledge and listen away.

Hey friends, this is Matthias Roberts and you're listening to Queerology, podcast of belief and being. This is episode 62.

Alyson: My ability to see love in places I never was able to sense or receive before, it's just exploded. And I'm so grateful for that.

Matthias: Welcome back. It's been a little while, and it feels so good to be back behind this microphone. This is thanks to you. Y'all stepped up to keep Queerology on the air and we raised the \$2,500 a month and needed to do so, and I am so thankful. Over 230 of you said yes to pledging monthly, and we're able to keep broadcasting a message of love and belonging all over the world because of you. Thank you. I'm so excited about today's episode. Alyson Stoner is an accomplished actress, dancer, and recording artist who is known for her performances in blockbuster movie franchises, Step Up, Cheaper By The Dozen. Her voice over work in TV shows like Phineas and Ferb, dancing in music videos for Missy Elliott and Eminem. And then most recently, her new music. Earlier this year, Alyson came out publicly via her single, When It's Right, and an essay in Teen Vogue, sharing her journey of falling in love with a woman for the first time. She gets into this a little bit more in this episode. Currently, Alyson's hard at work on new music.

Matthias: She's set to release a new single in January 2019, and she also remains active in the voiceover world, and can be heard on the Amazon Prime series, Pete The Cat, Disney's Milo Murphy's Law. And she'll reprise her role in Phineas and Ferb in January 2019. I met Alyson several weeks ago at a wedding. Actually, it was Tory and Alex's wedding, if you remember from season one. They got married a few weeks ago. Congratulations Tory and Alex. And Alyson and I got into an incredible conversation around faith and sexuality there. And I asked her if she would want to continue that conversation here on Queerology so you all can listen in. And here we are. I have no announcements this week, other than another big thank you for keeping Queerology on the air. So, let's just go ahead and dive in. Alyson, hi. Welcome.

Alyson: Hello.

Matthias: I'm so excited to have you on Queerology today. Thank you.

Alyson: Thank you.

Matthias: So to start, the question that I ask everyone, how do you identify? And then, how would you say that your faith has helped form that identity?

Alyson: Oh, the hot seat.

Matthias: Yeah.

Alyson: Today I feel honest in identifying as a white sis gender woman. I don't feel comfortable labeling my sexual orientation or even my faith at the moment. Not because I'm afraid of the words themselves, or being stereotyped, but because there's a certain magic happening in letting the sediment keeps swirling in the water, versus forcing it to settle and land somewhere. And I'm being so transformed because of mystery that I want to stay here for now. I seem to be able to love better, and wider, and deeper from here for now.

Matthias: I love that. The idea of mystery, because I think anytime ... I feel like you're kind of highlighting this. Anytime we use labels, there's a certain certainty that's established.

Alyson: Right.

Matthias: That can then make things hard, that mystery then somewhat disappears in a way.

Alyson: Yeah. And I would say, words ultimately are merely symbols anyway. They have the meaning we give them. I can say, this is a poor example, but I can say, I hate you. But infuse true love and affection. And if you didn't understand English, you'd feel the intention rather than the definition of hate. So, we have to recognize the silliness and frivolousness of words when we're trying to describe incredible universe. In my opinion, people, and within the church my experience, we get hung up on words and we develop somewhat of a this or that. Where do you stand on this topic? Yes or no checklist approach, to know who's in and out of the faith. And I mean, I'll go off on a quick tangent. We forget that there have been hundreds of translations and iterations of the Bible, and we're not necessarily even practicing the same thing they were back in the day anyway. So, yes, we've got to respect that mystery is wonderful, and beautiful, and transformative.

Matthias: My mind is going to ... You mentioned the Bible, but that idea of the divine God is mystery. And I think I always think about that, if we believe this idea that humanity is created in the image of the divine, whatever that means, I feel like we have to acknowledge that there is going to be mystery present everywhere.

Alyson: Oh, yeah. And if you don't have the capacity or space for all people, all perspectives, all educational views, then are you really able to see the divinity in every material thing? Every material being? And that's something I noticed just over the last several years, my ability to see love in places I never was able to sense or receive before. It's just exploded. And I'm so grateful for that. It's really untethered a lot of, I guess, fear of otherness, fear of ... I don't know, anyone who is on the outside. I mean, what is the outside anyway? I'm sorry. You're going to get to a point where you're like, oh, we're explaining everything away. Suddenly there is nothing left. And I'm like, emptiness, we've arrived. The soul soothing emptiness.

