



Wild & Sublime® Podcast, Season 2 Episode 4
“Your True Sexual Self”
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When it comes to sex, who are you... really? In this cabaret-style episode, Sarah Sloane defines demisexual, aromatic, and asexual — and why labels are good as we understand more deeply who we are. Panelists offer tips to avoid projecting old experiences onto new relationships. And a storyteller shares how becoming a Domme helped her discover her true self.

Host: Karen Yates

Guests: Sarah Sloane, Brandon Hunter-Haydon, Tazima Parris, Jason Best, Lily Be

Sarah Sloane

Folks are like, "I don't understand why you have to have all these labels." It's like, well, because it's comforting. If there's a label that exists, it means that there are other people like me, and maybe I'm not broken.

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

I think just being aware that projections are a natural and normal part of the whole process — so it's not a matter of thinking that if you've done projections that you're doing a relationship wrong. You're not doing it wrong. It's about becoming aware of it, and realizing where its influence might be at any given moment.

Lily Be

And he turns to me and thanks me, and on the bed throws a wad of money. And I get mad.

Karen Yates

Welcome to Wild & Sublime, a sexy spin on infotainment®, no matter your preferences, orientation or relationship style, based on the popular live Chicago show. Each week, I'll chat about sex and relationships with citizens from the world of sex positivity. You'll hear meaningful conversation, dialogues that go deeper, and information that can help you become more free in your sexual expression. I'm sex educator Karen Yates. This week, we learn more about sex labels and why they're important. Our panel chats

about projection. Plus a story about how topping Thor led to a journey of self-discovery. Keep listening.

Sarah Sloane

Welcome to the last episode of 2020, folks. I'm not going to spend time in a grand commentary, because 99% of you listening to this have been impacted in some tremendous way by the events of this year. When I started putting this episode together, I initially wasn't even sure that there was going to be some sort of unifying theme. I thought it was going to be sort of a mishmash. But then lo, something started to emerge, and I saw that each of the segments today are really about getting to know ourselves better, really understanding what makes you tick, especially in regards to sexuality and how we relate to our intimates. And I suppose in a grand way that applies to this year. Many of us have been forced in one way or another to see what is important to us, how to connect to each other or not, and is it possible to get our needs met during this time? Basically, who are we really? We'll begin today with What's Up with That?, a recurring segment about words from the sexual lexicon that might be confusing. Our conversation with sex educator Sarah Sloane ended up being way more expansive than the words we were discussing — in this case, demisexual and asexual. Sara is the Director of Communications and Operations at Hashtag Open, the dating app for ethically non monogamous people and their partners. Wild & Sublime is partnering with Hashtag Open on these current What's Up with That? segments. You can learn more about Hashtag Open and their cool dating app in the show notes. And now, Sarah Sloane.

Karen Yates

Okay, today: demisexual, asexual, aromantic. Sarah, what's up with that?

Sarah Sloane

I am really glad you asked me that. Because I did not know about the term "demisexuality" until about four or five years ago. And it was like hearing it and hearing somebody tell me what it was was like a watershed moment. It was kind of like when I read the term "bisexual" when I was teenager. And I realized like, Oh, it's okay for like — there are people who are interested in both guys and girls. Oh, wait! And like, 13-year-old Sarah felt really affirmed by that. Forty-five-year-old Sarah felt really affirmed when I heard the term demisexual, because it made sense for me. You know, I was questioning like, why do the ways that I get turned on by people seems so different from a lot of my friends, particularly in the sex-positive community? And so what I learned was that demisexual means that in order to feel a sexual attraction, there has to be kind of an emotional connection there first. So, I need to know

somebody, and kind of feel comfortable with them, get to know them. Often, they're people that I develop really strong friendships with, before any kind of conversation about sex ever happens. And so for demisexual, folks, there has to be something else there. And then the sexual attraction can turn on.

Karen Yates

I was looking this up, and it's like, you don't even find, say, beautiful celebrities attractive. It really comes down to — it's about an immediate connection with someone that develops into an emotional bond. And that then the sexuality comes from that, right?

Sarah Sloane

Yeah. And sometimes it's even over time. I would say that, you know, for a lot of demisexual folks, it may be that they start dating somebody that they're intellectually attracted to, or that they might feel some emotional attraction to, and then that gives space for sexual feelings, and for lust, and for passion to kind of develop from that. I would say that I do find people attractive, I just don't find them sexually attractive. Like I can look at images of Daniel Craig or Idris Elba — I'm thinking of James Bonds today, apparently — and I can go like, wow, they're really attractive. But there's not a corresponding "Damn, I'd hit that" kind of a piece to it. You know, it's a very aesthetic kind of experience. And then if we move to a different place on on the ace spectrum, then we would put demisexual on the asexual spectrum.

