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**gillian anderson**

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LBRIS

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## on fantasies

'I'll keep your secret if you keep mine.'

*'My fantasies, my rules, right?'*

I would like to understand myself. Not as a person, but as a human. I often find myself questioning the shame that comes along with my desires. Is everyone ashamed and pretending not to be? As humans – as animals – we are desiring individuals, and yet we think of ourselves as something bigger, more important than mammals: intelligent beings who founded cities and discovered how to use fire to cook vegetables, celebrating the result of organised sowed seeds.

I'm searching for answers. As a teenager, I lived as a lesbian, but what do I want now? I'm terrified of change: it's easier to label myself and stay trapped, but I'm sure I'd be a pretty sad woman. I want to touch and be touched, to love and be loved. I can't think of sex as an act lacking affection. I want someone to stroke my hair and my skin, someone to tell me that they desire me. I want to be worshipped and to worship, I care about the mutual act of making love. And at the same time, there's a part of me that wants to know how it feels to be fucked. Is it possible to be simultaneously attracted to cuteness *and* to roughness? To have a deep, primal desire of being controlled. It's the unknown, I think, that excites me.

As women, we do everything we can to be independent individuals. Immersed in a system that will do anything to make us the weaker gender, I find my desire in conflict with my rational thinking. Is this the reason I feel shame any time I think about being dominated? As much as we think of ourselves as powerful, we females are trained to feel shame from the day we are born. I, like many other women, feel shame about my body. And that's where the roots of my insecurities are: am I desirable in the way I look? I don't want to be objectified and yet I want to be desired. Maybe I'm just attracted to contradiction.

I want a relationship but I'm scared. And somehow my fears all add up to sex. I want someone to touch me, to fill me, to make me want to be touched. I want someone to tell me what to do

and what to say, how to please them and when to stop. I want to be edged, to play with the limits. I want to trust someone to the point where I feel safe while being controlled. I want to moan from pleasure and also from pain. To be thrown over and to be fucked – even if it’s a vague, common fantasy, it’s not easy for me to assume the truth: I desire. My fantasies are limited by my rational self – which is embarrassed by *me*. I know that for sure. I’d like to let my mind run wild, but it is so, so hard.

I’ll try, for you but especially for me: I finally learned that I like to dance, so I’m at a party, having a good time. I see someone I like but I’m not sure if they’ve noticed me, so I keep dancing. After a while, I feel a hand gently touching my back, so I turn round. When I see their face, I smile and dance along, feeling the increasing tension running through my skin. Slowly, as if previously planned, their hands go to my waist and mine go to their neck, their soft hair. Can’t imagine how, but we’re already kissing. It is a slow kiss, and my torso is closer to theirs as the minutes pass by. When the hands over my body start to make me feel like I need more, I suggest we go somewhere more private. We find a bathroom where we continue with the making out, with the touching. And as the hands go down, the adrenaline goes up, and the fact that we could be caught makes me more excited. They push me up against the cold, hard wall, with my face towards it. From the back, they put a hand under my long skirt and start to touch me over my underwear. The rubbing of the clothing against my clitoris turns me on, and when it starts to feel like I could come, they stop. And I ask them not to, but they shush me and tell me to turn and face them. As I do that, their hand goes up and to my mouth, where a finger meets my lips and then enters. I like my own flavour, it’s a reminder of being alive. Then, as one hand is entering my mouth and playing with my tongue, the other one goes down and starts to rub my inner thighs, making me want more, so I ask for it. They don’t do that.

Instead, they keep touching everything but the clitoris, and I’m so vulnerable standing there, waiting to be fucked and knowing that anyone could come through the door at any moment. When the hand goes to my clitoris my underwear is by my knees, so this time it is skin-to-skin. It’s not the fingers but the entire hand that strokes me. I’m sensitive and it burns but just a little, the right amount to make me feel like I’m going to succumb. We are kissing but I need to take a deep breath, so I stop to catch some air. As I feel the need of being filled, they fill me. It’s like they could read my thoughts, the desire of feeling them inside of me. Two fingers going inside and out, going slow but rough. I feel the music vibrating in my chest, the bass caressing my brain as I feel the sex as something that happens to me. Music and dancing, the lovemaking ritual.