Matthias: Mm-hmm (affirmative). That's real though.

Alyson: Yeah, right? But you don't hear that in church settings.

Matthias: No.

Alyson: I mean, contemplation and mysticism is like ... Paganism is abhorred, and these deplorable people who talk about an embodied faith, and God forbid we're connected to our physical earth suit while we're here. Come on. Anyways.

Matthias: I mean, yeah. I'm over here being like, uh-huh, uh-huh.

Alyson: But I have to remember, I'm nervous about speaking so candidly right now, because like I was telling you, it's been a long time since I've had a public conversation about faith and spiritual formation. And the mainstream culture tends to feel like the big kid with the power. And I currently feel smaller because, my faith historically fell within very safe parameters. And now just by sheer authenticity I'm probably offending or scaring people, or I'm on the fringes, and I'll lose people's trust. But we have to talk about these things. And again, I'm just grateful that you create that space.

Matthias: I'm curious, because you're talking about this kind of historical faith that you have held.

Alyson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Matthias: And now kind of where you're at. And I would imagine, and you have spoken about this, it has been a journey.

Alyson: Right.

Matthias: Arriving to where you are now.

Alyson: Yeah.

Matthias: And you continue to be a journey, but I'd love to kind of hear about some of that process of where you've been.

Alyson: Okay. I would love to ... I've never actually teased this out. So, you're in for a ride. I would love to first point out that I recognize I carry patterns from my past family dynamics, and things outside of the faith, so to speak, outside of the church, into my relationship with God. Right? So if I'm a perfectionist, then I become a Christian perfectionist. And if I had a difficult relationship with my father, then it was harder for me to call God, Dad, but easier for me to call God, God for awhile. Until God became the father I thought I was missing and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So there's all of those layers. Then of course there are the layers in hindsight I'm beginning to recognize my own geography. I was going to have a very radical, evangelical, nondenominational church, and things like don't ever get horizontal with a person because you'll get pregnant and die. And never wear clothes that show anything below the neck. So, really conservative, even though they would tell you that they were provocative and progressive. Whatever that means. And so, over time I'll also say it got tethered in with

my entertainment background. There was almost a showmanship and a performance that I think many Christians can relate to.

Alyson: But, being in the public eye, I couldn't truly be vulnerable with things I was wrestling with. I had to kind of become almost the public figure and face for young Christians. I was asked to speak at congregations before I was even spiritually mature, just because I was a child star in Hollywood. And I have these very interesting experiences of recognizing how the Christian culture is actually really reflective of consumerism, and capitalism, and commercialism, individualism, all of these ideologies, and concepts, and constructs that I now have words for, thankfully. But in the moment felt like, I'm simply using my platform for Christ. And I'm called to do this, that, and the other. And anytime I fail, it's because Satan has a target on my back. And there's that sense of American exceptionalism as well embedded in there. So, I've been a lot of places. But I will say it was mostly and consistently black and white, very linear. And I took a lot of pride in that. I had a huge ego boost every time I could quote more scriptures than the person next to me. But do it in a way that was supposed to sound encouraging, inspirational. And as time went on, the real impetus for change was me being attracted to a woman.

Alyson: I mean, talk about startling and completely conflicting with my theology, and communities teachings. And that was the beginning of deconstructing, and ignoring all the filters, and just how all those pieces got there. And I felt like I was able to be mentored by some really wonderful people. And still am. And constantly finding new teachers, of course, you can learn from everyone. And yeah, now it's sort of like I'm examining the mosaic and that was me, that is me. Letting go of some pieces, keeping some, transforming others. And I don't know if I'm ever going to totally rebuild. I might just continue to examine and [inaudible 00:13:00].

Matthias: Mm-hmm (affirmative). You talk about, in the piece that you wrote, your kind of big quote unquote, coming out piece that you published last March. About this experience of kind of breaking down in your bed, crying, and saying something like, God, if I'm evil than I accept this. And then you talk about this moment of thinking like that would plunge you into despair. But experiencing deep love instead.