Karen Yates

And when you say "ace," it simply means a shortened form of asexual?

Sarah Sloane

Yeah, yes, asexual. So we have a spectrum that's called the asexual spectrum — demisexuality is on that. Asexuality is not feeling sexual attraction, period. Not feeling a desire for sex. And it doesn't mean that those are folks who are celibate, it just means that they're folks who don't intrinsically feel a desire for sex. Many people who are asexual do choose to engage in sexual relationships, often because there's a lot of reasons to have sex beyond just getting off.

Karen Yates

Mm-hmm.

Sarah Sloane

You know, sometimes it can be about an emotional bond, it can be about pleasing our partner, it may be, you know, in order to start a family — there can be dozens and dozens of reasons why people choose to have sex that aren't actually related to lust, or to, like, arousing passion — you know, like all of the bodice ripper stuff. And I think that's the part that can feel really confusing for people, is that the way that we've kind of structured how you should feel, in order to be a sexually functioning person, is that you should be able to feel the lust running through your veins, or, you know, all of that bullshit. And, you know, and there are a lot of people that that's not what the experience of sex is.

Karen Yates

I know, it's very interesting. What I really like about the terms that we're examining today is that there's an allowance for reality, I guess. Because we have all grown up with these tropes — these romantic tropes, these sexual tropes. They're just so scripted, just as you alluded to — that, you know, we have to have fire in our veins, and pull off our clothes, and it always has to be going 24-7. And while I don't identify as demisexual, there was a relaxation I felt when I started understanding the concept. It's like, Oh, yeah, it's okay. It's okay to develop a relationship over time, and maybe it will lead to sex eventually. It doesn't have to be like, "I looked at him and knew." It's a real allowance. And I hear that in the definition of asexuality — it doesn't mean people are like, "I am a monk, and I am not going to have sex, and I do not want to have sex." There's a scale there.

Sarah Sloane

The frustration that lots of folks have, that are not conversant with a lot of the terms that we use when we identify ourselves outside of any kind of old-school binary — folks are like, "I don't understand why you have to have all these labels." It's like, well, because it's comforting. You know, if there's a label that exists, it means that there are other people like me. And maybe I'm not broken, maybe the way that I respond is normal, is okay. And so, you know, the reason for all of the labels is because they're shorthand for us to communicate to other people, and that communication goes both ways. We're telling people who we are, but we're also feeling a part of a group of people who also feel the same way. And when you're marginalized, simply knowing that you're part of a group of people who also feels that same way can be such a relief.

Karen Yates

So on, say, a dating app or site, you know, if you see asexual, it's not automatically like, "Oh, why is this person on here?" Or, "I don't get this." It's something completely different. And something that can be dialogued about.

Sarah Sloane

We have this idea in our culture that you're supposed to find the one — you know, "the one" in all capital letters, and that person should be meeting your sexual, your romantic and your partnership needs. All of them. The best that anybody can do, because that's the one. And that's a whole lot of baggage to put on one relationship. And I think that when we start thinking about what is it that makes a relationship — for me, part of what makes a relationship is physical affection. For me, part of what makes a relationship is deep friendship. Do I have that with people that are not my sexual partner? Absolutely. Is that less of a relationship? Absolutely not. So when we start separating out action from relationship, we can start kind of figuring out, what is it that we actually need? What is it that actually serves us and works for us? And how do we communicate that with other people? And do we want to have a world in which we prize one relationship over every other relationship in the world? And so, starting to think outside of what is it that makes a relationship that's not what they taught me in the bodice rippers, or in mainstream culture, or in rom-coms? The closer we are to finding the kinds of relationships that really work for us.

Karen Yates

I'm sort of framing this like, you know, dating apps, or when you're looking for folks, and the way people label themselves. But I'm also thinking like, you might be in a monogamous relationship for say, 30 years, and you suddenly realize — you hear this conversation and you're like, "Holy shit, I'm asexual!" And the level of acceptance that you can then bestow upon yourself, the allowance you give yourself, then opens up so many doorways, instead of living in shame, of like, "I don't fit this standard." Not even knowing there was a standard that you were trying to fit yourself into. But suddenly realizing "I'm okay, there's other people like me, and they might be in monogamous relationships as well. But now I can communicate maybe more adequately with my partner."