Part of the fantasy is not knowing if I come, not caring if I do. In my mind I feel pleasure. Will I feel it in my body someday? To be touched, to be loved. To be a woman in love with the world she created.

*Argentine • NA • Less than £15,000 • Gay/lesbian • Single • No*

I would like to have a penis. That is my fantasy. I love my boobs and my femininity. But I would like to have a penis to fuck a woman, or many women, with care and protection, but also with fiery desire and to feel the pleasure that men feel when having sex with a woman. And mostly to share the desire at the same time. That must feel amazing. Not so long ago I wished to be a man, or so I thought, because what I *really* wanted was to have the privileges that men have. Not only their rights and safety but, mostly, their penis.

I long for technology able to make me feel like I have a penis and give as much arousal and desire as possible to a woman. A hot, sexy, funny, lovely woman. 'Please send me one,' I asked the space that surrounds me, to my ideas, to you, I guess. Isn't that funny? I'm a bit desperate, but I try not to think too much about it. I guess for now I'll have to get a rubber penis and find a woman who wants to kiss me and have sex with me, to begin with. A hard task. I don't know whom to ask for advice or to introduce me to hot, funny, feminine women. And it sucks. I also don't think I am ugly at all, so I don't understand why I can't find a woman who would like to be with me. I don't think I have ever been loved by a woman, or by any romantic interest, as a matter of fact. It hurts. Sometimes my heart aches because of that silent rejection. Somehow, I feel lonely thinking about the fact that I can't find a female match on Tinder or Bumble, or in real life. It used to be easy on apps, for me. But now, it doesn't work. I sometimes feel I am in the wrong place and maybe also the wrong time.

And so, I want to escape to a foreign land, and I fantasise about the possibility of finding someone there who cherishes me and desires me. And loves me. I would like to experience that. Something healthy, something lovely, something comforting. And I don't just want sex. I want a sweet, real and honest connection, even if it is only for a while. For a tiny fraction of

time. A sweet balm. I still want a penis, but I guess my biggest fantasy is to find someone to love. To really love and to be loved. Thank you for this space. Writing this has made me feel better.

*Mestiza Ecuadorean • NA • Less than £15,000 • Bisexual/  
pansexual • Single • No*

As far as sex goes, fantasising is all I've ever done. I held hands with someone once a long time ago but that's it. I've always had an active fantasy life but the recent realisation that I'm not straight has amped things up. If people knew what I was thinking when I'm sitting at the kitchen table eating a cheese sandwich! Well, let's just say I could be imagining something completely different in my mouth.

It's confusing how much my fantasies have changed over the last couple of years. Before it was just two people in the missionary position, which is cool. You can still have a lot of fun that way, but now it's 'yes, please', to things that I wouldn't have dreamt of dreaming about before: BDSM (bondage, discipline, sadism, masochism), kink, three-or-moresomes, escorts, sex parties and clubs, watching and being watched, one-night hook-ups with random strangers. Anal sex and things I didn't even know were things until a year ago, like fisting. A current favourite fantasy is one where I'm at a party surrounded by people in various stages of undress, all engaged in different activities. My mouth is on someone's nipple, my hand is inside them and they're riding it and riding it until ...

Discovering my queerness has completely changed my thoughts and feelings about *everything*, not just sex and fantasies. It's like I've had a personality transplant. I mean, watching porn was a no-go area before, but now – women together, men together, men and women, groups, solo masturbation – I love it! I tend not to fantasise about real people (unless it's that delivery person with the tattoos and the undercut!). I do have inappropriate thoughts about people, though. You know, when you're talking to someone, and a thought just pops into your head? What do you taste like? What do you like doing in bed? What would your penis feel like in my hand right now? But mainly, it's just people I've made up in my imagination. The same person can be part of a long-term relationship, someone

I'm madly in love with, or a ten-minute encounter in a nightclub restroom. I do have special people that stay in my fantasies for a while but mainly it's *a lot* of different people. And before, I always dreamt about fit, good-looking, able-bodied people, but now it's every kind of person, every kind of body. Looks, gender, race and sexuality don't come into it. Age doesn't come into it either. My imaginary friends can be twenty-five or eighty-five and everything in between. But whatever kind of situation I find my imaginary self in, it's always unofficial. It seems I'm scared to even fantasise about full-time, out-and-proud relationships. That, however, doesn't stop me obsessing about throuples and polycules. When I heard about a possible celebrity throuple a few weeks ago, I broke out in a cold sweat and that day's fantasies were sorted.