Alyson: Yeah. I've never really talked about this openly. So, thanks for the opportunity. Recently I was at a screening for a movie called Boy Erased, which talks about conversion therapy. And I had a moment with a really wonderful woman at the end. And we cried in each other's arms in the bathroom. And I tried to explain this moment to her a little bit. But you can never quite articulate something that's so personal, and so vivid, especially years later. But in that moment, I was ready to accept that I was demon possessed, that I was ... If we're talking about Calvinism and predestination, I was ready to accept that God had already destined me for Hell. And that's why I couldn't change this. And I was a mess. I was a wreck. And that moment of feeling freedom, it was very still. It wasn't a sensationalized, super emotional moment. It was like a glimpse of clarity, and a window that I didn't see in the room before. And it wasn't at all about finding the solution, or changing my theology, or the this or the that's. It was just simply being held and still and quiet. I think that's important to recognize that I spent a lot of time in very loud churches where the louder you pray and the more words you pray and the louder the music, the higher to God you can get. I'm such an introvert to begin with but also silence and

solitude and meditation are so crucial for this spiritual experience. I've always admired monks. My therapist would use the phrase, "You're a monk without a monastery."

Alyson: I, in that moment, kind of experienced like the first glimpse of what my future might look like, where my spirituality might be very different from someone else's but God apparently hadn't given up on me. I had no answers. I was actually totally okay with being like, "Hey. We're just going to be enemies and I can't do anything else. I can't change this. I really tried." Yeah, that was the beginning of being okay with not knowing. I guess, I've never felt like I understand God, the divine spirit realm everything more than when I connect with the unknown. I'm rambling. I'm sorry.

Matthias: No. No, no, no, no.

Alyson: I'm [crosstalk 00:16:30].

Matthias: I mean, honestly, that doesn't feel like rambling to me because I'm hearing this really beautiful experience of getting in touch with ... I mean, this is going to sound so woo-woo, but getting in touch with a deeper level of energy and love that is in the world, and I feel like you're telling your story but it makes me think of so many other stories of getting to that point of like, "God, I don't know what else to do, and if this means we're not on okay terms, then so be it because I know it's in my body," and then realizing on the other side of that, that there is love.

Alyson: The word transcendent entered my vocabulary. I finally understood that there is a space that exist beyond the rights and wrongs and beyond ... Sorry, I live near an airport. You can hear the plane.

Matthias: That's fine.

Alyson: I'm really trying to drive home a point here, but there's a transcendent place, and as you ascend, you stop picking on people and on yourself, and you start just living and being able to coexist, which I know is a very scary word for many Christians, but I simply mean peaceably recognizing if you prefer to say Jesus, then say Jesus in every one and everything and every place you meet and working together toward wholeness versus destruction, you know? In some groups, the word sin has far less to do with behavior as much as like, are you just forgetting your divine nature? Are you experiencing the shadow side because you just forgot that the light is right around the corner and it's in, it is you, is in you at all times? Naturally, when you come from that place of love and understanding, a different behavior, a different lifestyle forms.

Alyson: I'm so nervous to listen back to this interview what [inaudible 00:18:59]. I don't want to lead people to the "wrong place", a harmful place. If your untying deep-seated beliefs for someone right now, it puts them in a vulnerable place. I always want to make sure they have the support to navigate the nuances and their own suspicions and doubts and reconcile them. With your therapy background, with my background as being in therapy for so many years, we have to help each other return to a place of resilience, so we're not entering manic states or depressive states and just feeling so overwhelmed by all of this. I wish that kind of nurturing and support was offered in the church, but I don't

always find, I guess, that level of emotional intelligence and mental health education. I would have loved to see a little bit more of that if we're putting that out there.

Matthias: Yeah. I mean, that kind of I think goes to a good next question is like, so if you weren't able to find support in the church, which is an incredibly common story, like that's my story ...

Alyson: It's so sad.

Matthias: Right. Where are the support structures that you did find?

Alyson: All of them in the beginning were so gay.

Matthias: I love it, yes.

Alyson: My first girlfriend, all of her friends, some of them were Christian and identified as gay or within the queer community, but for the most part, there was still like a separation there. However, their ability to just welcome me with open arms without, for the record, for those who are listening thinking like they were trying to lure me in and convert me. That's really not the case. They were just there to listen. In fact, I look back now and wonder if my words were harmful and hurtful to them and also to my girlfriend at the time. I was so concerned with trying to do the safe acceptable thing. I'm not sure I ever tried to make a safe place for my girlfriend and for the queer community, and for that, I take responsibility. I have compassion for the many factors that led there, and I try to carry forward with all the lessons.