Sarah Sloane

Yeah. And I think one of the great sadnesses is that, if none of us talk about what our internal reality is, we often end up feeling like we're the only person that feels that way. And I was thinking last night, as I was doing a little bit of reading to prep for our conversation today, that the thing that has made it easier for so many people has been the fact that there are podcasts, there are dating apps, there are tumblrs that we can follow. And we get exposed to a new term, and it allows us to think of ourselves as more of a whole individual. You know, when we see ourselves reflected by somebody else, or somebody says, like, hey, it's safe to step outside of what you felt like you

were supposed to do — all of those things function in a way that help us to realize that we're not alone.

Karen Yates

Yeah. So let's move on to aromantic, and what does that mean?

Sarah Sloane

Aromantic is kind of the romantic version of asexual. It's somebody that doesn't feel a romantic drive. So they may want close friendships, they may want sex, but in terms of that kind of NRE — new relationship energy — kind of flush, that crushy kind of feeling, they don't necessarily feel that. And again, it doesn't mean that these are folks that swear off all relationships. It's just that that kind of romantic passion is not a thing that they experience.

Karen Yates

Like if you were just getting into a new relationship, and you're like, "Wow, this person isn't experiencing NRE, and I'm head over heels — are they emotionally unavailable?" Is it more about gauging how the person is showing up for the relationship? And not really getting insecure about their type of reaction?

Sarah Sloane

Yeah. I like to ask people, "What is it that brings you to this relationship and makes you want to continue dating me? What are you getting from this? How does it make you feel?" You know, the reality is that we all are going to be nourished by different things in a relationship. There are people that I've dated that, you know, hands down, not interested in a romantic relationship, but man, I had the right chemistry with them intellectually and it was like, balls to the wall sex. Great stuff. No relationship energy, And so, asking that person like, "Hey, what needs are you getting met by this? What are you enjoying about this?" And listening to their answer. And often, it's simply understanding, like, "Oh, this person, they maybe aren't gonna show up with flowers because they're having a grand gesture moment, but they're actually committed to being in this with me." They're going to come over and sit with me when I'm having a really rough day and they're gonna hug me. And maybe we have really good sex, or maybe we go out and we we do hobbies together. There are other things that are really important components of a relationship — that just might not be one of them. here's not only one way to love somebody, right? We can love people very much and be aromantic. People don't generally come to the understanding of themselves as an aromantic person without having had some of that thought— of like, What is this about? Is this a healthy place for me to be?" So at that point, I would say, believe that

person. It can be really hard to have these conversations, because they really do challenge us to deeply think outside of what we have been told is good in a relationship. And it can make us really question our own value. If we have, say, somebody who is allosexual, which is somebody who likes to have sex with everything, essentially, versus maybe their partner is asexual — that can bring up a lot of questions of whether you're good enough, on both sides of that. So, having the conversation about what is it actually that makes this relationship work with us? And how can we honor the identities and experiences of everybody that's involved in the relationship, using terms for our sexuality, using terms for our romantic desires can actually help us to kind of come to the core of like, this is the important piece of this relationship. And this is how we're going to invest.

Karen Yates

And also being secure enough in yourself that you can fearlessly ask these questions. Yeah.

Sarah Sloane

Well, I don't know that anybody ever asks them fearlessly. But bravely. I'm usually terrified when I have these questions. Because it's hard to know: am I doing this conversation or way that doesn't shame my partner? Am I doing this conversation in a way that isn't feeling scary for me beyond just, am I afraid of losing something? You know, these questions are not easy questions, especially if you've already invested in some way with someone. But they're so important, because I feel like it's like playing a video game. You know, you have to beat the boss before you can go to the next level. And I feel like sometimes, relationships, after a conversation that's really hard like this, where everybody who's involved in that relationship gets to say, here's what I'm about — at that point, you kind of unlock the bonuses. It's not like your relationship can't grow, but it's like, you don't get the bonus scenes.

Karen Yates

And here's the thing, even if it ends up ending the relationship, you get the bonus. Because you showed up. You showed up, and that's the bonus.