I love how freewheeling fantasies can be. A chaste, loving relationship with someone asexual lives quite happily alongside several people I don't know very well giving it to me hard up against a wall. One minute, I could be walking down the street holding hands with someone, being all lovey-dovey; the next, I'm with several others in a dungeon, all of us dressed for the occasion, some strapped to a frame being punished, others wielding our whips with relish. Then there are times in my fantasy life when I'm travelling around the world, a sort of sexual nomad. I'm not interested in the sights of the foreign country, but seek out places, retreats, communes, clubs where I can meet like-minded people and have sex in as many ways as possible.

But I also kind of hate how free and easy fantasy can be. I mean, the whole point of fantasising is to make you feel good and it does sometimes; other times, though, I feel paralysed by it. I've just read a magazine article about someone falling in love with a woman for the first time. Instead of doing stuff that needed doing, I sat there staring at the page for ages imagining

that it was happening to me. And it's pointless for me to try to watch television or read a book because I just can't focus on anything. I think I need therapy.

I thought that getting some of it out of my head and onto paper would help but writing it down like this has made me feel worse. It's made me see how selfish and indulgent I'm being. I'm sitting there watching the news with the latest tragedy playing out in front of me and my own life is a complete mess and the people around me need help, but all I can think about is bodies and fucking and relationships. It makes me feel ashamed. I know fantasies are supposed to be a distraction from real life, but it can be a burden. I dread waking up sometimes because I know it will all start before I even open my eyes. It feels like my life is made up of sex dreams punctuated by an occasional real-life event. It's also highlighted how frustrated I am. I wonder how different my fantasies would be if I was out there dating. Reading over what I've written, I think it might all be a bit naive and basic compared to what some other people fantasise about but ... *my fantasies, my rules, right?*

*Mixed-race British • NA • Less than £15,000 • Bisexual/pansexual  
• Single • No*

I'm happily married. I think. My husband is a great guy. He's kind. He's easy to get on with. We have common interests. He's a great dad. He respects me. He works hard. He supports me financially. He's my best friend. And being married to your best friend is the best thing in the world. But sometimes I wonder how my life would be if he died. I wonder if I'd be brave. If my tastes would change. If I would be different from the twenty-year-old who fancied a guy who turned out to be her best friend and husband. If I'd be courageous enough to admit to myself, my family, my friends, my children, what I actually wanted.

I worked with a girl. I say girl, she was a woman. She was nothing like anyone I knew; long dark shiny hair, a huge smile, her teeth too big for her mouth, her arms covered in tattoos, small breasts. Her eyes glittered as they caught mine and saw past the tired bags, the shapeless cardigan hiding my baby belly. Her face was animated when I spoke; her body angled towards me. She was leaving to go abroad the next day. A few of us decided to have a drink. I remember exactly where I was when she came up behind me, her demeanour casual as she put her arm round my waist, her fingers entwining with mine. I refused to look down; instead stared ahead. I felt drunk. Felt my cheeks redden. My whole body was on fire as I stood there pretending to follow the conversation, smiling and nodding when I could. I inched backwards, my body skimming off hers; her face laughing at something someone had said. I smiled though I hadn't followed a word of the conversation. I shut my eyes for just a second, and then her hand dropped. The absence burned. And I stumbled sideways. I made my excuses and went home to my kids and my best friend. Now I see her only on Instagram. Or when I look in the bathroom mirror. I see her standing behind me. I see her holding my vibrator and I imagine my husband is dead. And I wonder if I'd be brave enough to let her work her way round my body. If I'd let her long hair tickle my breasts, if her