Alyson: Then, I encountered authors like Richard Rohr, and mistakes on Celtic Christianity, even church history, the Dark Night of the Soul, different pieces of text, literature, poetry that ... Thomas Merton, for example, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, he wasn't afraid to use a poetic language that might not be the standard format for describing the Christian experience. I needed that. I just needed a larger vocabulary. I found that through people who were willing to wrestle with mystery and for people who didn't feel like they had to protect their own reputation with, which in my experience oftentimes were people who weren't super hardcore affiliated with an institution.

Matthias: You just mentioned this wondering of whether you had, maybe when you were first taking these steps, wondering if you maybe hurt people in the queer community. That made me think of, like I have those stories of things that I said as I was just beginning to step out of like, I will never be a person who thinks that homosexuality is okay. I said that to gay people as a means of self-protection, but it was a reflection of where I was at. I'm curious like, as you've stepped along, you mentioned compassion, how do you find the compassion for that Alyson?

Alyson: Many tears. To be honest, I cry way more now, way more often, and way more, I guess ugly in a wonderful way. It happens almost every day because I finally have breathing room to let things surface and be reflective and ... You know, we're also busy with our schedules, so healing is a process that takes time. It's very subjective, right, but having compassion for my younger self is hard. Most evidently, when I think about my first girlfriend and how much harm and destruction resulted from that relationship, and of

course, out of respect for her until she gives me full permission to share, I'm not sure it's totally necessary, but there were just so many struggles because of my faith. That's okay, but man, to think that I've contributed to someone else's scars is heartbreaking. I just hope that I'm continually more sensitive and I walk in a real humility where I'm able to be corrected and held accountable moment to moment.

Alyson: This reminds me also ... It's adjacent. I know you'll understand. I was once speaking to a congregation of people of color as a really young baby Christian, and why? I was so out of touch with their day-to-day experience with my privilege. I'm still learning. I'm sure anyone can be used at any given time, and we don't have to limit ourselves with labels, but we can do better. We can be more aware, more involved in reality and the multidimensionality of reality for all of the people around us and way more mature about supporting people in the mess including ourselves as we're repairing. I just look back and I'm like, "Why was I teaching about faith ... I needed to learn." It's hard. I don't have perfect compassion, but I will say as that increases, so does my compassion for everyone else, and that makes it so worth it, right? You're like you can't always find a reason to heal your own wounds because you're being real self-deprecating or whatever the issue is. You're melancholic and you just like it sometimes. Self-indulgent, whatever. Then, remembering that the degree that I love myself is the degree that I can love others is like, "All right, let's do this. Let's dive in."

Matthias: Yeah. I was literally just talking to a group about this just two nights ago about that sense of, we really cannot love others unless we love ourselves, which sounds ... I mean, to my young Christian years.

Alyson: Yeah. [inaudible 00:26:38] narcissistic. Why isn't Christ your identity?

Matthias: Right, because I think we're taught, we're enculturated into, at least the theological system that I was brought into, was a sense of the "hate what is evil" and we were the evil ones.

Alyson: Yes.

Matthias: Then, love can't flow out of that in my mind now. There's a disparity there.

Alyson: Yeah, I find it so interesting that Christians, of course, I cannot use generalizations, some Christians, there's this notion that we're awful sinners and to live as Christ than anything else is like not ... You can't claim that you're good. You can't claim that you're perfect or whatever. There's still a lot to discuss there. I'm not sure I'm the one, or it's the time, to try and do that, but then, yes, going into recognizing that some Christians don't understand the mental frameworks in which they process their faith and experience and navigate everything relates a lot to modernism and the enlightenment and shifting eras where logic and rationale and empirical data became dominant and like trusting the body and intuitive intelligence and alternative medicine became unreliable.

Alyson: Then, as you've mentioned in other episodes, they don't always see that, for example, a white American evangelical Christian might not know the parasitic relationship between Christianity and white supremacy or like how often do you hear pastors willing to use less rehearsed terms to describe LGBTQIA plus youth issues and the suicide rates. Will

they talk about that in the congregation? How many sermons have you heard relate Jesus's counter culture radical love to get him involved with policy and advocate and activism to upend oppressive systems and [inaudible 00:28:50] from the collective liberation of all not just spiritually but legally? A part of me is just like, "Ah, wake up." [inaudible 00:28:58] You've never left the comfort of the Rome or if you can't recognize love within yourself, can you notice how that has played out in your life and might there be, might there be another way of seeing it whether you choose to ascribe to it or not?