Sarah Sloane

And I think that actually in a lot of cases, it doesn't necessarily mean the relationship ends. It means that it shifts. I've had a couple of relationships where it became really clear — like, oh, this part of the relationship isn't really working so well, but this other stuff is. Can we have a relationship like this? Can we have a relationship, after kind of

coming to terms with the fact that one of us our orientations has shifted? And so you start looking at like, well, what would be a right-sizing for this relationship?

Karen Yates
Exactly.

Sarah Sloane

And being able to approach that conversation — I think there's this thing that we do as we mature, which is we stop looking at relationships as like, everything has to end in a burning dumpster fire.

Karen Yates

I think this will be a conversation for a future segment — really to talk about ideas of polyamory, and that relationships can get very nuanced and non-categorized if you're willing to be in the soup of polyamory and ethical nonmonogamy.

Sarah Sloane

I think having the internal conversations about: how do we identify, what is our orientation? What is it when it's just us, without the expectations? What does sex need to look like for us? What does romance need to look like for us? That really gives us the groundwork for what in a relationship is going to work for us. Because without understanding ourselves, we can't as easily go into any kind of conversation with a potential partner, or a current partner, and advocate for our needs to get met. So when we start rethinking our own orientation, when we start rethinking our own gender, it just gives us so much more information to bring to the table, and make sure that those conversations when we're talking about our relationships are really rich, and they're really authentic.

Karen Yates

Yeah, you know, the word that was coming up was "majesty. " Our own majesty.

Sarah Sloane

I like that.

Karen Yates

Our nuance, our complexity, our richness, our depth. It's a beautiful journey.

Sarah Sloane

It really is. And it is quite often scary, and sometimes frustrating. But every time you have that moment of like, "Oh, I actually like I know who I am, and I was able to advocate for myself here, and the pleasure I got from that moment" — those are the moments that really make it worthwhile.

Karen Yates

I so agree.

Sarah Sloane

Yeah.

Karen Yates

Thanks, Sarah. I appreciate it.

Sarah Sloane

Oh, thank you.

Karen Yates

If you've been listening to the past few episodes, you know that we've recently redone our crowdfunding platform on Patreon, dubbing it The Afterglow. One of the features on our live show was Q&A with our panel of sex experts. Now as part of the benefits for subscribing to The Afterglow, for as low as \$5 a month, you get to ask anonymous questions to our rotating Afterglow panel and then receive the audio as juicy bonus content. Here is an audio peek into the November session, where our panel discusses a question about projecting onto new partners. You'll be hearing from sex and intimacy coach Tazima Parris, sex-positive therapist Jason Best of Best Therapies, and sex-positive therapist and intimacy coach Brandon Hunter-Haydon. Enjoy.

So, Tazima. A person who has signed themselves "Sin" says, "What actions can you take to be mindful of your projections onto a person in a new relationship?"

Tazima Parris

The magic word that I'm going to jump in with is "should." If you're thinking or saying "should," like something should be a certain way, or you're disappointed by how that person — especially in a new relationship! And to expand this a little bit, 100% of people project onto other people. Even the most conscious — like, I've done a whole bunch of work, I've done a bunch of therapy or growth work, I've figured out my pain points and my traumas, and I'm working on it, I can identify it — even that person has projections. It's a natural way of us sort of trying to figure out the world. The best way

to counteract our projections is to stay curious. And this is one of the reasons — our curiosity and novelty is why new relationships are really interesting to us. This is a new person, new energy, new stuff, you don't know everything about them. And so, that curiosity that we have naturally is the thing that keeps it fresh. And for people who are in longer-term relationships, or they've been with the person for a while, or they're back, or whatever, you're also going to have projections. But curiosity is also going to help those projections. What's happening right now? I know this feels like something that happened to me in the past. Recognize that for yourself, and be curious. Take a pause, time out, slow down, and say — and you may have to verbally ask for this — hey, I noticed that I'm having a reaction to something you're doing or saying. And I want to take a moment to pause and check in with myself. This is not how normal people talk. [laughter] This is not a normal way of having a conversation. But it does help to slow things down. So you can literally say, "Hey, I noticed that I'm having a reaction to something you did or said. And I just want a moment to pause." You can either stop the conversation completely, or create a different part of the conversation by saying, "Hey, I need to identify, I think I'm projecting this." And in order to have that part of the conversation, you've got to know yourself. You've got to know, hey, this really feels like when I was, you know, in my old marriage, or this feels like when I was 17. Or this feels like when I was seven. And you're this other person.