Alyson: When I think about prayer and how my prayers used to be so full of requests and what is your will and blah, blah, blah, and that's wonderful. Fine. Everyone has their own prayer to follow, but like also pray with their hands and feet and be inclusive. If you're differently abled, pray with the actions you're uniquely equipped for. Don't just keep chatting like, one, listen and also two, act. I haven't seen a ton of that in my particular faith groups, but to me, it's like so reflective of god's nature, or you know, just the shared cosmic universal nature of everyone who is here with us if you don't ascribe to Christianity.

Matthias: Yeah. Like and you're talking about ... I mean, you had mentioned kind of the enlightenment and modernism, and this movement away from our bodies. Then, talking about letting our faith practice move us in ways that are physical, that involve bodies. That makes me [crosstalk 00:30:41].

Alyson: Oh no.

Matthias: And I mean, that makes me think you're a dancer. You move for a living. I'd be so curious about whether you feel a connection there in your spirituality and in creativity and movement and embodiment.

Alyson: I do now, but I did not. I felt imprisoned by it and betrayed by it mostly, because wanting to represent a hard headed linear version of faith in an entertainment industry where you have to tell stories about people going through everything you feel very limited, but again, also that strange ego boost of like but I'm going to stand in integrity and only talk about things in one way until people understand and fall in line.

Alyson: Then, with dance I was so uncomfortable in my own skin, you know? I was very prudish anyway for many reasons, and my faith kind of contributed to that. I didn't date until after I was 18. I was in certain dance classes that were provocative, and all I could hear were scriptures and I wasn't able to explore anything. There was just no freedom, and I didn't want to get it wrong. I just wanted to be the perfect Christian for God, you know? I went back and I'm like, "Oh, no. Where did we get off the path?" Like the body is full of intelligence and guidance and wisdom, and wow, it's your gift. It's giving you clues all day long as to what feels right and doesn't feel right, safe, not safe.

Alyson: Your gut is holy. Using the word gut as a Christian to me five years ago would have been like ooh, can you at least say the spirit, you know? Can you at least say the holy spirit? Now, I'm just so grateful for my skin, for my body. I have to remain grounded in it. That's sort of, I feel the way I'm able to encounter the divine all day long as opposed to having to retreat to a prayer room and pray for an hour to get back in contact, you know? My

cells are a reflection of the divine. Everything is spiritual. I remember going to, I believe was a Rob Bell-

Matthias: That sounds right. Yeah.

Alyson: Yeah, a Rob Bell conference, and for the record I had only ever listened to interviews of him years prior during which I scolded [inaudible 00:33:39]. Finally, when I was able to hear him first hand relay the full story I went, "Oh," and of course I was there standing next to my girlfriend at the time, and even she, who didn't come from the church, we were like, "Oh, this is sort of a happy middle ground for now while we're figuring out what this is. We don't have to agree with everything. We don't have to disagree with everything," but he connected a lot of dots for me, and he brought the everybody into the equation, and he brought science into the equation.

Alyson: I was like, "Oh wow, this doesn't sound like some kind of white washed evangelical washed version of science and body where you still are scared to really talk about how things feel in your body." It was a real rooted display, so then I am just rambling today.

Matthias: I love it, because again, I know I just said this, but to me it doesn't feel like rambling. I feel like all of these things are so deeply connected in the way-

Alyson: Everything is connected.

Matthias: Everything is connected. Everything is spiritual.

Alyson: Everything is spiritual. Even if you don't use the word spiritual-

Matthias: Yes.

Alyson: -invite everyone who is listening who might have come from my audience and is not Christian or whatever you feel about things, like if the word spiritual is uncomfortable, I'm so okay with recognizing that there are literal frequencies and energies that you can measure scientifically. That's okay, like that's more than okay. That is real. It's true. So, I just want to be as inclusive as possible. Thankfully I'm no longer intimidated by getting the words right and wrong. That's been super freeing, although I know it scares a lot of people in faith groups.

Matthias: Yeah, because I mean, we're taught that we have to use a certain language. Then, if we don't use the right language then it's the ... you were talking about that kind for in and out earlier. It's a marker of who's out and I'm really grateful that you are broadening this out, because whether or not we use the same language for energy, for spirituality, for whatever we're talking about, there's common experience. That's really important to acknowledge.