Karen Yates

Okay, so now this is really interesting. Now, I love that, because... I love it. But when I read that question, I thought it was like, "We're in a new relationship we project that the other person is fabulous, we put them on a pedestal, they're a god or a goddess!" How do you pull that? How do you make them a real human again? So what do you say about that?

Tazima Parris

That's called a golden projection. That's because you don't have any details about them. And it's the curiosity that is playing on sort of like a fantasy reel. It's like a combination of fantasy, slash actual curiosity and data that's coming in. That golden projection can also be damaging too, because then that person doesn't get to be a person. And if you think it's too good to be true, you're probably projecting.

Karen Yates

Okay, so Brandon and Jason, what do you have to say?

Jason Best

I'm so deeply curious about what Brandon was gonna say, I'll step back for a second and let him tackle that first. [laughter]

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

I appreciate that. You know, you've always got to be wary of the auto-fill. You just always got to be wary about the auto-fill. Because it's gonna want to help you out — there's a part of your styling of attachment and all the parts of you that want to secure connection and secure intimacy, and the parts that are going to want to take care of you — those auto-fills are just going to kick right in. And sometimes they contain, you know, your last residence, or two residences ago, and you need to go through and manually check what's in the boxes there. So just to echo, part of what I heard Tazima getting to is just being aware that projections are a natural and normal part of the whole process. So it's not a matter of thinking that if you've done projections that you're doing a relationship wrong, you're not doing it wrong. It's about becoming aware of it, and realizing where its influence might be at any given moment. And including that as part of the relationship — that you have a relationship with your projections, just like you do with the person. And if you can include that in your own awareness — and I would say even more so in your dialogue with your partner, where both people are starting to talk about their projections and notice aloud with each other — that's relationship building. That's intimacy.

Karen Yates

Getting back to Tazima's idea of the golden projection, even saying, "Wow, I'm noticing, I'm thinking you're amazing, I mean, I'm noticing you can really do no wrong," or whatever. Even naming the golden projection, even naming that?

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Insofar as that's possible. But also it's pretty normal for that to not even occur, until you hit the first record scratch. You know, whenever that is.

Karen Yates

Six months. [laughter]

Brandon Hunter-Haydon

Yeah, six months, seven years, whenever it is. Third date. But I'm curious now what Jason has to say...

Karen Yates

Yeah. What does Jason have to say?

Jason Best

Well, first of all, can we give it up to me? That was such a great answer, obviously, good choice, throwing it out there right away. [laughter from all] Just to build that—

Karen Yates

I'm just going to chalk this up to the fact that you're a new dad, and you need a lot of attention.

Jason Best

[laughter] I need so much attention. I've been holding a baby for so long. She is wonderful.

Karen Yates

The baby's getting all the attention. Now Jason needs attention!

Jason Best

I need so much attention. I need a little bit of love! I think maybe that's... I'm getting so much love. I'm fine. I think, obviously, Brandon and Tazima had fantastic responses to this. I do think that there is this constant tension, with humans really, about "Are we seeing the world as it is, the people we're around, as they are?" The relationships we have, are they really in the moment? Or are we you know, playing with projections, with these maybe distorted visions of who people are? And I would absolutely agree with Brandon: it's not whether or not this might happen. It is gonna happen! It happens all the time. You know, part of maturity is realizing that and then realizing, what are the lenses that I tend to distort things through? Can I be more aware of that? Can I try to counteract that? If I know that I'm a suspicious connector, and so once I start to get close to someone, I just instinctively get very suspicious of everything, even if it's not really called for, I've got to work on being more trusting. I've got to kind of lean into that. If I'm a person who's maybe a little bit too trusting, too gullible up front, okay, maybe I have to force myself to add some suspicion, and lean towards that a little bit. You know, you're probably not going to go too far. And if you do overcorrect, then you can always notice that and go like, yeah, I really have gone from too trusting to being way too suspicious, let me balance that out some. But I think that the awareness of the process, the awareness of who you are, and continuing to refine that, and refine that with your partner is really one of the most fantastic things about being a relationship. I know we were just talking about me being a new dad, and maybe it's the sleep deprivation talking, but I have discovered so many new elements to myself, to my partner, as we have gone through this process of having our daughter. And it's

really interesting. And we also are both carrying, of course, a ton of baggage from previous families that we're working through. Those were the families of origin. What is our family going to be like? So, no, I think it's honestly a really valuable skill to develop. Just that, you know, trying to continue to go to "what's real?" and then noticing, okay, yeah, I'm gonna be distorting things. It's fine. What can I do to correct it when i can?

Karen Yates
Cool.

Tazima Parris

Yeah, I wanted to jump in and also share: there's a space, a transition space between relationships, or before beginning a new relationship, that people often will make a list of what they want next. Oh, X, Y and Z was really messed up. And this is what I want. Now, that can also create some projections as well, whether golden or tin, rust, whatever projections, because sometimes even our language is terrible as we make this new list. This is a space — I work with clients a lot who are dating or seeing someone new. And as they're even talking about "I want this person to — I want this experience." And this experience might be, they might use a word like "stable," or "nice," not mean, whatever. This often is baggage from the old relationship. As you talk about it, or as people write this stuff down, they end up kind of tracking the past into the new experience. And so I often encourage people to take stock of: What kind of experience would you be having if you didn't use these words that you've put in here? Like, "I don't want this" — what would you be experiencing instead? And then look to see if you are actually seeing that, or if it's a projection. Some of this stuff is kind of high-level self-awareness, observing ego kind of stuff. And I want people to know: this is not simple, it's not easy, but it is worth it if you work it.

Karen Yates

[music under] For more info on our panelists, go to our show notes. And if you like what you heard just now, there's about 25 minutes more of questions and answers — consider joining monthly. You can also read about more benefits by clicking on the link in our show notes. Much of our income here at Wild & Sublime comes from listeners just like you, and really helps us cover expenses. And if you'd like to give a one-time contribution for our work, I understand the \$5 monthly may not be possible for everyone. You can also find our PayPal link in the episode notes. We here at Wild & Sublime appreciate whatever you're able to contribute. Thank you.

I'm really excited about this next story. It was recorded at our last live show, March 13th, 2020 at Constellation in Chicago. I had been trying to get Lily Be onto the show for a really long time. She is a very popular person. And finally, she could make it on, and then proceeded to deliver an absolutely fantastic piece. Please enjoy this performance by master storyteller Lily Be, a great way to finish out Wild & Sublime 2020.

Lily Be

I'm lying in the bed next to this Thor-looking man in a seedy motel, smoking a cigarette. And he turns to me and—kind of teary-eyed—and thanks me and gets up to get dressed, and turns and says "Here," and on the bed throws what looks like a wad of money. I don't count it, but it's some hundreds, y'all. And I get mad.

"Look, I told you I don't want your money. I don't do this for money." I'm so ugggghhh by this, and he's trying to talk to me, but I'm the Domme.

"No, no, shut up. I told you I don't want your money. Why are you giving me money?"

And I remember when I first met him. I had just gotten out of a relationship that for the most part just fucked my head up. I had fallen in love for the first and last time with a straight white dude. And when I say "fucked my head up," he did. He cheated on me, did everything that I did not expect him to do. We had gotten engaged, it was this ridiculous thing, and then it had to end, and it ended ugly. But the one thing I thank him for is that our relationship did show me that, oh, I'm not submissive. Me and this straight white man. Patrick—I'mma say his name; he ain't here [audience laughter]—Patrick, he had me doing things that... I had assumed I was submissive, my whole life. But he had me choking him in bed, and like, spitting in his mouth. Playing out sexual fantasies of apocalypse in my closet, where I tied him up and told him to shut the fuck up and eat this pussy. Right? Like all kinds of nasty shit. I was like, "Oh, I like this. I like being in control like this."

So when we broke up, and it was heartbreaking, and I got over the bullshit, I was like, "I want to do that again." And so I found myself on FetLife — cuz that's where we go — doing my profile, in my leather, in my fishnets, right? In my boots. Saying I'm a Domme. I own that. It was good to own that. And know that that's who I was. I'm in charge. I put my Kik on there. My Kik, like, blew up, with men all over Chicago. Like, what it do? What it do, Lily, what it do? Basically like, how can we meet? Yeah, yeah, let's do this. And I was like... let's see. And so, I meet Ross — we'll call him Ross. And he is — I mean, I opened the picture. It's Thor, y'all. It's Thor. He's like 6'6", he's just

bam bam bam everywhere, and he's in the finance world, slash a personal trainer. And he's like, "I like your profile." And we do the dance, right? "What are you into?" "What are you into?" La la la, all that stuff. And then he finally is like, "Ah, I'm into... uh... I want you to, like, fuck my throat." Which is something I had never done. Ever. But I pretended that I did. I'm like, "I got that. I could do that." [laughter] Because he described it, and I'm like, oh I want to do that, and I don't need you to like, left swipe. No, I want to be the one to do this to you, Thor.