Alyson: And who am I to invalidate someone else's felt experience? You know what I mean? Oof, when I spend time traveling and I encounter Christians, non-Christians, all humans everywhere and they use different language. I couldn't imagine taking their stories away from them and denying them because they didn't use my english western, you know, language. Ugh. I just wish I guess more people could see the beauty in diversity and how

we can be united in that and there's richness in it as opposed to that us versus them spiel.

Matthias: Absolutely. Yeah.

Alyson: Should we come back up to the surface and talk about what your favorite movie is? Feel like we've been blabbing into the trenches.

Matthias: Yeah. Sure, why not? Let's bring it back up. What is your favorite movie?

Alyson: Oh, fun fact. I don't watch films.

Matthias: Really?

Alyson: Yeah, I watch documentaries, but I don't ... Yeah.

Matthias: I don't listen to podcasts, so here we are.

Alyson: That's so funny.

Matthias: So I guess this is a question that I'm realizing I've started asking a lot of people, and at the end of an episode, but for people who are listening to this podcast who are in places that you have been before of that fear or everything you kind of described this episode of what life was like in the midst of a more ... I mean, this is strong language, but in my mind a more oppressive religious structure. For people who are just beginning to realize that there might be something different about them, or that their faith identity isn't quite doing it anymore and the terror that comes with that. What would you say to those people?

Alyson: I always lead with curiosity, and not just because being curious is like affiliated with queer culture, but having a posture of curiosity allows room and doesn't jump to conclusions. It doesn't lead with judgment. There's a compassion there. You're just asking questions. You know, I had to learn how to be an ally to myself, but if you can appreciate that opportunity, learn how to love yourself in this process and check in. If you feel like you can't talk to anyone yet of course there are so many podcasts and books and things that you can look up and I encourage you to do so.

Alyson: Talk it out. Write it out with yourself and develop that really strong, nurturing relationship there, because it's going to help you be able to communicate with other people eventually as well as recognize after communicating whether their response is bringing harm to you or if it's a safe place to continue exploring. Just know you're so okay. You really are. There's nothing wrong with you, and man, I wish I understood that a lot sooner, and if I can try and bring a little bit of light heartedness to it, the more you get to know yourself the less surprised you're going to be about anything else.

Alyson: It really is freeing, because you're slowly escaping this jail cell, and you know, I do things sometimes now instead of being like, "Oh, wow. That was awful, or ooh, what a mistake," I'm like, "Oh, I remember the last time this happened because I spent time getting to know myself, and I can observe how if I'm not mindful this will become a pattern or it already is, and I'm ready to kind of break free from it." Just enjoy this

invitation into intimacy with self, with God, or whatever you consider a higher source, or if no higher source that's also okay. Just be okay with where you are in the process. You do not have to arrive somewhere right now.

Alyson: You know, as I said in the beginning, the mystery is the destination in many ways. There is just so much awesomeness to mystery, and if you learn how to encounter mystery, there's going to be some kind of special perspective that you're able to have in situations where other people might be bound to more linear constructs. It might even help you become the bridge in the future to polarized groups. Yeah. Just you know, listen to me or not. You can just throw everything I said away too. That's fine. Know that I support you. I'm here for you. I'm thinking of you.

Matthias: I love it. Thank you, Alison, so much for joining me.

Alyson: Thank you for letting me speak. Oh my god.

Matthias: This has been a blast.

Alyson: Oh. I'm so nervous. Truly, thank you.

Matthias: Yeah.

Alyson: Thank you for everything you're doing. This podcast is so crucial.

Matthias: Alyson is on Instagram and Twitter @alysonstoner. She's also on YouTube, TheRealAlysonStoner. You can spend lots of time checking out her new music and her music videos over there on her youtube channel. I did that instead of editing this episode, and it was a lot of fun. Queerology is on twitter and Instagram @queerologypod, or you can tweet me directly at @MatthiasRoberts. Queerology is supported by its listeners. To help keep spreading a message of love and belonging pledge a dollar a month or more over at matthiasroberts.com/support. A really easy way to help support Queerology is by leaving a rating and a review. Do that right in your podcast app or head over to MatthiasRoberts.com/review, and it'll take you right there.

Matthias: As always, I'd love to hear from you. If you have ideas of what you want to hear on the podcast or just want to say hi, reach out. I'll get back to you, and until next week, y'all. Bye.