So, he picked me. And we decided to meet at this hotel — we made it our... made it our spot. And I remember showing up early and waiting and waiting, and butterflies in my stomach, and I open the door and there he is. And there I am. Not like this — I had a corset on, I had my fishnets and my boots, hair down and out. And he hands me a little bag, because I told him I don't have the equipment, that you have the equipment. I KNOW you have the equipment — because I didn't have it. He hands me this little bag. I go into the bathroom with the little bag and my phone, because I don't know how to put on these harnesses, y'all. It's my first time. So I googled that shit. [Laughter]

And then I'm standing there in the mirror and I'm like, "Yeah." For like, a hot second, men, I got it. I get what y'all get, what y'all get, what y'all think. And so I'm like, "Mmm," in the mirror. And I open the door to the bathroom and walk out. And Thor's on his knees, like, "What can I do for you, Goddess?" And that sounded so good, y'all. Yeah. So good. And I was like, "Shut up!" And he loved it. And I was like, come here. And like, on his knees, this six foot five, Thor of a man crawls over and is right here. Just in front of my dick. With his mouth open, like, "What can I do for you, Goddess?" And I was like, "You can take this dick is what you can do." And he did. All eight inches of it. Like a boss. And I was impressed. I was like, you go. You go! [laughter] And that was it.

I fucked the shit out of his throat! Like ya! ya! I took every experience I'd ever taken, every man that had ever tried to like, grab my head and like — I took it all, all of that, channeled all those blowjobs into this experience. Like, yeah, yeah, get it, get it. He took it all, took all of it. And then at the end, when he was like, "I'm done," like a gentleman, took a napkin, wiped his face, thanked me and went on his merry way.

And I was hooooooked. I realized this is what I want to do. I want to do this. And not just throat fuck. I got into all of it. Pegging, period. I was pegging four or five — I had a roster. I had a lineup of cubs, yo, because I'm also a cougar. They had to be like 30 — I'm 42, y'all. They had to be like, 27 to 32. Rackin' em. Just day after day. It built my confidence up. It made me forget about Patrick. It made me walk into rooms like,

"Yeah, I could fuck about seven of y'all. Seven of y'all in this room would take this dick, I know it." I walked around just knowing. Changed my life.

So here I am in this room with Ross, and I'm mad that he's trying to give me some money. I'm like, "This ain't about money, this is about me, and what I get, what you get. We've talked about this, Ross! You know this!" And with, like I said, tears in his eyes, he said, "Lily, do you know how envious I am? That you get to walk out of here and own this? You go out here and tell all your friends you just fucked me in the throat. And I can't. I can't. I gotta go back and I got to pretend this didn't happen. You're like, the only thing that keeps me from going into work and shooting up my job." That's what he said, I swear to God, so I'm kind of doing the Lord's work, y'all. A little bit. [laughter]

And I was like, "Damn, Ross." I felt for him. At that moment, I was like, damn. And so like, I took the money. Like \$600, y'all. Like damn, Ross, for real? Okay. But also, I kept seeing Ross. I did this for four years, y'all. Never really wanted anything reciprocated. Like, I didn't ask him to fuck me. I never cared about me getting off. It wasn't about that for me. In fact, I just turned 41. When I turned 40, I realized, like, I'm asexual — that's a story for another day. But this four years of my life changed the way I navigated in the world. How I carried myself, what I believed about who I am, and why I am who I am. The confidence, the glow, the strength, the empowerment that I got from these four years with these men — all straight white men. It was like my payback, all the retribution. Like, "I'll fuck y'all now!" But it changed my life. And I always think about Ross, and how so many of us don't get to be who we want to be in the world. And how I was that for him. And so in a way, like — I know he's better now. We still keep in touch via Kik. I don't fuck him anymore, but we're still friends. But I say this to say that kink helped me find who I am. This world of like, "No hay mal que por bien no venga" — there is no bad from which good cannot come. And so, my shitty relationship with Patrick led to this discovery of kink, led to Ross, led to me finding out that I'm a badass bitch. And I want to give you all, and let y'all in on a secret: All you are some badass motherfuckers. All y'all, every single one. And all y'all got to do is find the way, right? And step into it. And y'all will be okay. Thanks. [applause]

Karen Yates

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